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Ethical Code of Conduct and its Impact in Decision Making Among Managers in Local Government in Zimbabwe

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Ethical Code of Conduct and its Impact in Decision Making Among Managers in Local

Government in Zimbabwe

by

Mavis Bhehane Bordvik

MPhil, University of Oslo, 2010

BBA, Norwegian Business School, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

February 2022

Abstract

This qualitative case study addressed a gap in administrative ethics literature and was aimed at exploring how leaders in local government make ethical decisions and to understand the impact of codes of ethics on ethical conduct and ethical decision making. Trevino's interactionist model of ethical decision making was used as a theoretical lens to guide the study. Because the model explores contextual interactions and the moral compass of individuals, it illuminated whether managers in local government perceive ethics and codes of ethics as important in decision making. The research questions solicited information on how leaders in local government describe their ethical decision making to influence ethical behavior among employees. Purposeful sampling was used to gather a sample of 10 appointed managers from different departments in local government where semistructured interviews were used to gather different perspectives. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data collected from both interviews and documents. Results were indicative of contradictive opinions on what ethical decision making entails and how ethical codes can be used to enhance ethical decision making in the organization. Managers had different perspectives and understanding on the role of codes of ethics and how they can be used to encourage ethical behavior. There were blurred lines in the definitions of the code of ethics and conditions of service which managers need to clarify for efficiency and effectivity in fostering ethical conduct in their departments. A solid awareness and competency in ethical decision making guides managers to be accountable in their operations leading to a fair distribution of public goods to the citizens which then results in positive social change.

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to the One, God Almighty and to my grandfathers and

grandmothers in the light. Thank you, I know you continue to guide and watch over me.

This work is also dedicated to Khanyi, Maka, and Shay, girls, be inspired, it can be done!

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Local government institutions form the backbone of governments' response to citizens' needs. Residents, through elected councilors and public officers, make known their wishes and concerns while public administration officers formulate response mechanisms towards hospitable, responsive, healthy and habitable districts, growth points, and towns and cities, according to policy directives (Jonga, 2014). However, reports of scandals and questionable decision making among leaders in the public sector characterize public administration and thwarts its intended efforts (Chigudu, 2014). Prior research has also revealed the challenges brought about by poor decision making, ethical violations, and corrupt activities in rural and urban councils in Zimbabwe (Sithole, 2013), making it a necessity to investigate how ethical decision making is enacted in the public sector governance at local level.

According to the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF, 2015), corruption in public office is one of the greatest challenges for public leadership. In the Zimbabwean scenario prominent individuals, including ministers in local government, public works and national housing, have been charged for corruption scandals in local governance institutions (Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association [BPRA], 2017). Conflict between personal interests and obligations in public office is rife and perpetrators of unethical public practices include those occupying public offices. Therefore, an exploration of ethical conduct and how the codes of ethics impact ethical decision making in local governance and leadership is vital.

In this chapter, I present the background to the study. I bring into perspective the research problem, research questions, objectives of the study, and assumptions. I also provide the significance, theoretical framework, scope, and limitations of this study. To bring understanding into ethical decision making in local government, I used Treviño's person-situation interactionist model of ethical conduct as a theoretical lens for this study. I refer to one major city council (CC) in Zimbabwe as the case under study. In this chapter, I also define key terms as used in this study and conclude with a summary.

Background

In his study of administration, Wilson (1887) posed a question on how a government could be administered such that the public officer can cultivate the desire to serve, not only his superior but also the community, with best of efforts and the soberest of service of his conscience. His desire was to see a responsive public governance system. Though coined more than a century ago, this remains a metaphor for public office leadership as ways to improve the chances of public administrators consistently serving the public interest are formulated continuously. A plethora of scholars have made significant contributions in the study of ethics, ethical conduct and ethical decision making (Cooper, 2004; McGowan & Buttrick, 2015; Rohr, 1989; Trevino,1986). Rawls (1971) called for public administrators to anchor their work on the idea of social equity and social justice to ensure that public resources are distributed fairly among all citizens. Rawls viewed social equity and participation as being critical for effective governance. Likewise, other scholars such as Rohr (1989) and Cooper (2004) have alluded to the critical task of local government and bureaucrats towards the stability of central government. More so, other

studies support the notion that there is no better way to govern the ordinary grassroots individual, than through a local authority (e.g., Erakovich & Kolthoff, 2016). Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) noted that a robust local authority system provides a solid environment for sound implementation of policy and allows for the promotion of bottom-up socioeconomic development which is crucial for livelihoods at grassroot level. Cooper fronted the perspective of public interest in the approach to ethics and argued that public servants' obligations should move towards serving the public rather than self. Hence, local authorities in their administrative, political, and social service agenda must always attempt to pursue the ideal scenario to fulfil their mandate; however, ethical practice eludes most efforts (Chigudu, 2014).

The subject of ethics needs to be focal in the social discourse in Zimbabwe as cases of bureaucrats' abuse of the public space are on the increase. Chigudu (2014) noted that while ethical practice reflects the democratic inclination of a country, unethical practices in the Zimbabwean context have become the norm among public sector officials and politicians, resulting in the shrinking of democratic spaces. Yakamoto, cited in Chigudu, reported several scandals in Zimbabwe that resulted in many economic losses for the citizens. Cases have also been on the rise where employees are victimized for reporting any unethical practice (Chigudu, 2014). Chigudu further argued that while structures and systems have been put in place towards curbing unethical conduct to promote ethical decision making in public governance, the incompetence of Zimbabwe's public institutions, particularly citing the Anticorruption Commission, impedes such efforts, and corrupt practices continue unabated.

In the study of ethical decision making, the politics-administration dichotomy requires further examination in the Zimbabwean context. Although Connolly (2017) questioned the feasibility of calling for a separation between politics and administration among public administrators, in the Zimbabwean context coercion and interference by top politicians in local government administration has been cited by some scholars as one of the major challenges local government managers face in Zimbabwe (Jonga, 2014; McGregor, 2013; Zhou & Chilunjika, 2013). The institutionalization of the ruling political party within all state bodies has made it difficult to see where the demarcation lines between politics and administration lie. However, Rohr (1989) purported that in order to minimize political infiltration and the subsequent compromise on ethical decision making, ethics should be guided by value regimes which must be enshrined within the constitution. Because these values are encompassed within the constitution, they need not be subject to governmental changes and individuals in government will adhere to laid down statutes. Rohr suggested therefore that the work of bureaucrats must be grounded in values such as freedom, quality, and property, which should be reflected in the constitution. The Zimbabwean constitution is quite progressive and democratic on paper, with all the values Rohr referred to in place. However, in practice there is little evidence to suggest these values are being followed given numerous reports of local government ethics violations.

In Zimbabwe, public integrity violations involving the flouting of tender procedures, primitive looting and rent seeking through illegal land leases have surfaced on many occasions over the years robing the local municipality of billions in revenue

(BPRA, 2017). For example, in 2017 residents in one city expressed some dissatisfaction about the procurement of an exorbitantly expensive vehicle for the mayor at a time when roads were in need state and services such as water, education, and refuse collection were in poor state (BPRA, 2017). Residents also lodged complaints at the huge salaries by council officers when the economy was depressed and housing bills unbearably high. The authors also noted that corruption in land and housing deals is a common feature in other local authorities around the country. The local newspaper, the Herald reported a loss of millions of dollars by the Harare City Council to land barons (The Herald, 2019). Pan African Social Accountability (PSAM, 2016) noted that limited transparency and weak social accountability were some of the contributors to corrupt practices in Zimbabwean councils. In addition, Sithole (2013) argued that corrupt practices posed serious threats to public administration and negatively affected service delivery. These examples are an indicator of the deplorable situation in local governance leadership. An examination of ethics in decision making therefore stands to unearth some of the causes of unethical practices in governance.

In other studies, some scholars have argued that character plays a significant role in influencing how individuals approach particular ethical dilemmas (e.g., Cooper, 2004; Crossan et al. 2013). Chandler (1984) contended that public administrators must approach their work as citizens representing other citizens. They advocated for the acknowledgement of the patriotic stance in their responsibilities. Cooper (2004) discussed how the notion of virtue understood as character has also gained traction in scholarly research. Crossan et al. (2013) described virtue as the intrinsic qualities within,

directing an individual towards a good and happy life based on the values of courage, honesty and justice among others. In their contribution on the role of character in ethical conduct, Martin et al. (2014) discussed moral disengagement and expounded on the complicated relationship between employee perceptions of strong ethical infrastructure and the actual ethical behaviors dictated by that ethical infrastructure. The authors asserted that conclusions drawn from employee perceptions about the ethicality of the organizational context should be examined for further interventions. The individual and the ethical infrastructure in place, combined with the bureaucrat's perceptions of a particular situation are therefore critical towards making ethical decisions. This raises the need to explore the personal and contextual characteristics that can influence and impact ethical conduct among managers and to investigate whether the existing environment facilitates effective public administration and ethical decision making.

In the ever-changing nature of public administration, in the context of the New Public Management (NPM) reforms (McCourt, 2013), the tasks of public administrators are becoming more diverse and complex (Matsiliza, 2013). The new environment is characterized by ambiguity and volatility resulting in an increase in ethical dilemmas in the public sector. The involvement of the private sector in the distribution of public goods through public, private partnerships (PPP) further complicates the work of public managers (Zhou & Chilunjika, 2013). As focus is now directed at the discretion of the bureaucrats in making decisions, there has been an increased scrutiny globally, on how public sector managers make decisions as they carry out their tasks to serve citizens (CLGF, 2015). Managers in the public sector must be inclined to adapt to the ever-

changing environment to meet the demands of all stakeholders whom they serve. Chigudu (2014) asserted however that the NPM implementation in the Zimbabwean scenario is fragmented and lacks proper coordination and requisite administration skills, suffers from a shortage of resources and from politicking. Chigudu also noted it is ill-timed and driven by political stagnation and therefore leading to failure to deliver the expected results.

Local councils have a twofold nature: politics on one-end and as office bearers on the other; they are ideal vessels for brewing conflict situations, leading to high risks of unethical conduct (Mozumder, 2018). This calls for a better understanding of the individual, situational, and contextual factors that influence decision making in the environment within which one operates and an increased awareness of ethical expectations. Managers in the local government in Zimbabwe have a responsibility to foster an environment of ethics in their departments by demonstrating an awareness of ethics in how they make decisions. Zimbabwe ranks among the 25 most corrupt nations in the world (BPRA, 2017). This study was designed to establish how managers make efforts to curb unethical practice in the Bulawayo Municipality.

Administrative ethics guide public organizations towards responsibility and competency in the management of public resources (Shafritz & Ott, 2016). To encourage a reflection among employees on ethical conduct and ethical decision making in public organizations, internal and external control instruments are put in place to assist employees to follow the requisite standards expected by government when fulfilling their mandate. These instruments may include laws, rules, ethics committees and codes of

conduct (Yusuph et al., 2017). In this study, the focus was to explore the perceptions of managers on codes of ethics and how they use them to encourage ethical decision making and ethical conduct in local government in Zimbabwe. As such the focus of this study was on appointed managers rather than elected leaders. Political, elected leaders were excluded from this study because they operate under different parameters. According to Thaler and Helmig (2016), adhering to a code of ethics ensures that public administrators serve citizens in an open, transparent, just and fair manner. Thaler and Helmig asserted that public service codes of ethics are instruments outlining principles that include general, democratic, professional and people related values.

Svensson and Wood (2009) concurred those codes of ethics and the extent to which public organizations can commit to them might provide a way of having these values articulated and adopted by public employees for the organizations to attain integrity and legitimacy and to provide better service to citizens. Thaler and Helmig (2016), citing Schwarts, suggested that the existence of codes of ethics has shown to have a positive impact on ethical perceptions and ethical behavior in other contexts.

Having codes of ethics in place and adhering to them demonstrates willingness of local government to be transparent and accountable to the citizens they serve, thus allowing for reestablishing the environment of trust in the Zimbabwean context. Trust is a prerequisite in the attempt to assure the public that public administrators have their best interests at heart. Public managers therefore need to embrace the ethical standards they are expected to comply to and to promote ethical conduct and ethical decision making as they carry out their duties. A study like this one may encourage discussions and reflection

in the CC to improve and make use of the available ethical infrastructure for better

service delivery. Increased cases of unethical practices in local governance in Zimbabwe

are of concern towards effective and efficient governance (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018).

This research is therefore key towards outright promotion and implementation of ethics in

local governance.

<div align="center">**Problem Statement**</div>

Studies have been conducted in Zimbabwe that explored the notion of ethics and

its role in combating corruption in public administration (Chigudu, 2014; Mafunisa,

2001; Muswaka, 2017). Some studies have been done to explore the general challenges

faced by local government in service delivery (Dewa et al., 2014); however, there is a gap

in the literature regarding how appointed managers in the public sector in Zimbabwe

make decisions and how they perceive codes of ethics in regard to their role in ethical

decision making and ethical conduct in the Zimbabwean context as well as how they use

their positions of influence to encourage ethical decision making in their departments has

not been clearly documented. There is no documented evidence how departmental

managers in local government in Zimbabwe perceive the role of a code of ethics in

ethical decision-making process and how they use it to encourage ethical behavior in

their departments. There also is no documented evidence of how they describe how the

codes of ethics are implemented to achieve positive social change

Zimbabwe ranks 156th out of the 175 countries in the corruption perceptions

index (Afro Barometer, 2015). In Zimbabwe, leaders in the public sector have been

frequently accused of nepotism and general abuse of power and public resources through

self-aggrandizement (Chigudu 2015. Moreover, Zimbabwean public institutions have

been unable to execute their mandate, resulting in stagnation in development and

consequently a deteriorated quality of life for most citizens (Magaya & Chidhawu 2016).

Politics in Zimbabwe is characterized by social injustice and growing inequality

(Chigudu, 2014; Afrobarometer, 2015). Unethical decision making and general abuse of

office is rampant in Zimbabwe's government institutions (Chigudu, 2014).

The Constitution of Zimbabwe stipulates some principles and values, which

government officials must adhere to in the delivery of service to the people of Zimbabwe

(COZ, 2013). These values include efficiency in management of state resources,

equitable and fair distribution of public goods, and impartiality (Kaul et al., 2011).

However, there is little or no indication that these principles are considered in decision

making (Chigudu, 2014). Magaya and Chidhawu (2016) reported how public institutions

in Zimbabwe have demonstrated a high level of incompetency and lack accountability

and transparency.

To illuminate the perceptions of local government managers on codes of conduct

in ethical decision making and ethical conduct I employed Trevino's person-situation

interactionist model of ethical decision-making model as a theoretical lens to answer the

research questions of this study. The model expanded the understanding of how leaders

respond to the situational factors and the internal and external interactions within the

environment they operate in both on the organizational and individual level when making

ethical decisions.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore, using Trevino's person situation interactionist model of ethical decision making, how departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe perceive the role of a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes and how they use it to encourage ethical behavior in their departments. This study was intended to contribute and build on what is already known about codes of ethics and local government ethical decision making in the Zimbabwean context. The several scandals revealed in multiple studies of the public service in Zimbabwe as discussed in the above paragraphs call for a closer examination of such a topic.

Although ethics is a complex area to study, it is the backbone of public administration (Radhika, 2012). Investigating whether ethical conduct is part of the environmental culture in the CC shed some light into why certain behaviors are employed. Answering questions about ethics in decision making was a way to direct individuals to reflect on own values, thus leading to a reflection about own practice. In the fair and just delivery of social goods to citizens, Rhadika (2012) noted that it is important for public administrators to act with integrity which is generated through self-awareness. An understanding of ethics should therefore lead one to develop skills in articulating values and norms that are conducive to one's tasks as a public administrator (Tomescu & Popescu, 2014). Leaders should be able to reflect about ethical adherence before they can evaluate ethical conduct in their departments.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

RQ1: How do departmental managers in local government Zimbabwe encourage ethical behavior among their employees?

RQ2: How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe view a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes as important for encouraging ethical behavior among their employees?

RQ3: How do departmental mangers in local government in Zimbabwe utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments?

Theoretical Framework

This study borrowed from Treviño's (1986) person-situation interactionist model of ethical decision making. After conducting a thorough literature search to find a suitable public administration theory for this study, I settled on this model because it specifically considers the interactions that occur on different levels of the public sector which influence and impact ethical decision making within the Zimbabwean context. This is especially important in the Zimbabwean context where boundaries between the role of elected politicians and bureaucrats are blurred. Because the model not only focuses on the individual but rather also on the environment and the organization, it illuminates how leaders in these departments encourage ethical conduct and how they perceive codes of ethics as being important in ethical decision making. Adams et al. (2001) further concurred to the notion that other than individual factors influencing ethical or unethical behavior other factors such as cultural beliefs, availability of role models such as leaders, environmental and contextual variables may be equally important.

Treviño's Person-Situation Interactionist Model.

Treviño's (1986) person-situation interactionist model draws from Kohlberg's model of cognitive moral development. Kohlberg's model outlined six stages of cognitive moral development that may influence how individuals make moral judgements on whether a situation is right or wrong (Kohlberg, 1981). Expounding on Kohlberg's work, Treviño's model goes further to expound on contextual factors that influence leaders to embark on a course of moral action taken. Treviño suggested that there is an interaction between the individual and situational factors that determine how a leader may decide whether an action is ethical or not. Therefore, understanding ethical decision making through the moral development lens only as suggested by Kohlberg whilst neglecting other factors affecting decision making may not be sufficient. Treviño therefore pointed us to the direction of the situational moderators that also have an influence on an individual's cognitive moral development. The model further investigates the dichotomy between personal values and those of the organization and how an individual will decide given an ethical dilemma.

Nature of the Study

This study is underpinned in a qualitative single case design. O'Sullivan, et al. (2017) suggested that the aim of qualitative research is to produce rich and descriptive information from a few cases to enhance understanding of the phenomena under study. According to Yin (2014) and O'Sullivan, et al., a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; it therefore lends itself as an appropriate method to understand ethical decision making in local

government. The advantage of the case study approach is its flexibility; a researcher can use multiple sources of evidence such as documents, artifacts, and interviews as a way of triangulation to achieve trustworthiness. Furthermore, I used purposeful sampling to gather data through semistructured interviews to solicit information from managers in the different city council departments.

The CC under study is made up of seven departments which have different branches and sections performing different functions. From these departments I planned to interview two individuals; the top and middle managers in each department, which would total to 14 managers. However, the data had reached saturation at participant number 10. I also reviewed the national public sector code of ethics and other available documents reflecting observance of ethics in the city council.

Definitions of Terms and Concepts

The following terms and concepts are defined as they were used in this study. The definitions are as much as is possible based on their true meanings in the generality of settings to avoid distortions of knowledge. Reference is made to authoritative sources.

Code of ethics: Written statements of ethical principles and policies that guide employees in an organization on how to uphold high standards of behavior (Mahajan & Mahajan, 2016).

Constitution: A set of fundamental principles and established precedents according to which a state or organization is governed (CLGF, 2013). Constitutions are living documents, which are amended where necessary and can be completely overhauled or even abandoned, when radical changes take place. Constitutionalism and

constitutionalist approaches are accredited to the works of Rohr's (1989) on regime

values as key determinants in decision-making. Constitutionalism cannot be separated

from leadership and public administration and solving administrative dilemmas in

isolation from the constitutional power and purpose is illusory. The subject of ethical

leadership can therefore not be divorced from constitutionalism, which formulates codes

of ethics.

*Department heads***:** For the purposes of this study this term carries the same

meaning as department manager and leader.

Ethics: A system of moral principles based on values relating to human conduct, in

respect of right or wrongfulness, good or badness, acceptable or unacceptable actions

Ethics is a constant endeavor to analyze, examine, and scrutinize human behavior for the

purpose of steering people towards proper moral values (Benlahcene et al., 2018). Ethics

is both a personal and social attempt to create and establish a better life for all.

Ethical behavior: Ethical behavior refers to the study of ethical and unethical

decisions and conduct in an organizational context, especially in a work context (Treviño

et al., 2014). Ethical behavior looks at how organizational personnel conduct themselves

as they perform their duties for the organization, through interaction with processes,

stakeholders and resources.

Leaders/Managers: Although in leadership studies, these two terms have distinct

differences in their theoretical definitions, for the purposes of this study the terms are

used interchangeably as both managers and leaders fulfill the same functions in

Zimbabwe.

Local government/Local authority/ Local council: These terms will be used interchangeably in this study and refer to the administrative body officially responsible for all the public services in a specific geographical area. According to the UNDP, local governance are the processes by which public policy decisions are made and implemented (Wilde et al., 2008). It concerns itself with different power relations between stakeholders to determine who gets what, when and how. Governance shapes the way services are planned, managed and provided.

The National Public Sector Code of Conduct: A code that all public sector entities must adhere to and it is developed in consultation with the labor unions.

The site code of ethics: An internal ethics code that the local government has developed informed by the local culture and the lessons learned within the specific context

Assumptions

Bryman (2016) argued that it is important for a researcher to articulate their assumptions before any study's inception. Bryman suggested that such assumptions may influence how the study is conducted. In this study, I assumed that department heads have a site code of ethics to benchmark their decision making. The site code of ethics was important for this study in order to understand the wording and its guiding principles as well as understanding the extent to which the managers had contributed to its formulation to establish ownership of the code of ethics.

Another assumption was that there was a national public sector code of ethics which is a directive from central government for all public sector institutions. It was

important to establish whether the local government departments have the discretion to coin their own ethical codes and also to explore how the national codes of ethics and the site code were harmonized.

I also assumed that department heads have a degree of autonomy in making decisions within their working environment; There is a widespread discourse proven by empirical research that highlights interference by central government and elected officials in local government operations which compromises ethical decision making, therefore established the ownership of the managers to the code of ethics would elucidate how the codes of ethics are implemented in their departments.

I assumed that department managers would have experienced ethical dilemmas in their work as it was in the interest of the study to explore how they solve these ethical dilemmas. Another assumption was that managers would allocate time to answer my questions and that they would respond truthfully to the best of their abilities given the sensitive nature of the topic in the Zimbabwean context.

Scope and Delimitations

This study focused on the views of local government managers on the use of code of ethics as a tool to promote ethical decision making and ethical conduct in their organizations. The study was premised on Treviño's person-situation interactionist model of ethical decision making. Top and middle level managers of various departments within one major CC in Zimbabwe were the focus for this study with emphasis on managers' ethical decision making in an organizational setup as well as their understanding of the interactions occurring internally and externally. Managers' perceptions on the code of

ethics and how they influence behavior and decision making were explored. I selected

managers with work experience of three years and above in the understanding that these

would be in a better position to understand the organization and thus provide rich

information.

The subject of ethics and ethical conduct is personal and in the public domain in

the Zimbabwean context where public sector has a reputation for unethical conduct.

There was bound to be reservations on the part of managers to participate truthfully for

fear of victimization within a culture of suppression of freedom of expression, hence I

was aware that there could have been distortions of information that could potentially

show up from the participants. To the best of my ability, I assured the participants that

whatever information they disclosed would be treated with utmost confidentiality and I

would ensure that it is not traced back to them.

Authorization was sought from the Ministry of Local government to carry out this

study. The consent of the participants was solicited prior to their engagement in this

research. Their confidentiality and anonymity were assured. The validity and integrity of

the study was based on the participants' prior knowledge that this was an academic study

and not an investigation, or a mission to expose unethical behavior.

Limitations of the Study

While Zimbabwe has 10 provinces, this study was set to be carried out in one

province and the CC of the major city in that province. The selected sample was limited

to top and middle level appointed managers from the various departments within the local

government departments. Because this was a single case study with a small sample, the

results cannot be generalized however because the structure of local government is similar in all major cities the study can be duplicated in other city councils.

Since ethics is a sensitive topic particularly in Zimbabwe where the government has acquired a reputation of unethical behavior, a situation could potentially arise where participants could be unwilling to answer certain questions. It was therefore in the best interest of the study and the participants that I made sure they felt safe to express themselves and provide information needed. I made sure that the environment was conducive and that the style of interviewing would put them at ease.

Adding to the limitations mentioned in the above paragraphs of the study it was not easy accessing the sample of senior and middle level management due in part to the Covid-19 pandemic, which made it almost impossible at some point to collect the required data for this study. Restrictions on travelling and insistent lockdowns meant there was to be no physical contact at some point, resulting in time limitations and barriers to ordinary flow of conversation to allow the participants to relax as face-to-face interviews would have allowed. The use of managers' website was initially viewed as the most ideal engagement platform given social distancing, but responses to the emails sent to managers were not easily obtained and alternatives had to be used. The denial by the CC to allow access to the site code of conduct meant that I had to rely on the National Code of Conduct to analyze the content of a public sector code. Even though the managers confirmed that their site code was an adaptation of the national code, analyzing it would have provided more insights into the perspective of the whole organization towards ethical codes.

Significance of the Study

The task of local government is to deliver the many basic services that the public in their communities require (Magaya & Chidhawu 2016). Their role goes beyond mere policy implementation to exercising discretionary powers that affect citizens' lives (Pohling et al., 2016). Public administrators must make sound and ethical decisions to ensure an equitable, fair and just distribution of public goods. Bem (2014) noted that ethics provide the foundation for accountability, which is vital for human development. According to Bem, unethical behavior undermines transparency and compromises accountability and therefore the trust, which citizens need to have towards their public institutions. Leaders have power and they hold positions of influence; it is expected that they must therefore be capable of fostering ethical conduct in the culture of their organizations by demonstrating an awareness of ethical conduct. It is the task of the leaders to give clear guidance and to set a good example for employees. An understanding of set ethical standards and instruments as directed by the code of ethics is critical in equipping them with the necessary ethical competency that is required in ethical decision-making. Beeri et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between performance and ethics in local governance and they concluded that bureaucrats handle ethical dilemmas better when they have an awareness of the code of ethics.

Mafunisa (2001), argued that the need for professionalism and ethical competency among the leaders and their subordinates in ethical decision making is crucial and needs to be developed in Zimbabwe. According to Pohling et al. (2016) ethical competency refers to the connection between conscious decisions made by an individual as they draw

upon their own moral principles, the legally defined standards of behavior required in their roles, and the course of action they take. Through an understanding of ethics, public administrators can develop ethical competency enabling them to describe and apply the standards of right and wrong as well as investigate, question and reflect on their personal moral beliefs as they make decisions in the delivery of public goods for positive social change for a better Zimbabwe.

Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the background to this study. I discussed the importance of the subject of ethics in public administration especially in the Zimbabwean context where previous studies have proved that the culture of unethical conduct in the public sector is sustained. Concerns were raised on the escalating unethical practices in local government structures and how this compromises the fair distribution of public goods to the citizens. I also presented Treviño's person-situation interactionist model as the theoretical framework and its usefulness in illuminating the study phenomenon. The statement of the problem and objectives of the study were also presented. I referred to studies that have been conducted that have revealed corrupt tendencies in the public sector in Zimbabwe. I further introduced the concept of codes of ethics and expounded on how they can be useful in promoting ethical conduct (Handy & Russel, 2018). The research questions were expressed, the research questions were intended to capture how managers view codes of ethics in promoting ethical behavior and how the managers implement the codes in their departments.

The scope, limitations, and delimitations of this study were also spelt out. In chapter two I discuss a review of the literature that informed this study. A global approach was necessary to review in order to capture the views on codes of ethics in other contexts for comparison purposes to those of the context of the study. Literature that situated the study within its context and other research in other countries like Zimbabwe was also reviewed to provide a holistic understanding of the context and the topic under study. In Chapter 2 I also presented the person-situation interactionist model in more detail as a conceptual framework which was used as the lens to illuminate the phenomenon in this study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I review relevant literature in relation to ethical decision making in local governance, particularly in the Zimbabwean context. I also present the theoretical framework guiding this study. The theoretical framework focuses on the different parameters related to ethics and ethical conduct in local government in the Zimbabwean context. An understanding of ethics, leadership, perceptions and ethical decision-making is key in this study in view of the defining parameters surrounding decisions by department heads. Literature relevant to this study was reviewed, guided by the research questions and the topic. For a broader understanding of issues, a global view of code of ethics and their influence in local government was conducted. Arguments in this chapter are broken down into subsections for ease of understanding of the concepts contained. I resume by reviewing how department heads encourage ethical behavior among employees, and in the second subsection I look at the effectiveness of code of ethics in encouraging ethical decision making.

Literature Search Strategy

To obtain differing perspectives and arguments related to the research problem and purpose, I concentrated my search on ethical leadership, public sector ethics, code of ethics and public administration. The search strategy allowed me to explore information from scholarly sources within a 5-year time frame. I grouped the different topics into categories with the aim of situating the study in its context and to gain the arguments relevant to the topic from a global perspective. To capture the essence and to place the study within its context, I searched for terms like *ethics and corruption in Zimbabwe,*

local government, and *ethical leadership* and I focused on journals that focus on African studies. To find out about the performance of Zimbabwe globally I searched for articles in the World Bank Data base. For a global perspective I searched for terms like *Codes of ethics, codes of conduct, ethics theory, theories of ethical decision making, Leadership in public sector, public administration theories and ethical leadership,* and *Local government and ethics* from journals like ProQuest and Political Science complete.

Among European and American journals as well as the OECD library the topics of focus involved the code of ethics, ethics and leadership, ethics in public sector, ethics and organizational culture, ethics awareness and competency, ethics and performance and ethics infra-structure. I used peer reviewed scholarly journals from the Walden library and other journals I had access to. There were few journals that had been published specifically on Zimbabwean codes of ethics and ethical leadership. I however identified some older journal articles that had been published discussing the challenges faced by public sector in the African context. I also made use of PhD dissertations which provided valuable information on the use of codes of ethics and local governance in South Africa and Zimbabwe. The search produced many studies and articles. I selected the articles that were relevant to the topic of study and created a file for easy accessibility as I wrote my study.

Theoretical Foundation

The Person-Situation Interactionist Model

The person-situation interactionist model (PSIM) was coined by Treviño (1986). Trevino noted that this was a way of cultivating the application of ethics to the fore of

decision-making in organizations. In the PSIM, ethical decision making has an internal cognitive component that is influenced by the interaction of situation and individual moderators. In building the PSIM, Treviño employed Kohlberg's (1981) model of cognitive moral development and expanded on it.

Kohlberg (1981) studied children and came up with three conventional levels, consisting of six stages of moral development (Yilmaz et al., 2019). According to Kohlberg, Level 1 is the preconventional level, Level 2 is the conventional level, and the final is the postconventional level. At Level 1, physical consequences and instrumental relativist orientation determine a person's decision. If the person perceives the action to cause good, they are motivated to do it, but if bad, they may not do it, regardless of its morality. Therefore, if a leader perceives that they will benefit personally, and occasionally the other will benefit they may perform an action. In Level 2, the decision is based on loyalty to family, group, and nation, and is not concerned about consequences to self. One earns approval by being nice to a group, or following authority, fixed rules, and maintaining social order.

In the third and final level, the decision is based on autonomy, in consideration of moral values as compared to the law, self-interests, or consequences (Kohlberg, 1981). The decision maker appeals to the universal principles of justice, equality, and respect for all, and assumes what Rawls (1971) called, the "vail of ignorance", where one acts as if they do not know which side they will occupy after the decision. When coercion is used to control behavior, the subjects will have been denied their individualism and reduced to Level 1, where consequences determine behavior. The concept of hierarchical integration

means the person develops higher order decision-making skills as they progress through the stages, thus creating comprehensive decision-making abilities in later levels of development (Cana et al.,2017). As they develop, the earlier stages of self-gratification and satisfaction of family, group or clan are trivialized and the value of the individual as person is considered key. As a leader, one needs to have fully developed cognitively for them to appeal to reasoning when dealing with followers towards attaining optimum results. Kohlberg's (1981) cognitive model employs more of a moral thinking approach as compared to the action of the person, in as much as his model suggests such a relationship exists (Yilmaz et al., 2019).

Treviño (1986) thus developed the PSIM based on Kohlberg's (1981) stages of moral development. The emphasis of Treviño's PSIM is the sixth and final stage found in Level 3 of Kohlberg's cognitive development model, where the dilemma is evaluated based on the person and their individual circumstances and the interactions that happen there. The model puts emphasis on the contextual environment in combination to the cognitive elements. Figure 1 shows Treviño's (1986) line of thinking in terms of ethical reasoning in the Person-Situation Interactionist Model.

Figure 1

Person-Situation Interactionist Model (Treviño, 1986)
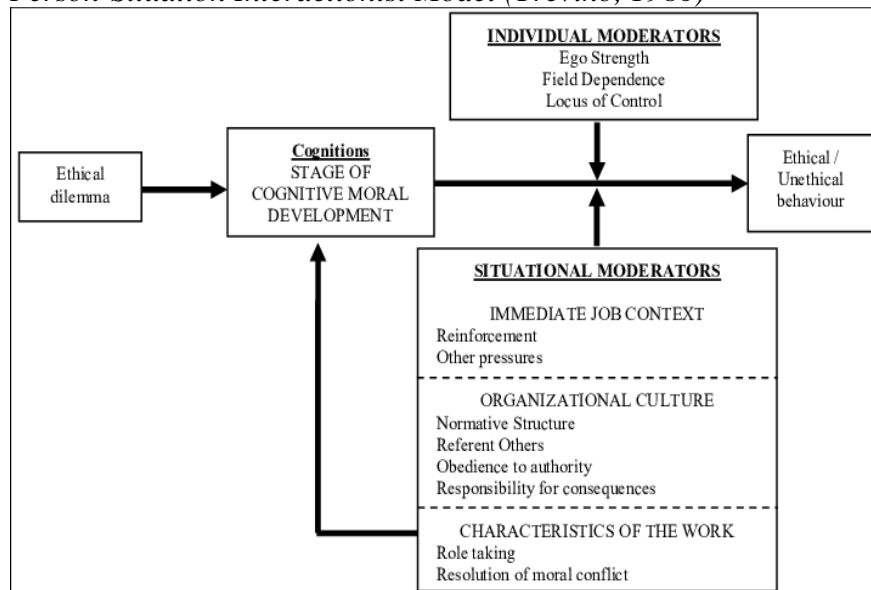
Trevino (1986)

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Ethics and Ethical Decision Making

The origins of the word ethics can be traced back from the Greek word 'ethos' meaning both an individual's character and a community's culture (Singh, & Prasad, 2017). Several scholars have coined definitions of the term, with Wechsler (2013) defining ethics as a decision-making process regarding conflicts and obligations of government officials and employees towards the public, associates, and any other stakeholder. The notion of ethics can also be drawn to set standards about what is good and bad (Radhika, 2012; Singo, 2018) and in how one ought to do things as stipulated in codes of ethics. A closer look at local communities in Zimbabwe, the Shona in particular, reveals that people's definition of ethics is traced to their proverbs, which enshrine

preservation, transmission and authentication of religious, moral and spiritual forces (Masaka & Makahamadze , 2013) thus underlining the importance of context in understanding the notion of ethics. Further emphasizing the notion of contextual perspectives in ethics, Sambala et al. (2020) suggested that in Africa, ethics are embedded in and can be influenced by the communal concept of *ubuntu* which provides a moral compass on how individuals navigate their around when faced with an ethical dilemma.   For years, ethics was equated to moral philosophy, which deals with the study of values and norms (Benlahcene et al., 2018). Despite variances in definitive stances of ethics, scholars seem to approve of ethics as a decision-making parameter guided by the existence of the environment and valuable others. Though geminating and growing within, it has a communal character in appearance and is rated from outside.

The idea of ethics also shows up as having an intrinsic morale base. McGowan and Buttrick (2015) argued that ethics is more fundamental than law because it uses moral principles to test validity of decisions, making ethical codes mandatory for organisations. This suggests that one can be intuitively motivated to behave ethically before they can be modelled to behave lawfully. This argument indicates that governance decisions should be guided by objective ethical codes. The arguments compel one to believe ethics appeals to an innate store of principles which govern humanity and these can be recorded and used as a guide to decision making. This however begs the question on whether ethics has an all-encompassing character applying to all.

Rohr (1989) questioned the effectiveness of codes of ethics in the absence of what he calls value regimes. Rohr suggested that ethics must be anchored on value regimes

enshrined within the constitution of a given society. Because when these values are encompassed within the constitution, they will not be subject to change with government shifts. While Rohr put faith in central government and the constitution, Overeem (2015) however argued that the government's ability to be a mediator of moral responsibilities may be influenced by contextual factors. It can therefore be noted that to Rohr, universality of decisions is key towards making ethical decisions. While corporates should base decisions on ethics, governments use the law, which, raises questions on coercion since superiors can use their power to put pressure on subordinates causing them to act unethically (McGowan & Buttrick, 2015).

On one end, some researchers noted that unethical behavior happens when one does something contrary to accepted moral standards like cheating, stealing and lying (Trevino et al., 2014). In the African context and Zimbabwean traditions in particular, the existence of spiritual forces in people's lives as shaping conduct is well pronounced (Masaka & Makahamadze , 2013). Spirit mediums play a role in defining good and bad and these exist in a world not visible to all but keeping an eye on those in this world (Chigudu, 2014). Given Masaka and Makahamadze's (2013), as well as Chigudu's (2014) arguments for the spiritual determining factors and Trevino et al.'s (2014) arguments for routine ethical behavior, it can therefore be noted that ethical behavior brings together the self and others in varying contexts which should somehow lead to agreements on what is ethical and not. Based on the ideas of these researchers, a gap was noted in literature in understanding Zimbabwean public sector ethical decision making and this calls for further investigation.

Ethics have come into context in the Zimbabwean local governance decision-making scenario. An example is drawn where in October 2011, the Zimbabwean Minister of Local Government Rural and Urban Development adopted a policy that granted mayors and councillors countrywide, the authority to acquire residential stands at concessionary rates (Dibaba, 2016). While communities supported the policy, its implementation caused chaos after reports of public office bearers acquired more than one stand and syphoned unsuspecting residents in promise of stands. The BPRA (2017) between September 2015 and June 2017 carried out a study accessing the nature and scope of corruption in local authorities in Zimbabwe. In their findings, they noted that corruption was endemic in local authorities and communities rated 75% of public officers as corrupt (BPRA, 2017). The major variables to unethical conduct in public office, though numerous, have been zeroed down to the economy and desire for prosperity, personal growth, pursuit of democracy, regulation of quality, stability of organisation, its effectiveness accountability structures (Asongu, 2013). Asongu (2013) noted that in the African context, unethical conduct can be embedded in societal behaviours deemed normal, thus causing fear and intimidation of those with dissenting opinions. In the existence of such operating parameters, an examination and understanding of how leaders make ethical decisions and how they use codes of ethics to encourage ethical conduct is crucial.

Theories and assumptions have been coined around one's motivation to decide ethically but no clear-cut explanations have been given to one's motivation to make a given decision (Zollo et al., 2016). It is unclear whether public officers lean on the law,

ethics, or both when making decisions. Information on what leads to a compromise of ethics is needed. Where there is lack of sensitivity to the notion of ethics, one may not have adequate motivation to act ethically. The dominance of rationalization in ethical decision-making suggests the omnipotence of rational thinking in ethics. Ferrell and Gresham (1985), Jones (1991), and Cooper (2004) each developed with models of ethical reasoning with a view to guiding organizations on how to handle ethical dilemmas. While all their findings point to rational thinking as the foundation for ethical decision making, there is a lack of adequate literature on the contribution of ethics to decisions made in the Zimbabwean local government.

Researchers noted four primary ethical principles that need to be considered for ethical decision-making and conduct to take place in respect of acts and statutes (The British Psychological Society, 2018). These are respect, competence, responsibility and integrity. A lack of any of these aspects leads to a compromise on ethics. Research findings have also factored in moral intuition as also critical for ethical decision-making (Provis, 2015 as cited in Zollo et al. (2016). Moral intuition factors in emotive, instinctive, and intuitive reactions that spring from the interbeing as compared to rational thinking, which factors in external factors. Ethical decision making therefore is a production of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that are collectively reflected in a leader's decision.

While acts, policies, statutes, and regulations exist to influence the conscious being, there is the subconscious being also competing for recognition (Masaka & Makahamhadze 2013). Some commentators have argued for unethical decisions like

corruption as "necessary evils" arguing that they spur development and neutralize bottlenecks brought about by bureaucracy and red tape in public administration (BPRA, 2017; Nyoni, 2017). Nyoni (2017) argued that unethical behaviors facilitate bureaucratic procedures, making the system more responsive, flexible, and competent to the demands of different clienteles. In local council leadership, it can be noted that in ethical decision making, overlooking the human factor can be detrimental to an organization. There is therefore a need to establish how the influence of embedded unethical practices have an influence in decision-making in local governance given this line of argument.

Local Government Leadership and Ethics: Identifying the Gap

The repeated loss of local council elections by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front, (ZANU PF) to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) from 2000 has led to government creating parallel centres of local governance meant to ensure propagation of ZANU (PF) principles in local governance (McGregor, 2013). In some instances, militia has been employed as a strategy for urban control. The authenticity of urban local governance structures in Zimbabwe have been highly polarised with party alienation chosen over professional suitability. This gives rise to questions on how trustworthy ethical codes generated by a partisan administration can be in managing non-political members. Muchadenyika and Williams (2018) and Jonga and Chirisa (2009) attested to this phenomenon by underlining the difficulties faced by bureaucrats in ethical decision making in the backdrop of political interference by contesting parties. This highlights the need for an empirical approach in understanding the leaders' perceptions of the codes of ethics, however there is scarcity of such studies in the Zimbabwean context.

According to Wart (2014) and Cheteni and Shindika (2017), there is a great connection between leadership and ethics in local governance which determines the overall ethical tone of local governance. How leaders recruit, orient, and engage with employees largely determines the ethical tone of an organisation. There are numerous legal measures at the national and local level seeking to promote public integrity in Zimbabwe. The Constitution of Zimbabwe (COZ, 2013), Prevention of Corruption Act, Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15), Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act (Chapter 22-23, 2018) and the Public Finance Management Act 9 (Chapter 22:19) are some of the legal instruments containing provisions deterring corruption and promoting ethical conduct in local authorities (BPRA, 2017). The COZ (2013) is the supreme law governing local authorities. According to Section 194a of the Constitution of 2013, institutions, state agencies, and public entities must be governed by democratic values and principles including high standards of professional ethics, efficient use of resources, accountable public administration, and transperancy. Section 9 of the COZ also calls upon the government to adopt and implement policies and legislation tat enhance efficiency, competence, accoutability, transparency and intergrity. Specific to local governance, is the Urban Councils Act [Chapter 29:15] which contains provisions relating to ethics in local governance. Such provisions relate to appointment, procurement, tendering and general public integrity. In the face of these credible constitutional and legal provisions. BPRA (2017) noted that the level of unethical practices in the municipality and other councils in Zimbabwe continues to escalate.

There are therefore implementation gaps that need to be identified and cemented towards full commitment to ethical conduct in local governance.

Singo (2018) noted that public officers in various leadership positions are capable of setting the tone for ethical conduct in local governance, as they are responsible for the implementation of policies. Until the first half of the 19th century, the word "leader" was synonymous with prince, president, king or commander (Mizrahitokati & Guney, 2016). The term had a traditional and regional meaning, which attached central authority, strict inspection, and adherence to rules, power, and conformity by all, to a certain extent this is almost still so in the Zimbabwean context and it demonstrates the power leaders may have in influencing ethical decision making in their departments.

Upon realization that leaders were differing in terms of their ethical and moral conduct, the Ohio State University and the University of Michigan in the 1950s and 1960s carried out parallel research with a view to understanding the behavior of leaders (Vroom & Jago, 2007). Their findings showed three important points of departure: (1) that organizational effectiveness is affected by situation factors under the leader's control, (2) that situations shape how leaders behave; and (3) that situations shape the consequences of leader's behavior. This opens up avenues to theories such as Rawls' (1971) theory of justice and fairness and Treviño's (1986) person-situation interactionist model, which can be useful in understanding and gaining knowledge about the Zimbabwean context.

Ethics in leadership in the last two decades has enclosed on the philosophies of traits, behavior, contingency, relational, sceptics, information processing and neo-

charismatic or transformational school (Aalateeg, 2017). Ethics in leadership is thus, an act of responsibility and a challenge calling for concerted and collective activity with a common goal, as guided by a set of rules. Research in the previous decade point to a direct link between ethical leadership and overall organizational performance (Metwally et al., 2019; Mozumder, 2018). The "tone at the top" approach (Shin et al., 2015) argued for top leadership as the strongest fibre towards organizational ethical conduct since it determines how leadership tasks are cascaded in a multi-level continuum. It is therefore prudent that this research establishes the 'tone at the top' and water it down to the 'tone at the bottom', visa-vee determine links between leadership, ethics decision-making, the code of ethics and the ethical climate at local government.

The personalities of leaders have been noted to be influential in organizational conduct. Cooper (2004) discussed how the notion of virtue understood as character has gained ground in scholarly research. Scholars advocating for this view argued that character plays a significant role in influencing how an individual will approach a particular ethical dilemma. Kooskora (2012), noted that, a leader is not just a person or position, but rather a composition of factors that include trust, commitment, a shared vision and emotion. (Friedman, 2014) concurred that the realization of the leader as an individual with feelings and perceptions about situations is a key determinant of the decisions they make at particular points in time.

For a long time in the history of Zimbabwe, the city under study has been considered the industrial center of Zimbabwe with textile, tyre manufacturing, and housing the National Railways of Zimbabwe headquarters and many other focal

industries in the country. The harsh economic environment however turned the fortunes of the city around, moreover, not well thought out government policies resulted in businesses being moved to the capital city or relocating to more lucrative areas, thus thwarting economic growth. Since the city attained town status the municipality has stood out as the leading municipality in Zimbabwe in terms of service delivery to its residents for years. In view of the economic challenges faced by the city, an exploration on how ethical decisions are made is in its place.

The shift from ancient time slavery to modern day human capital has led organizations to altering their paradigms about people management, from leaders as enforcers to leaders as servants of the people (Aalateeg, 2017). Cooper (2004) fronted the perspective of public interest in the approach to ethics and argued that public servants' obligations should move towards serving the public rather than self-interest. Developing the argument further, Fredrickson and Chandler (1984) argued that public administrators must approach their work as citizens representing other citizens. The issue of representativeness requires that they acknowledge the patriotic aspect of what their responsibilities entail.

According to Bovaird (2004) the public sector is attempting to increase efficiency and better coordination in practice by engaging public private partnerships (PPPs) as a way of improving service delivery. In this way, private partners are engaged for specific services to the city and the burden is borne by the resident, through city council or a direct link between the service provider and resident is created. PPPs harness the power of different sectors to produce quality services to clients. The City Council has over the

years stood by its principles of providing quality services till of late due to economic hardships. This New Public Management (NPM) dynamic in running local government gives rise to ethical dilemmas that leaders must be prepared for. Lapuente and Van de Walle (2020) problematized PMN as an ideology that is challenging to implement in public administration by virtue of its diffuse definition, however the idea behind NPM is to increase value by involving the private sector in the dissemination of services to the citizens. Borrowing from the South African experience, it should be noted that community awareness of rights and obligations are enhanced prior to implementation of a PPP to avoid squabbles. An example of the inclusion of PPPs is the event where the City Council in 2016 awarded a tender for the construction of a state-of-the-art modern shopping complex at a site which had been a bus terminal to a private company. The old terminal at the site was destroyed and for more than two years at the time of writing the rubble was still piled up and the community was having difficulty in accessing public transport from several alternative sites scattered all over the city (NewZimbabwe.com, 5 July). In the light of such examples research showing how codes of ethics and ethical decision making is enacted is scanty.

Several studies have focused on leadership, code of ethics and quality service in public office (Cheng, 2003, Dale & Fox, 2008). In a presentation to the Council of the Americas Symposium, Treviño (2019) held that leadership is a geo-political complex concept requiring values of expectation, empathy and trust, while calling for agility and self-determination. A number of leadership theories take cognizance of the situation as postulated by Treviño (1986) as an influential other in determining the behavior of the

leader. For example, transformational leaders seek the development of subordinates who should be intrinsically motivated to perform with the leader towards the achievement of organizational goals (Aalateeg, 2017). The author also noted that, in transformational leadership, leaders motivate, encourage, work with the people, create a vision, set the direction, share with followers, align people based on knowledge, abilities and personalities, take the organization to new heights, as well as coining plans, and doing things right for the benefit of those beings served. Leaders are viewed as cultivators of productive people, and the employment of a leadership model that engages the total person is supreme in this view.

As demonstrated by Chigwata and de Visser, (2018), leadership in local governance is very crucial, at both the horizontal and vertical level given the wide nature of local governance structures. The vertical plane of leadership entails the transfer of authority, functions, responsibilities and resources from central government to local government structures, while the horizontal plane involves the empowerment of grass root communities to enable them to determine, plan, manage and implement their socio-economic development (Kauzya, 2003). Likewise, Rawls (1971) argued that bureaucrats must anchor their work on the idea of social equity, focusing on the notion of social justice, with public administrators ensuring that public resources are distributed fairly among all citizens. The establishment of cohesion between vertical and horizontal leadership is therefore mandatory for ethical conduct. Mapuva, (2019) argued however that as much as the government of Zimbabwe attempts to involve citizens in the running of their local governance structures, it employs a commander approach that cripples

citizens participation in a democratic space. There exists a gap in knowledge of how local municipalities attain social equity, while maintaining quality service delivery within the frame of ethical conduct and decision making and leadership in hugely populated environments as their mandate requires.

In a related study, a survey on the ethics policies, staffing and training in local governments was carried out. The results showed that 55% of local governments deal with ethical issues and violations as routine elements of organisational management, 48% incorporate ethics in recruitment of employees, and over 90% of local governments use internal staff to investigate ethics issues (Wilde et al., 2008). The authors also noted that 63% of local government have their own codes of conduct separate from the national codes, and of those, 71% have input from local leadership structures. ICMA (2018) noted that 91% of such ethics standards refer to conflicts of interest, acceptance of gifts, appropriate conduct in the workplace, use of public resources, outside employment and internet usage. From the same study, 78% indicated some form of ethics training for employees. The following figure shows a sample program and model for implementing and measuring ethics in local governance Beeri et al. (2013).

Figure 2

Ethics measurement guide

Adoption of Ethics Program

Ethics Resources
- Awareness of the Ethics Code (ACE)
- Ethical Leadership (EL)
- Inclusion in Ethical Decision Making (EDM)

Ethics and Organizational Outcomes
- Ethical Climate (EC)
- Organizational Commitment (OC)
- Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB)
- Quality of Work Life (QWL)
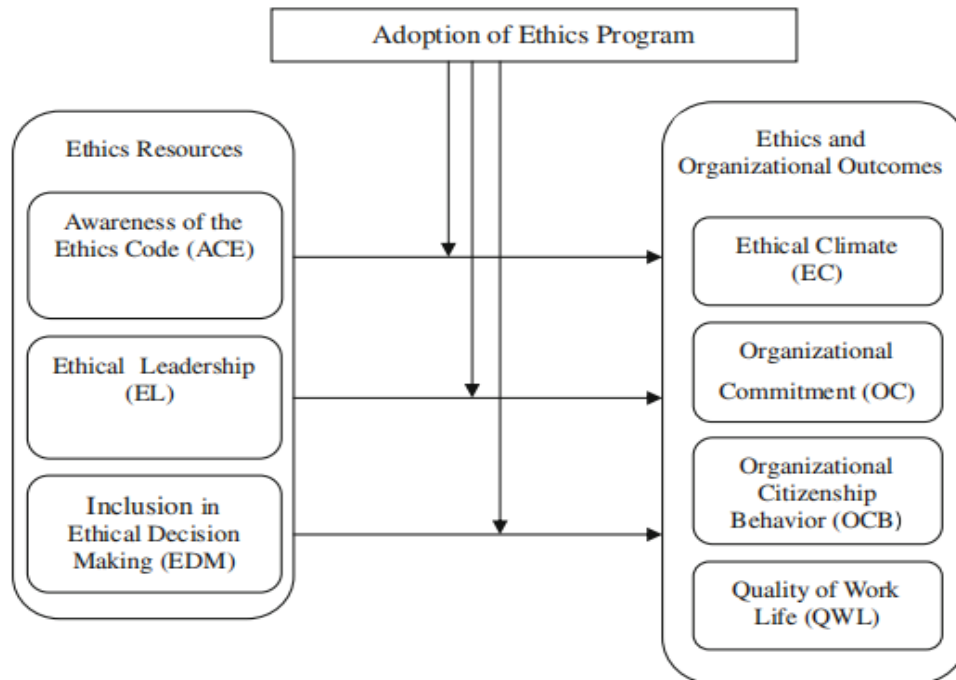
Note. Adapted from Beeri et al. (2013)

According to Beeri et al. (2013), there are three ethics theoretical resources that should be considered when measuring ethical practice in a local governance organisation. These are awareness of code of ethics (ACE), ethical leadership (EL), and ethical decision making (EDM), and these are related to four ethical outcomes, namely; ethical climate (EC), organisational commitment (OC), organisational citizenship behavior (OCB) and quality of work life (QWL), they are all encompassing of the environment and the interacions that happen within the organizational context. Organisational commitment measures the degree of an employee's identification with the organisation, while organisational citizenship behavior entails employees going beyond their normal obligations of the jobs they do, out of their own free will suggested by Cohen and Vigoda

cited in Beeri et al. (2013). Ethical climate represents employees' perceptions of work

procedures and their overal behaviors and quality of life refers to employees' sense of

fulfilment as a direct result of their job and looks at welfare, compansation, knowledge

expertise, personal growth, social integration, security and appreciation of the job. The

measurement of organisational performance helps in identifying deficences in the

leadership structures in terms of ethical conduct (Wilde et al., 2008).

Ethics and Behavior

Unethical behavior is one of the most dangerous ills of modern governance, hence

the need to engage in ethics and its influence on behavior (Beeri et al., 2013). Public and

private organizations have of late instigated programs towards enforcing ethics in public

office. Anderson (2019) opined that ethics in public governance determine largely, who

to trust and consider legitimate, while Rose and Heywood (2013) resonated that there is a

direct relationship between ethics and performance. For the populace to consider local

governance officers as legitimate, there must first be trust. Rose and Heywood further

noted the potential of an ethical climate breeding satisfaction within and without and

promotes positive perceptions about the organization and its ethical practice. The

presence of policies that guide conduct is also considered good for positive perceptions of

an organization (Anderson, 2019). Jashari and Pepaj (2018) argued that transparency in

public institutions is a prerequisite in the establishment of trust and they suggested that

through a demonstration of transparency, local government can promote efficiency,

effectivity and responsiveness. Leaders should therefore ensure that there is open

communication with the citizens and workforce about what codes of ethics expect of

them, so that these act as moral compasses for behavior and performance. Public administrators should also be responsive to community needs as guided by policy frameworks, which are formulated, discussed and agreed upon with every stakeholder represented.

Local governance organizational history is littered with extreme forms of unethical behaviors by leaders and lower-level employees alike as Antonaras et al. (2015) purported. Scandals such as sexual harassment, toxic waste dumping, insider trading and discrimination in employment practices, dominate in disciplinary hearings, dismissals and warnings, as organization workforce turn a blind eye to statutes, rules and regulations (Antonaras et al., 2015). In Zimbabwe the powers bestowed on the President and the Minister of Local government Rural and Urban Development, by the Urban Councils Act, are considered too much and often abused (Dibaba, 2016). Accusations of tribalism, nepotism, poor tendering systems, political infiltration, politically motivated appointments and unfair dismissals have dominated media headlines in recent years. Dibaba further noted the appointment of District Administrators (DAs) and Ministers of State in urban centers as a way of down toning the role of Mayors elect, given the overlap of duties between elected officials and the bureaucrats. Codes of ethics have been overly overlooked as other factors influencing decision-making.

Towards ensuring ethical conduct and the responsiveness of local authorities to consumer needs, there is a global shift from a centralized approach under the Ministry of Local Government in Zimbabwe, to a localized approach, in view of addressing public distrust (Mozumder, 2018). In the case of the UK, the Local Government Act of 2000

identified public values, objectivity, accountability, openness, trust, and honesty as key indicators of an ethically sound local authority (Lawton & Macaulay, 2013). Given that, conflicts not well managed create stress between the local government and the community (Wechsler, 2013); there is need for leaders, to come up with strategies that ensure the local community is well informed of council directions and progress parameters.

In the local authority setting, the definition and the roles of a leader and a supervisor can at most times be muddled and diffuse (Mozumder, 2018), this overlap calls for a leadership style that strives to develop trusting relationships between the leader and the employee for effective daily supervision. However, local authority leadership, given its multi-layer form, creates opportunities for coherence and conflict, which have a bearing on ethical practice. For example, during the exercise of rating property, members of the top-level leadership might be biased on estates or properties where they have personal interests, from a political and mutual approach, while lower-level leadership might be focused on adherence to standards. The need to please and the position of top-level management might influence the overall decisions over standards control, compromising on service delivery. Mozumder (2018) posited that trust and organizational leadership have a hand and glove kind of relationship, where trust varies due to differences in relationships, interactions, and contexts within which the leadership exist.

Ethics Management Strategies

How local governance managers engage with ethics for ethical conduct is pertinent for effective execution of tasks. The challenge for local government is how leaders perceive their implementation of an ethical environment in light of the 2013 constitutional reforms calling for devolution of powers in local government in Zimbabwe (Mapuva & Miti, 2019). For example, in 2013, the Minister of Local Government Rural and Urban Development appointed a special interest councilor in terms of Section 4A of the Urban Councils Act (Chapter 29:15), at the City Council, without the City council passing a resolution to appoint one (Dibaba, 2016). While the Urban Councils Act allows the minister to appoint special councilors up to a quota of the sitting councilors, in this case the quota had been exceeded. Democracy was violated leading to massive bickering about the issue.

Higher levels of relationships between a leader's moral identity and employees' perceptions of ethical leadership have been found to greatly influence the support for ethical conduct an organization has among employees (Treviño et al., 2014). Stajkovic and Luthans (1997) used the social-cognitive theory to identify factors that influence adherence to ethical standards (Svensson et al., 2009). They noted that a person's perceptions of the standards and their conduct is influenced by institutional factors, personal factors and organisational factors, and these interact to influence decision making.

To augment understanding of the situation decision-making, I also refer to the works of Rohr (1989). Rohr avoided dependence on a single value to make administrative

decisions (Spicer, 2014). He made a distinction between public and private morality (Green, 2012). He argued for values of freedom, property and equality in what he termed "regime values" He considered freedom, property and equality as important determinants of ethical reasoning, while acknowledging that they were further dependent on exposure to alternative ways of looking at the same problem. Rohr reflected a pluralistic view of ethics and pointed to the dangers of following a single path to a decision. He therefore argued against assuming there is a common metaphysical supreme premise on which to define one's freedom, hence the need to analyze the path to a decision rather than the decision.

Rohr (1989) argued that freedom in leadership assumes different values depending on the leader's views and experiences. Furthermore. Brown (2021) argued that values that inform policy in different settings are influenced by contextual factors. Rohr's theory compels leaders to have a broader view of the situation before they can arrive at decisions about phenomena. His concept of "regime values" in leadership leads to a distinctive approach to public administration (Green, 2012, Rosenbloom & Rene 2012, Uhr, 2014). The authors' views reflect on constitutionalism as fundamental to ethical reasoning, acknowledging a set of rules guiding practice on which we can all base our leadership decisions. The presence of guiding ethics code is the starting point towards ethics in local governance. The City Council should therefore have exhibits of code that promote ethics.

A number of cases have been handled where the application of the Person-Situation Interactionist Model has been used to guide decision-making dilemmas.

Treviño's PSIM was used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration

(NASA), to review variables leading to the loss of Space Shuttle Columbia and seven

astronauts (CAIB, 2003; Gibson, 2006). They considered the situation and all

possibilities and discovered that an engineer had ignored an important email, expressing

the seriousness of a matter had caused the loss of lives that could have been avoided. In

the post-accident interview, he indicated it was against organizational rules to jump the

chain of command (CAIB, 2003). How organizational leadership accommodates input

from subordinates can to a large extent influence the safety or danger personnel can be in

the performance if daily tasks. If no clear reporting structure is availed to employees,

catastrophic occurrences can happen, as in the case of the National Aeronautics and

Space Administration, where a reporting structure did not allow an informed member to

communicate to a higher office on time. Directing the lens towards reporting structures in

the City Council is focal in this instance.

Most countries the world over, have moved towards the New Public Management,

NPM, where local government reports to the people's concerns Anderson (2019). For

example, after the 1994 democratic elections, South Africa ushered in the appointment of

new local government officials, with a view to addressing colonial imbalances (Matsiliza,

2013). South African democracy hinged on fostering ethical behavior that would restore

confidence in local governance, the eradication of corruption and racism. According to

Lynch and Lynch (2009) ethical conduct enhances democratic morality and needs to be

pursued. Despite the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, providing

guidelines to public employees, Disoloane (2012) noted that moral decadence in local

governance keeps increasing among not only citizens, but also involving opinion makers. Disoloane further purported that the Limpopo Province witnessed massive unethical practices after independence, which among others included theft of property, employment irregularities, mismanagement of funds, irregular tendering, illegal occupations and abuse of vehicles and fuel coupons. Efforts have been made to educate and train South Africans from a young age on the philosophy of morality and make it a lifelong learning experience. The Local Government Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000 stipulates that a councilor shall be so elected to represent local communities, ensuring municipals are responsive to the demands of communities.

In a study involving six Finland local governance authorities on the interaction of politics and public administration, it was discovered that politicians seem to represent the people more than the public administrators are (Joensuu & Niiranen, 2016). Politicians were also seen to want to please while public administrators were interested in performing their duties to the book. This study will shed light as to whether local government leaders in the City Council are able to reflect on these issues to focus on fair service delivery.

While Rohr's views suggest the engagement of a constitutionalist approach to ethical decision making, Treviño brought in a modernist approach, where administrators use their discretion to make choices (Overeem, 2015). This therefore makes decision making alien and resident to both the constitutionalists and the modernists, calling for a closer look at the exact influencers to leaders' decisions. In this study I took a closer look at the major influencing forces to decision-making in the City Council.

Creation of Ethical Environment in Departments

Codes of ethics have an important role towards achieving ethical environments. Singh & Prasad (2017) noted that the code of ethics communicate the organisation's philosophy to employees, vendors, customers, clients and general public. Furthermore, examining the effectiveness of a code of ethics in the public sector in Tanzania, Nkyabonaki (2019) posited that if the principles of a code of ethics are followed deligently there can be added value in the efforts to control corruption. It is therefore important to ensure the organisation values ethics and comes up with eplicit codes of ethics that speak to the behavior, workplace issues, accountability, health and security of every other concerned member for everyone to be committed. A case in point is the staphylococcus aureus food poisoning among City Council employees in 2014, where eighty-nine workers were hospitalised at a workshop (Gumbo, et al., 2014). The poisoning was attributed to negligent unethical behavior upon council employees engaged in the preparation of the food. According to Wart (2014)*:*

> Systems with ethical leadership tend to provide a higher quality of life
> for all individuals involved, higher organizational performance on
> average, greater sense of trust and pride for those affected, greater
> sustainability over time (p, 28).

Good intent, proper means, and appropriate ends should be the guiding principles for each employee in an organization for an ethical environment to be achieved. Treviño et al. (2014) identified ethics codes as organizational conduct standards and core values.

In the Zimbabwean context, the movement to a decentralized system of local governance in line with the COZ (2013) theoretically empowered local government leaders to make localized decisions. Also backed by the Urban Councils Act (29:15), theoretically affords local authorities the mandate of making ethical decisions at local governance level. It is however pertinent to review the practicality of local governance independence in view of the constitution and other policy provisions. Where central government and the ruling party would blatantly disregard laws and impose decisions on local governance (Chigwata et al., 2019), the constitution now empowers local authorities to shape their leadership structures and perform autonomously. The perceptions of local government management on the statutory provisions and their practicality in curbing unethical practice is therefore vital in this study.

The African continent has since the 1990s been creating democratic decentralization, creating local governments and strengthening the already existing ones (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018). Leadership personnel like mayors and council chairpersons and local government officers have been created and given powers to manage council tasks. Chigwata and de Visser noted that central governments have generally retained supervisor powers as a way of standardizing practice. In the Zimbabwean context and other nations within the African context, it has been noted that national government supervisory powers have been mired by controversy relating to corruption and disregard for basic citizens' rights (Afro barometer, 2015). Central government infiltration into local government issues is therefore a challenge towards ethical practice (Jonga & Chirisa, 2009). For example, in some cases ministers have used

their political power to overturn even High Court rulings to foster party decisions thus

undermining the role of local authorities in meeting service delivery commitments.

While civil law and religion are key restraining forces, efforts have been made,

the world over to come up with the ideal public officer. Kauzya (2003) called for capacity

building to ensure local government personel have the requisite skills to manage local

government issues. Kauzya noted that most African countries present unusual conditions

of multiple weaknesses in capacity where the public sector, civil society and private

sector lack requisite organisational ability to be effective. Poor corporate governance

practices are considered a part of a broader economic and social pattern where barriers to

entry are high, resources are controlled by a privileged few and conformity is prized. As a

result, local people are mainly considered incapacitated to manage functions,

responsibilities and resources at their disposal (Sifile et al., 2015). It was of interest to

note how the Municipality leadership under study manages resources within the

departments in an ethical manner.

According to Wart (2014), one of the mandates of ethical leaders is to make sure

rules and regulations are explicitly stated, communicated to all, fully taught to all

members, refreshed, updated and enforced consistently and fairly. Treviño noted that not

enforcing ethical rules and regulations could lead to moral degeneration and

dissatisfaction among employees (Wart, 2014). The strategy and frequency in the

implementation of code of ethics is on the agenda in this study as the researcher gathers

valuable knowledge for refinement of practice. Care however should be taken that the

enforcer of ethics is not considered ethically unsound. Ostrom in Wart (2014) purported

that leader should avoid being rigid in the name of enforcing code of conduct and ethics, as this may fuel moral disengagement. This may also lead to compliance without focus on optimal performance.

The nature and role of ethics in organizational leadership has been contextualized with integrity, morality, trustworthiness, fairness, and concern for others viewed as key ethics indicators (Mozumder, 2018). Where ethical leaders are, there is bound to be reciprocity on the part of employees. Thaler and Helmig (2016) noted that, reciprocity from leadership could come in the form of promotions, pay rise and rewards, while employees can express it through commitment to ethical practice and going beyond their schedule and abilities to perform exceptionally well and sacrificially.

Previous research shows a connection between ethical leadership and improvement centered behavior, organizational commitment, behavior, well-being and satisfaction of the employee (Hassan, 2015) Ambition is considered in some studies a key aspect of leadership (Richardson & Nigro, 2001). If local government leaders are not sufficiently moved by ambition and self-interest, their leadership becomes unbalanced and can thus lead to a carefree attitude towards leadership which can compromise ethical conduct, and subsequently undesirable outcomes. The desire to attain some glory, be famous, lead a decent life, attain persona properties, uplift council standards in some way and have a positive public image, are some of the desirables for individuals in public office leadership. Local government leaders have since the conception of the devolution of local governance powers in the Constitution of 2013, been allotted powers of autonomy in local authority governance (Dibaba, 2016). Devolution of governance power

if allowed in practice stands to improve the quality of leadership decisions on the deployment of public resources, peace building and overall citizens' welfare (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018), it also enhances legitimacy of government since it allows citizens to participate in decision making, (European Commission, 2017).

The extent to which the statutory provisions are affecting leadership ethical operations remains to be unveiled to the ordinary person. To them, local autonomy translates to the legal right to manage public affairs within the limits of the law, while having the necessary political, administrative, and financial resources to carry out their leadership tasks effectively. There is need to come up with leadership strategies that will promote efficient service delivery and overall public trust at local government level. According to Dibaba (2016), central government structures should exist for purposes of ethically rectifying local government failures. Chigwata and de Visser (2018) however, argued that not all failure should attract central government attention as it compromises local democracy and representative governance. Handling of failure in departments needs to be handled by department leadership professionally and guided by ethics codes.

According to Kauzya (2003), the movement towards ethics in local governance begins with the engagement of all stakeholders. The author noted that participation of all begins with a will, capacitation and establishment of relavent structures.

Moral Disengagement

Treviño et al. (2014) concluded that moral attentiveness, connection, and identity are important factors in determining conformity or deviance to a given set of ethical codes. Martin et al. (2014), also noted that good people can sometimes be blind and

engage in unsavory acts without being aware of the unethical nature of their actions, in what they called 'moral disengagement'. Bureaucratic hierarchical setups in organizations also have a potential to create ethical impediments (Cooper, 2004). The author noted that big organizations like local governments stifle conscience. Rohr (1989) referred to philosophical and religious thought processes that made people to think in pluralistic forms (Green, 2012). While the Constitution blessed liberty and posterity, the Declaration of Independence viewed all people as equals and endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Interpretations of such statues lead to moral dilemmas for leadership hence the need to borrow from the subconscious to lead effectively.

　　　　While unethical behavior is considered a deliberate or neglect conduct, it can also be seen as an indication of negative work ethic (Disoloane, 2012). Cases of leaders being implicated in high-profile scandals have a global outlook, as ethics violations is not a preserve for specific local authorities. While the local authority's character is deformed due to violation of ethics, questions should be also asked about the causes of unethical conduct, as a way of improving the working space. For example, if an employee is not satisfied with wages or they have a financial need, they can be tempted to carry out parallel piece jobs without seeking approval to be off duty thus bringing in the aspect of the environment and what goes on in a particular context. Disoloane, also noted that the work environment presents leaders with moral dilemmas that force them to make decisions, sometimes beyond everyone else's expectations. According to Parrish (2007), moral dilemmas are ethical conflicts which, in order to do the right thing; one has to do the wrong thing. At times one needs to appear evil for the right results to be attained.

According to Coser a conflict theorist cited in Rosenberg (1984) it is necessary for conflict to occur where living beings are involved as it is not a source of social disintegration, but rather a natural and necessary part of society. Coser posited that public office needed both dichotomy and harmony, and where these lacked, there are bound to be social explosions. The author affirmed that conflicts reinforce awareness of 'them', and us'

Numerous studies have shown that ethical infrastructure influences the ethical/unethical behavior of members in an organization (Martin et al., 2014, Mutema, 2016). Employees have different orientations in terms of philosophical egoism, divine command, political affiliation, economic theories, existence, and moral particularism (Wart, 2014). Leaders make decisions in an organization based on their authority, the organizational structures, peer influences and many other factors, which may not be readily observed by just looking at a code of ethics document. Treviño et al. (2014), noted that people rely on others in reasoning, when faced with ethical dilemmas, thus emphasizing the influence of cognitive moral development (Kohlberg, 1981). Peers, significant others, codes, laws, leaders, and many other factors influence a behavior, which can plainly be viewed as deviant. Ethical behavior should not always be looked at as rational and deliberate, but rather intuitive, impulsive, and affective (Trevino et al., 2014).

An ethical culture can be viewed as a moderator between unethical behavior patterns and cognitive moral reasoning (Treviño et al., 2014). Informal organizational norms, like language used, rituals performed and other informal systems in an

organization can interplay between reasoning and behavior. For example, polarities caused by ethnicity differences, notably the use of vernacular languages at the workplace can influence an employee's behavior, based on preconceived ideas about language usage in the context of cultural identities. The authors further noted that co-workers can have a huge bearing on ethical or unethical behavior. The presence of an outgroup member can breed compensatory behavior on the group performance (Treviño et al., 2014). Leaders therefore have a role to play in determining team dynamics in a work environment as these can influence the general performance of an organization.

Ethical leaders are not the only ones who may influence ethical or unethical behavior (Treviño et al., 2014). The leader's transformative prowess can also influence adherence or deviance among subordinates. If the leader is perceived not to be transforming the organization in a positive way, employees may exhibit unethical behavior patterns. Employees have a tendency to compare current leadership with previous and draw lines on whether to conform or act unethically. If the employees also perceive the current leader to be abusive, they can also behave unethically. The chain of support for whistleblowing is also key towards reporting unethical conduct. According to Treviño et al. (2014), sustained hostile abusive verbal and non-verbal behaviors by leadership, can lead to deviant behavior patterns, and unethical conduct can thus go unreported. Skarlicki and Rupp; cited in Treviño et al. (2014) brought in the perspective of dual processing in understanding unethical reactions. Reactions might be based on the decision processing frames, which are more conscious and also based on experimental processing frames which are more automatic, quick and emotional. In answering the

research questions this study will thus, highlight how leadership in local government departments, handles dual processing among employees.

Effectiveness of Code of Ethics in Encouraging Ethical Decision Making

Code of ethics

Codes of ethics play an important role in maintaining ethical standards in an organization (Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2019). They enable people to be accountable for their actions by setting out clear actions on how they should behave in specific situations. According to Garcia -Sanchez et al. (2011) codes of ethics articulate the values and the philosophy that guide an organization. Where one violates a code of conduct, sanctions in place to motivate observance of code, deter similar behavior, prevent further wrongdoing and maintain public confidence in the organization. The importance of ethical values in the public sector has to do with the position of confidence, power and privilege (Garcia-Sanchez et al., 2011). Garcia- Sanchez argued that although it is widely believed that the existence of codes of ethics can enhance performance in the public sector it can be useful to analyze how public managers perceive them.

Nations in the global village are governed by various codes of ethics that define how people should relate, be treated and behave (WHO, 2017). Global level codes like the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Integrity Hotline, Framework on Engagement of Non-State Actors, and UN-System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality, inform national laws, which in turn guide institution wide codes of ethics. The Committee on Standards in Public Life (2019) noted that local authorities have in place codes of ethics, which outline behavior patterns required public

servants, but these differ in content, quality, clarity and length. The code of ethics are a

guide to engage with subordinates in public and private institutions. They assist in

enabling employees to be responsible and act according to given guiding rules or acting

morally. Integrity, accountability, impartiality, independence, respect, and professional

commitment should be the major thrust of code of ethics in organizations (WHO, 2017).

Chigudu (2014) however noted that in Zimbabwe while codes of ethics may exist, they

do not seem to be having any positive effect as senior management use their positions to

mask unethical practices. Moreover, the notion of ethical codes and their role is contested

in many academic circles (Maunganidze, 2014,). Maunganidze for example argued that in

Zimbabwe codes of conduct serve the purpose of industrial relations and for disciplinary

action as opposed to them being used as a moral compass for everyday use by all

employees in the public sector.

Managers by virtue of their positions of power to influence, should make efforts

to educate, inform and guide the engagement of code of ethics for effective local

governance. According to Wechsler (2013), it is bad practice in local governance not to

avail codes of ethics, advice on ethical conduct, disclosure of ethical information, and

enforcement of such code of ethics as may be available. Staff should know the

consequences of their decisions and or behavior. The WHO (2017) further noted that

codes of ethics should promote in individuals: accountability, responsibility, honesty,

decency, openness and good faith. According to the WHO, leaders play an important role

in promoting workplace culture that upholds ethical practice. This research will reveal the

efforts made by the City Council in enforcing code of ethics as availed to it by itself and other influential forces.

Leaders are expected to serve as role models of integrity, follow rules, regulations and policies, take responsibility for their actions, pursue organizational objectives, promote fairness, make informed decisions, understand code of ethics, encourage dialogue on ethical conduct, support ethical practice and whistleblowing, foster healthy practices and care about staff wellbeing (WHO, 2017). However, corruption continues to escalate in Zimbabwe and unethical practices go on undeterred and unreported (Chigudu, 2014).

There are other studies of ethics that have proven that codes of ethics do not always translate to desired ethical behavior in organizations (O'Fallon & Butterfield, 2005; Tenbrunsel & Smith-Crowe, 2008; Treviño et al., 2006). As Treviño et al. (2014) pointed out that actions need not necessarily be intentional for them to be considered ethical. The authors noted that in some instances negative outcomes can come out of ethics, thus the need to explore and understand the notion of ethics from different perspectives including contextual and individual factors.

The Role of Code of Ethics

Codes of ethics are sometimes referred to as codes of conduct, corporate credos, business conduct guidelines, operating principles, staff handbooks, and codes of practice (Mahajan &Mahajan, 2016). According to Downe et al. (2016), codes of ethics are usually reflected in a multiplicity of ways. Codes of conduct make selections from policy

of issues that apply to a given community of people. Codes of ethics thus inform codes of

conduct. For this study however, the terms are used interchangeably.

The conduct of managers in public office is however not entirely due to the

existence of a code of ethics (Downe et al., 2016), as their character and personal conduct

have been seen to have an influence on the business culture. While the decision to guide,

communicate, reprimand or reward, has far reaching implications on the employee, the

root of such decisions is known more to the leader, than the code of ethics can explain.

Bartuševičienė and Šakalytė (2013) noted that efficiency and effectiveness largely can be

used as determinants of ethical conduct on the part of leadership. A departmental leader,

for example, can be viewed as efficient, but ineffective if they are in control of the

budget, but not meeting the desired organisational targets. While results may be achieved,

leadership has to be accountable to their decisions, based on the cost of their decisions to

the organization. Ethical conduct signals a strong desire to do the right thing (Disoloane,

2012). The author however noted that in some instances there is a compromise of values

due to lack of determination to follow conscience.

As managers attempt habitual predicaments, the need for codes of ethics is

intensifying daily as ethical dilemmas confront the working space (Mahajan & Mahajan,

2016). Business organizations are increasingly compelled to adjust their business

operations to match with the situation as technology trends also modify the working

space daily. Antonaras et al. (2015) opined that the code of ethics constitutes the value

systems by which organizations form patterns of acceptable behaviour, and these are

usually documented and apply to all employees. Codes of ethics aim at ensuring

appropriate personnel are hired, cordial working relations are established and maintained, and everyone is focused on the achievement of organizational goals (Chigudu, 2014). Leadership should therefore be responsive to the demands of society that determines the success of a local council. Heads should be actively involved in crafting and disseminating code of ethics that are responsive to customer needs, so that all the employees are aware of these, and leaders themselves are relying on this code in decision-making processes.

According to Wechsler (2013), the purpose of government code of ethics is to prevent unethical practice in the face of ethical dilemmas. Codes of ethics largely determine the organizational tone, behavior of employees and output given inputs. If well implemented, every effort in the organization is driven towards achieving organizational goals. In urban councils where thousands make up the workforce, it is not easy to assume every other member is organizational goal driven. Personal ambitions and the desire to achieve, in view of factors obtaining in the working space have a tendency of influencing employee operations. Bartuševičienė and Šakalytė (2013) opined that high performing organizations build and maintain consistent strategies that bind with the organization's philosophy, thus driving towards high customer-oriented policies. The presence of a code of ethics thus, guides employees with grounding rules that drive towards the achievement of organizational goals and the maintenance of integrity in the customer community. Mahajan and Mahajan (2016) noted that with globalization, liberalization and competition, the need to operate ethically has become a global issue. Violation of ethics now affects the financial and social standing of an organization. Businesses have thus

become proactive in coming up with a code of ethics to protect their names and their operations. Without a code of ethics to lean on, it is no longer easy to satisfy operating partners doted across the globe.

The government has driven the introduction of ethics into local councils as a way of sensitizing public officers about how they should perform their work, promotion of institutional quality ant turning of public institutions into 'thinking organisms' (Pareto & Román, 2020). Due to political tension, a number of local council reforms have over the years been formulated and catalysed into councils in the Zimbabwe (Muchadenyika, 2018). At one point, the ZANU (PF) led government scrapped all outstanding council bills towards an election in the name of lowering the burden on the ratepayer. Mixed reactions were echoed with councils since categorically they were not capacitated to scrap anything given that they also needed money to survive. The existence of two political voices in council administration creates chaos here and there, as politicians interfere with professionals. Harmony in councils as well as enforcement of codes of conduct in local councils are debatable dimensions in Zimbabwean local governance (Chigudu, 2014). How codes of ethics are enforced in the Zimbabwean local councils, who is dominant in the enforcement of codes and what the reactions to the code are in view of the developments in Zimbabwe forms the basis of this study.

Code of Ethics and Local Government Leadership

Local government is often underrated even though it is the level of government with the most significant contact with the people (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018). Leaders in various local government structures have over the years played an influential role in

determining the course of local governance; implementing rules, laws, statutes, regulations and making sure organizations stick to their daily mandates (Downe et al., 2016). Based on studies in the African context, Kauzya (2003) noted that good governance should entail effective constitutionalism, adherence to the rule of law, justice, security of persons and property, participatory democracy, respect for human rights, transperancy, accountabilty, ethics and integrity, equity, informed citizentry, effective and efficient delivery of public services, as well as a decent standard of living for all. It can be noted that where local governance fails, the whole populace is affected in one-way or the other. It can therefore be noted that local authority leadership, given its multi-layer form, creates opportunities for coherence and conflict, which have a bearing on ethical practice. For example, during the exercise of rating property, members of the top-level leadership might be biased on estates or properties where they have personal interests, from a political and mutual approach, while lower-level leadership might be focused on adherence to standards. The need to please and the position of top-level management might influence the overall decisions over standards control, compromising on service delivery, therefore sound codes of ethics may remedy any potential ethical grey areas public administrators may face (Menzel, 2009). Mozumder (2018) saw trust and organizational leadership having a hand and glove kind of relationship, where trust varies due to differences in relationships, interactions, and contexts within which the leadership exist.

The current Zimbabwe Constitution of 2013 allows for a devolved system of local governance, where there are two distinct types of local government: the rural and urban

local authorities (Chigwata et al., 2019). Urban local government is made up of a variety

of leaders, some are elective, while others are appointed (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018).

Chigwata and de Visser also noted the existence of three types of legally recognized

urban local authorities, namely municipal councils, town councils and local boards.

Municipal councils, which include cities, have the provision of a mayor in their

leadership structures, while in local boards there is a board chairperson. Mayors can be

executive or ceremonial, where communities choose executive mayors and ceremonial

mayors are chosen by councilors.

Historically, the election of councilors was preserved for young personnel who

had proven to the generality that they are responsible and worth supporting, to represent

the community in a political office, having attained public trust (Wechsler, 2013).

Nowadays, it is sometimes the party that takes precedence over the person being voted

into office, thus compromising the quality of the composition of councilors (Chigudu,

2014). This along the way creates avenues for conflict situations as some without aptitude

find their way into leadership positions (Mutema, 2016). Voting for party instead of

personality is ingrained in Kohlberg's theory of moral development where one conforms

to society rather that adherence to ethical decision making. This is a leeway for weakened

local government leadership.

Local governance in Zimbabwe can be traced back to the early colonial days in

1890, with the establishment of administrative and military forts (CLGF, 2013). The first

local government system in Zimbabwe was established in 1894, meant to enforce

colonial control and suppression of natives. There was no equality, which Rawls (1971) advocates for in his theory of justice and fairness.

According to the CLGF (2013), the COZ 2013 is the Supreme referral apparatus of government that spells the operations of local governance, which mainly entail developments relating to service functions, commercial and industrial operations. While local governance is anchored in chapter 14 of the Zimbabwean Constitution of 2013, the whole constitution speaks to the operations of local governance.

In the Constitution of Zimbabwe 2013, local government is the lowest in a three-tier system (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018). Local government responds directly to the respective areas in which they exist and represent the affairs of people there. According to the constitution, local government should ensure people enjoy prosperous, happy and fulfilling lives. It is therefore the task of local government to ensure people optimally thrive in a given local government area. Key in the operations of local governance is the effective management of land and resources in their influence, while raising revenue in the form of rates, taxes, and service charges (CLGF, 2013). Services like water, roads, education, housing, health, child protection are under the umbrella of local authorities, in a devolved situation.

The COZ (2013) gave local government a level of autonomy thus increasing the role of local leadership in decision-making processes (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018). The authors note that localization of operations in local governance encourages participation, and responsiveness, while creating ethical dilemmas on the ideal solutions for

appropriateness of developments. As per the COZ (2013), citizens are a key stakeholder in local governance and their voice should be given an ear in all matters of governance.

Leaders are expected to improve the socio-economic environment in local communities (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018). Powers of local government leaders include governance, regulation, administration and service delivery. Financial management is localized, though fiscal has a budgetary allocation for local government development projects. While there are laws governing the vertical and horizontal relations in local governance tiers, CLGF (2013) notes that there are overlaps that can be a cause for conflict. The desire to ensure efficiency, transparency, accountability, participation, and responsiveness to citizens is supreme in local governance. These operations are articulated at local council level, hence the need for every council to construct operational guidelines in line with constitutional provisions. The interesting question to be answered is to what extent are local councils implementing codes of ethics in line with the requirements of a constitution calling for devolution of leadership operations.

The national government decentralisation process in local government is a way of facilitating democracy and national unity, through the active participation of citizenry in smaller units (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018). Local councils are an all-encompassing force, and this calls for the application of codes of ethics at a very wide scale. The city council, while a branch of the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Housing, has services that demand that it interacts with virtually all other ministries. When issues of health have to be attended, the Ministry of Health and Childcare is factored in; on issues of water supply, and land acquisition, the Ministry of Lands, Water and Rural

Resettlement is engaged; on education provision, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary

Education, and the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Science, and Technology

Development are invited. However, Sifile et al. (2015) proved in their study of another

municipality in Zimbabwe that coordination among the different ministries and stake

holders leaves much to be desired in Zimbabwe. The construction of harmonized codes of

ethics that speak to the existence of various departments as key actors in local governance

is critical. In their study of the use of codes of ethics in Sweden, Svensson et al. (2004),

suggested that the extent to which employees in different departments in the public sector

are committed to the code of ethics is important for ethical decision making.

The notion of participatory democracy is exercised when local people chose their

leaders in council elections. These are considered free, and fair given that local people

have authority to choose who they want in leadership (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018).

While local leadership is chosen by the local citizenry, the authors argued that

circumstances in local government differ and it is important to assess whether the

allocation of power to local authorities, translates to discretion and final decision-making

or not. They further noted that ethical decision-making can be affected by influential

others in political positions to the detriment of effective local governance, this dichotomy

between elected leaders and bureaucrats can be a challenge to ethical decision making.

While the constitution of 2013 allots power and the right to govern to local

authorities (Chigwata & de Visser, 2018), the major question for local government

leadership is to what extent are they autonomous in decision making. Dibaba (2016) and

Janga and Charisa (2009) noted that in the Zimbabwean local governance scenario, there

was too much interference from central governance in local affairs, compromising the ethical conduct of local authorities. The Minister of Local Government, for example, interferes in the conferring and dismissal of councilors, mayors, district administrators, major projects approval. The author noted that the current Urban Councils Act (UCA) accords the Minister too much power which is easily abused. For instance, some of the dismissals are based on party affiliation and not the inabilities of an individual. ZANU (PF) as the ruling party choses the Minister of Local Government and as such the minister becomes a political bandit fighting any moves from the opposition parties. Wrong policies and strategies are therefore sometimes implemented to please party politics and compromise ethical conduct.

Failure by ZANU (PF) to accrue influential support from local councilors, compromises the local governance equation, as central government controls local issues from the national office (Dibaba, 2016). The author also noted that, in the past, Ministers of Local Government were chosen to harass local government operations. Chideme, in the local newspaper the Herald (9 March 2012), stated that the vision of Zimbabweans in local governance has been spoilt and infringed on (Dibaba, 2016). For example, Mayors have been gradually trivialized by the appointment of Ministers of State who now acting as mayors and making key decisions on local governance issues. The city council, housed in the province of interest for this study, with a Minister of State, has to kowtow to the local minister's influence, and that of the Minister of Local government. Gone are the days when the Town Clerk would inform the masses of the direction of city council

issues, and Dibaba noted that commitment to work by leaders is now lessor as they face contrasting orders from all directions demonstrating lack of proper coordination.

The task of effectiveness and efficiency now lies with local leadership who should turn goals into action, in a politically volatile working space. While autonomy may suggest freedom to decide, Chigwata and de Visser (2018) noted that issues to do with establishment of local units, functional areas, local democracy, revenue generation and spending, bureaucracies, and interference from external government bodies, are a constitutional issue requiring local authorities to comply with national directives. While leadership in local government is bestowed with a level of autonomy and security of existence, Chigwata and de Visser (2018), however raised concerns on the practicality of this arrangement, in a country where even judicial enforcement of constitutional limits is sometimes overtaken by legislative, executive, and political infiltration raising questions on whether the City Council is at all autonomous.

Code of Ethics Instruments Guiding Local Government Leadership

A number of policies, frameworks and commissions have engulfed public office leadership and workforce environment, as a direct response to unethical conduct by public officers or the generality citizens. In the Zimbabwean scenario, instruments like the Anti-Corruption Commission of Zimbabwe (ACCZ), Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA), Public Order and Security Act (POSA), Urban Councils Act (UCA), Corruption and Economic Crime Act (CECA), Promotion of Access to Information Act, Prevention of Corruption Ordinance Act, Protected Disclosure Act, National Anticorruption Forum, and the Working Environment Act.

These have received mixed feelings from both public officers and citizens (CLGF, 2013).

Mujtaba et al. (2011) argued that government alone cannot enforce ethical decision-

making and conduct by generating legislative frameworks. Local government structures

are governed by a code of ethics, which spells out internal and external regulatory

functions of the employees (Yusuph et al., 2017). These instruments come, mainly from

central government and employees refer to them whenever they need to handle ethical

dilemmas. With honesty and integrity, public officers are expected to perform their

duties, and the ethical instruments act as mandatory principles of operation. In

concurrence Calderon, and Araya-Bugueno, (2019) noted that ethics promote an open

system of governance where citizens are expected to participate, promoting dialogue and

being open to voices from the ordinary home dwellers. Given that the ordinary citizen has

an active voice in local governance, and public officers have open ethical principles to

follow, with ethical practice in local governance, then harmony should prevail in local

government.

Codes of ethics are a resource that local government can use to achieve alignment

between the strategy and the activity of the department. The availability of a code of

ethics and its implementation may reflect the organization is aware of its purpose

(Svensson & Woods, 2009). However, in as much as ethical guidelines and codes of

ethics may exist in an organization, they may not be implemented due to lack of

awareness and a clear direction from the leadership on how to implement them. Treviño

et al. (2014) suggested that some codes of ethics are available in organizations just for

window dressing

The Local Government Laws Amendment Act (2016) is the current referral law local councils relate with in the Zimbabwean context, for making decisions on to do with local councils. This Act was gazetted on 26 August 2016, amending the Rural District Councils Act [Chapter 29:13], and the Urban Councils Act [Chapter 29:15]. Subsection 2(d) refers to the suspension and removal of councilors from office on the grounds of corruption, abuse of office, and dishonesty. Such unethical practice can be in relation to funds, council properties, negligence, or inability. Procedures thereto are also well detailed on how the minister shall handle a case when it so arises. Ethical conduct is therefore enforced from central government, going down to council leadership, who implement policy issues.

Local Municipality Experiences of Ethics Issues

Kish-Gephart et al. (2014) noted the existence of various dilemmas facing local governance municipalities. Political infiltration was noted as a major contributor to unethical experiences of local governance. The Bulawayo City Council in July 2019 witnessed an ugly scene when the deputy Mayor elect and the Town Clerk were involved in a fiasco that went virus on social media and was even published in the Daily Newspaper of 12 July 2019 (Tshuma, 2020). The Clerk was accused of intrusive conduct, misappropriation of housing and industrial stands, poor water service delivery, and overstepping his mandate. While this and other glaring scenes have happened, contrary to the council's core value of integrity and constitutional uprightness of its workforce, BCC has in place mechanisms meant to ensure ethical conduct (Bulawayo City Council, 2013).

According to Dibaba (2016), urban councils in Zimbabwean face the fury of communities due to poor service delivery. In view of the prevailing conditions, communities have raised countless ethical questions, which no one is prepared to parent or stomach, as finger pointing has become the norm. Codes of ethics should be referral in times of need and when services dwindle, it should be easy to pinpoint who is not doing their part. In another part of the country, Chitungwiza council has of late been accused of turning community grounds into residential stands, as Harare has turned Gwanzura Stadium into a maize field, as Bulawayo industrial sites are now domineered by churches. These conversions of spaces may be seen as actions in violation of ethical principles. The unilateral diversion of spaces into alternative use without authority is a challenge for local governance (Dibaba, 2016).

Reports of councils coining policies and statutes to the advantage of office bearers while the general populace suffer the brunt are a common feature (Dibaba, 2016). Like the rising and the setting of the sun, local governance business today is so dynamic adjusting daily to situations. Council leaders and employees now feed with silver spoons while citizenry "scramble for the crumbs at the masters' table". Should local government leaders deliberate better working conditions and attainment of concessionary spaces, while the communities they serve feel weight through dwindling service delivery? These are some of the dilemmas confronting leadership and code of ethics become integral in decision-making.

City Council has perennial water supply challenges and the dwindling standards of road maintenance, weakened refuse collection strategies, and a widening gap between

citizens' needs and service delivery standards. (CLGF, 2013). While organs external to the local authority exist for effectiveness, these can also be potentially volatile and ethically detestable. Local leaders are expected largely to engage with non-state actors and civil society organizations like non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Faith-Based Organizations to ensure quality service delivery in all aspects. The city's governance structure is composed of elected councilors for each of the twenty-nine wards. City Council's corporate values are integrity, transparency and accountability, fairness, consultative, equal opportunity, environmentally friendly, and responsiveness (CLGF, 2013); These values are clearly outlined I strategy and the leadership's focus is to effectively servicing the concerns of the Bulawayo community in and ethical manner.

Implementation of Code of Ethics in Local Governance

Implementation of ethics is dependent on a number of factors. Trevino's person situation model comes into play, where the person as well as the situation become focal. Svensson and Woods (2009) investigated the implementation of codes of ethics. They purported that public service codes of ethics are instruments outlining principles and values, which employees must adhere to in their conduct as they serve the citizens. Leaders use differing approaches to implementing ethics.

There are instances where "brute force" has been used in leadership. Government leaders like Napoleon, and Hitler, who called for the 'clipping of followers' wings in order to achieve desired results, come into mind. Some leaders were even considered 'evil' (Reed, 2012). Many injustices have been recorded in governance, raising pertinent questions of ethics in leadership. Wart (2014) noted that ethics and social justice go hand

in hand. Wart also noted that leaders are sometimes caught between being firm and remaining ethical, thus making the task of leaders further complicated.

According to Beeri et al. (2013), codes of ethics should not just be viewed in terms of adherence and deviance in behavior, but all the factors in an organization's architecture should be considered simultaneously. The authors further noted that a healthy balance needs to be maintained to avoid a situation where codes are over-emphasized over employee-welfare (Rohr, 1989). The extent to which knowledge of ethics is spread to lower arms of the municipality and how they are spread is a critical determinant of adherence to such. Rutgers, (2008) also echoed that there are some tensions in the discussion of values and norms that public employees need to adhere to and there is a need for these to be classified and categorized to avoid the situation whereby they will end up on paper and in discussions without practice. How the Bulawayo Municipality handles ethics education is therefore valuable for transfer of practice to other cities. The priority therefore is to encourage an ethical climate by employing code of ethics as tools. In this research I therefore also seek to establish the organizational climate and attaining knowledge pertaining to the magnitude of deviance to code of ethics on the part of the led. How are code of ethics implemented in the Bulawayo City Council given their potential to be abused as cohesive mechanisms.

Since the 1990s, there has been a shift from traditional public administration towards the New Public Management (NPM) in the delivery of goods to the citizens (Meyer, 2018). NPM opens up for market forces and requires ethical conduct (Rhadika, 2012). Zimbabwe still lags behind in catching up with the other countries in Sub-Saharan

Africa (SSA) and remains at the bottom of almost every development index, as captured

in the Human Rights watch (2018), UNDP Development Index (HDI) (2019). Economic

difficulties caused by bad policies have left Zimbabwe isolated and therefore not able to

sustain any development thus, causing difficulties in implementing NPM systems in

public administration. Zhou and Chilunjika (2013) noted that, there is a rubric of fiscal

decentralization, but the efficiency of local authorities, in the case of Zimbabwe, is

compromised by interlocking factors that include limited revenue base, failure to devise

revenue optimizing strategies, political interference, and an institutionalized culture of

rent seeking. This in turn contributes to social injustices on communities who have to

bear the brunt.

Influence of Code of Ethics on Behavior

Code of ethics are increasingly becoming the norm as corporates attempt to set

standards of operation and response mechanisms by employees (Webley & Werner,

2008). In a study involving 448 government employees, leaders and citizens in Iran, the

researchers discovered that the more educated and experienced a leader was, the more

ethical and mature their decisions were (Mujtaba et al., 2011). This assertion partially

concurs with Treviño's Person-situation Interactionist model, which takes cognizance of

the situation as defined by a number of factors that include one's knowledge and

experiences. The more years of experience, the more chances of mature ethical decisions.

Code of ethics formulation for local governance is usually a preserve of central

government in the Zimbabwean context (Chigudu, 2014). The author noted that local

municipalities simply receive these from national offices and disseminates to all

concerned. These form the backbone of organizational conduct, and where possible, customization is done through local leadership, to ensure ownership, acceptance and conformity. Without such, an organization might experience challenges controlling members' ethical behavior. The local governance structure places the management personnel as key ethical decision makers.

According to Mutema (2016), the problem of ethical violation is largely influenced by the nature, essence, and pattern of ethnic group dominant group in a given geographic space in the Zimbabwean context. Given this viewpoint there are bound to be more Ndebele-speaking nationals in the BCC given that municipality is located on the south-western side of Zimbabwe and dominated by the Ndebele ethnic group. By virtue of naming provinces after ethnic groups, the leadership in a given ethnic zone is automatically skewed towards the domineering tribe. The architecture of the city council therefore stands to be tilted such that the dominant ethnic group in management such that the ethnic group will make up the general employee base. The tendency therefore among leadership is to surround oneself with 'homeboys' at the expense of skills and qualifications (Mutema, 2016), also known as nepotism.

Mutema, (2016) further noted that Provincial Governors and Administrators in the Zimbabwean context are selected from the provinces they come from. How ethical are leaders in ensuring equality and competency is debatable, given a history of conflict between the two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. There is bound to be a skewed alignment towards one ethnic group occupying the major employment spaces in the BCC.

In a given province, just as there are bound to be more people from the dominant group in another province, this can be a loophole for corrupt practice in local governance.

The Global Corruption Barometer study of 2009, to determine corruption indicators in governance established that politicians and public officers were one of the most corrupt personalities in general society Findings indicated that Zimbabwe was in the red zone of corruption rated the 150th nation. Chigudu, (2015) carried out a study which analyzed the incompetence of the Zimbabwe Anticorruption Commission to address corruption practices within the public sector in Zimbabwe. Politics has been singled out as a key influencing factor in the unethical conduct of Zimbabwean local governance. In his study of local governance and ethical conduct in selected Midlands, Manicaland and Mashonaland Provinces, Mutema (2016) noted that the political leadership of ZANU-PF, with a strong Shona foundation, had an influential role in determining the face of local municipals. Corruption has shown up as one of the most prominent indicators of unethical practices in local government. Public officers are seen to finance corrupt political ventures as well as arm-twisting local citizenry to foster the political agendas of ZANU (PF), which is the ruling party in Zimbabwe. Determining the influence of politics on the performance of the Bulawayo City Council as perceived by department heads is important for this study. It remains to be established how the Bulawayo City Council is making efforts at curbing corruption.

Codes of ethics might exit, be well crafted and have the potential to influence ethical conduct among leaders, but conduct can reflect a different picture as evidenced from studies discussed in the above paragraphs. Leaders' implementation of codes of

ethics is critical for ethical governance**.** How leaders implement ethics in organizations

differs from one organization to another. Zollo et al. (2016), noted that an interplay

between moral intuition and moral reasoning were critical for ethical decision-making.

Ethics has proven to be more effective where religion and moral values are emphasized at

social level (Mujtaba et al., 2011). The author also quoted the Iranian experience where

leaders in 1979 called for the Islamic revolution and the overthrow of capitalism and

social justice. This viewpoint suggests other dynamics such as religion and community

norms may be more influential in the ethical conduct of leaders and employees, than

codes of ethics as spelt out at the workplace. A relationship between religion and ethical

conduct presents an opportunity for knowledge accumulation

Code of Ethics and Leadership Performance

Dale and Fox (2008) found a positive relationship between leadership and

organizational performance. Leaders are the key determinants of organizational

effectiveness, and quality implementation of organizational strategies. Leaders should

thus, create in their subordinates, positivity in the way they think about possibilities,

improving performance at work, at home, in the community and in the inner private self,

where the mind, body and spirit are at peace (Friedman, 2014). The author called for a

four-way integrated system, where the work, home, community, and the self are all given

due respect for optimal performance. This study will not focus on measuring performance

in local government, however it is useful to take note of the studies that provide empirical

evidence that an ethical environment is key to sustainability of decisions in leadership, as

well as transformation in line with the dynamic environment for optimum performance.

The stability of decision-making and the subsequent performance of departments in service delivery is imperative.

Rohr (1989) alluded to the need for authoritative and coercive agents in society for leaders to have a foundation on which to make decisions (Uhr, 2014). This therefore compels local governance as a people-oriented organization, to make regular checks and balances on codes of conduct, codes of ethics and constitutionalism for efficiency and effectiveness. Leadership in the Zimbabwe local governance structure is guided by a constitutional mandate to among other services, ensure; availability of stable resources for delivery of services, active citizen participation, security of tenure, and establishment of institutions with elevated status (CLGF, 2013).

Downe et al. (2016) noted that the way employees behave and represent their organization, largely determines their view of the organization. When lower-level personnel have the voice and courage to talk openly about their organization, defend its decisions, and openly put-on organization identity in public, shows their confidence in the leadership decisions. Job satisfaction and a sense of well-being are some of the indicators of ethical practice in an organization (Hassan, 2015). In the City Council, it is expected that leaders be confident about representing their departments. Their tone and overall confidence in fellow members is a far-reaching pointer to lack of confidence in the system.

Similar studies have revealed leaders perceive leadership decisions as cast in concrete (Seijts, 2011). In his study, Seijts looked at the perceptions of employees on ethical atmosphere in a municipal government located in Ontario. His findings indicated

that employees were not enthusiastic about new changes brought about by leadership. Instead of creating enthusiasm, new changes became sources of conflict. As such subordinates experienced shock at some leadership decisions leading to poor implementation. Wide varieties of organizational processes are affected by the perceptions of leaders (Mulugeta & Hailemariam, 2018), which largely influence the competitive nature of an organization (Mizrahitokati & Guney, 2016). In an operational environment dominated by rapid changes in technology, global environment and ethical principles, managers become integral in determining the ability of an organization to pass the test of time. Managers in the CC have the challenge of fostering smooth performance among employees and at the same time ensuring the municipal system is lucid and competitive.

A leader's moral identity and employee perceptions of ethical leadership is crucial for ethical conduct in the workspace (Rawls, 1971). Ethical leadership has therefore been found to influence employee attitudes such as job satisfaction, affective commitment and work engagement, thus reducing employee turnover (British Psychological Society, 2018). The rate at which employees in the various departments of the Bulawayo City Council migrate to greener pastures is a pointer to a regressive system.

According to the International Republican Institute (IRI), (2015) 40% of the Zimbabwean citizenry believe local government councilors are voted into power for their own good and not to service the wards they represent in local government. Sixty-nine percent of the electorate also believe councilors do not stay true to their Champaign strategies but are dishonest once elected to council positions. The negative perceptions of

citizens about office bearers can be a challenge reflecting the degree of ethical conduct by councilors. Citizens in the Bulawayo community need to have positive perceptions about the office bearers for effective operations with the people. Where service delivery is poor, people are bound to have negative opinions about office bearers. The IRI also identified citizens' perceptions about service delivery challenges facing the urban councils in Zimbabwe. Figure 2 shows their findings:

Figure 3

Main service delivery challenges facing local government in Zimbabwe
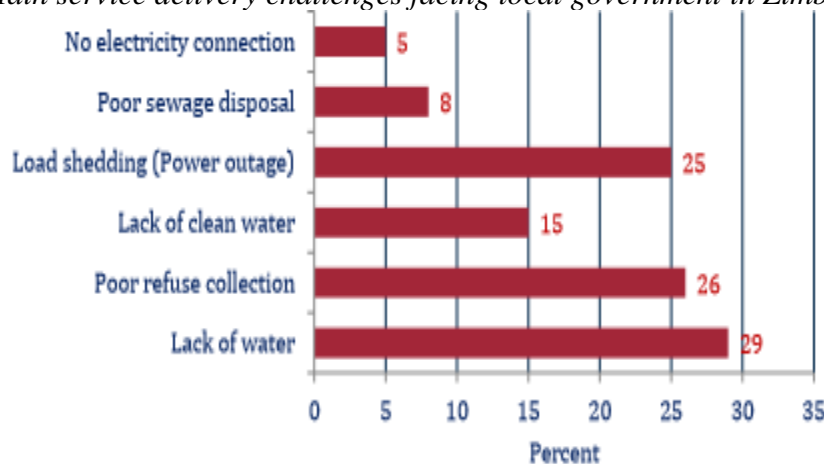
Note: International Republic Institute (IRI, 2015)

There are differing perceptions on the role of the citizens and office bearers in local governance (Mohammad et al., 2017). On one side officers believe citizens are not well informed to contribute meaningfully to local governance. On the other side citizens perceive, officers as corrupt and that they swindle them of their hard-earned money, while not delivering services. The author notes that the root causes of perception conflicts arise due to power distribution and resource control, as outlined in the conflict theory of Karl Max in the 1800s, and Max Weber in the early 20th century.

Questions have also been asked over the necessity for code of ethics. Code of ethics are labelled as too abstract, too specific to be meaningful, rigid, and set by fiat, and not leading to planned outputs (Svara, 2014). In as much as they spell what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior in an enterprise, they do not necessarily lead to conformity. It remains to be discovered how Bulawayo local municipality departmental leaders view the existence of code of ethics.

Summary

This chapter presented literature reviewed for the study. Ethics and its influence on organizational behavior in local governance was reviewed, together with the influence of code of ethics on performance in local governance. Conceptual explorations were also tackled to unearth the meanings of ethics and leadership. The Person-Situation Interactionist Model according to Treviño (1986) was reviewed. Based on the research questions, the review process dwelt on department leaders' practice of ethics, ethical decision making and how they enforce ethical conduct in local governance. Major milestones show there are studies that have been carried out on ethics in local government, but their major focus has been on ethics implementation. The following chapter focuses on the research methodology proposed for this study and how the research process transpired.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative research study, as guided by the research questions, was to ascertain how department heads encourage ethical behavior among employees in local government structures, as well as to establish their perceptions of how codes of ethics encourage ethical decision making. Leadership effectiveness in local government is topical (Chigudu, 2014), and the need for research and development in this area, calls for systematic approaches that are surety to findings and underwrite the honesty of such findings. Mandatory to this research is my desire to engage approaches that guarantee quality reliable and trusted knowledge. In this chapter, I present the philosophical assumptions underpinning the study, and relay the research design, population, sample, and sampling procedures. I also outline data collection processes, as well as the analysis plan, together with measures to ensure the validity and reliability of this study.

This study was underpinned in a postpositivism research paradigm pillared on my desire to engage natural settings in understanding ethics in decision making. Postpositivism paradigm is a mix of positivism and interpretism (Panhwar et al., 2017). Postpositivism allowed me as a rsearcher to investigate issues in their context and it also allowed particiants to interprete and share experiences according to their worldview (see Panhwar et al., 2017). A research paradigm therefore leads to an understanding of the research design given the research topic. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), a paradigm is a way of seeing the world that influences researchers' thinking about a topic. Kamal (2019), citing Fraser and Robinson (2004), stated that a paradigm is a set of

beliefs about the way a problem exists leading to agreements on how such a problem can be researched. Kamal also contended that a research paradigm zeros in on specific philosophical assumptions and approaches. A research paradigm defines the position of research in terms of research design, instrumentation, data collection, and analysis.

Majid (2018) defined a research design as the use of evidence-based procedures, protocols, and guidelines that provide the tools and framework for conducting a research study. Majid further noted that a research design is related to the philosophical orientation of the study, given that philosophical assumptions drive methodological decisions. Yin (2014) noted that a research design is a consequence of the research question, research objectives and phenomena of interest, population, and sampling strategies. A research design allowed me to deliberately plan conditions for collection of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose.

This study was a qualitative single case study. According to Yin (2014) and O'Sullivan et al. (2017), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Given my desire to explore how managers in local government make ethical decisions in a particular context under certain conditions and to understand the impact of codes of ethics on ethical conduct and ethical decision-making, this approach was seen to be suitable for this study.

According to Yilmaz et al. (2019), qualitative research is inductive, holistic, emic, subjective, and process oriented. It associates with words, language, and experiences that gives meaning to life experiences of a people of phenomena and is used to understand, interpret, describe, and develop a theory on a phenomenon. Qualitative research also

sanctions a more in-depth insight into the settings and the activities of participants under review, providing the researcher with an opportunity to sensitively gain insights into multiple realities, experiences, and interactions of individuals and groups by allowing participants to be heard and thus be able to analyze subsequently behavior formation processes through their own views (Creswell, 2007). My desire was to gain insight and understanding of how managers in local governance encourage ethical behavior among employees with codes of ethics and to understand leaders' perceptions of codes of ethics in influencing ethical conduct in the departments they lead.

My selection of a qualitative study approach was therefore guided by its potential to produce rich and descriptive information which enhances an understanding of the phenomenon under study (see O'Sullivan, et al., 2017). In coming up with a design for this study, I gave due consideration to various qualitative research methods, which include, ethnography, phenomenology, case study, and grounded theory. According to Allen (2017), ethnography is a qualitative approach that is used by researchers to understand different cultures and cultural groups. The researcher engages with participants in a participatory manner with the goal of understanding the dynamics in a specific culture. Since my study did not particularly focus on cultural dynamics, I chose not to focus on ethnography. Phenomenology's major focus is on how individuals make sense of their lived experiences of a given phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Since this research was about understanding and generating knowledge on the perceptions rather than understanding lived experiences of ethics and ethical codes in a given population, the most appropriate method was a case study.

Case Study Approach

In my attempt to capture the perspectives of local government managers on codes of ethics and ethical decision making, I specifically selected the single case study design. According to Yin (2014) and O'Sullivan, et al. (2016), a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. Gustafsson (2017) also noted that case studies are used to explore phenomena, test influence of theories, and to inform the development of new theory. Case studies can be exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive. A case study is a study of people aimed at providing rich descriptions within a specific context (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The context of a detailed case study may result in a comprehensive understanding of the complex behavior formation processes and how the particular participants in a study decide to act on issues the way they do (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). A case study can also be defined as a research strategy and a methodology, an empirical inquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context. A single case study approach allowed me to interact with the participants and gain a deeper understanding of ethics in leadership and in ethical decision making as defined and upheld in the CC. The advantage of the case study approach is its flexibility which allowed me to use multiple sources of evidence such as documents, artefacts, and interviews (see Yin, 2014).

The case study design was a better fit for this study because it provided me with the flexibility of studying a single circumstance and exploring deeper issues in-depth (see O'Sullivan et al. 2017; Yin 2014). Gustafsson (2017) further noted that through a single case, a researcher can question old theoretical relationships and explore new ones

creating a deeper understanding of the subject. Because of my desire for deeper

understanding, a case study was an appropriate method to understand ethical decision

making as espoused in this research. Flyvberg in Denzin and Lincoln (2011) stated case

studies are better suited for studies whereby a researcher is interested in factors relating to

the environment, namely contextual factors. In view of the research questions and the

theoretical perspectives selected for this study, a case study was a more appealing

approach for answering the research questions. Furthermore, Creswell (2007) noted that a

case study must have a unit of analysis which has its boundaries clearly defined. The unit

of analysis to be explored was a single CC in one of the provinces in Zimbabwe where I

interviewed top and middle level managers in local government on their ethical decision

making. The focus was on appointed leaders who are the policy implementers rather than

those politically elected. The sample and sampling strategies are discussed in the

paragraphs below.

Role of the Researcher

As a Zimbabwean-Norwegian, I have my perceptions and anecdotal assumptions

about leadership patterns in Zimbabwe and in local governance as a sector. Given the

weakened economy of Zimbabwe and the stories about public sector corruption, there

was a challenge of ethics when investigating local governance in Zimbabwe. Managers in

various departments know their experiences and reputation and they know how they are

perceived negatively in the public sphere. This knowledge on my part had the potential to

lead to predetermined assumptions that could compromise my objectivity when dealing

with the data during collection and analysis. An awareness of my standpoint as a

researcher and the desire to acquire knowledge informed the processes during data collection and sampling. This awareness was helpful in suspending judgement (Padilla-Diaz, 2015). Keeping a reflexive journal and focusing on my role as a researcher guided the attitude of learning and acquiring new knowledge. To the best of my ability, I tried to recruit participants representing the population rather than my own ethnic group. Given the polarizing ethnic divide prevalent in Zimbabwe, the temptation to recruit from my own ethnic group could have been high due to ease of access of participants. Therefore, reflexivity was paramount for effectiveness and objectivity when carrying out a research study in all its phases. This is the process of critical self-reflection about oneself as a researcher (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). I used the researcher/scholar lens to view the phenomenon to avoid bias. As I engaged with the literature to organize and synthesize information, I journaled my experiences and thoughts during data collection and analysis (see Bowen, 2005). Since I was interviewing a group which could be considered elite, I made sure to take the stance of a learner and conducted the interviews with respect in order to facilitate quality dialogue.

The researcher's views should not lead the discussion, but rather the data. An audit trail entailing the provision of a complete report, set of decisions made throughout the research, meetings, reflective thoughts, sampling, research materials. and data management should be availed for confirmability and dependability. This ensures every part of the research is transparent right from the beginning to the end. To ensure confirmability, I documented every step I took in this project and I reflected on

participants' consent to this study. Member checks and audit trails were carried out so that feedback from the participants' side on the findings.

Methodology

Population, Sample, and Sampling

Asiamah et al. (2017) identified three types of populations which researchers need to clarify towards effective sampling. These are the general population, target population, and accessible population. The general population constitutes the universally known group of potential participants about which some information is required (Asiamah et al., 2017). The general population embodies the target and accessible population (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010) and for this study, it was all the workers in the CC. The target population were the individuals who are focal to a given study (Asiamah et al., 2017). According to Alvi (2016), a target population is made up of all the members of a group who meet a particular criterion specified for a research investigation. The target population for this study was comprised of top and middle level managers with more than 3 years' experience in the municipality of a major city in one of Zimbabwe's 10 provinces. The 3-year experience timeframe was important as it would include individuals who with an understanding of the organization rather than recruiting people with lesser experience. The unit of analysis was the local government of this particular city, hence a single case study.

The accessible population were those individuals who are eligible to participate in the study and are willing to participate and were available at the time of collecting data (Asiamah et al., 2017). While this research was carried out based on the target

population, with assumptions that every member in leadership would be available and

willing to participate, it was however not always easy to ascertain the accessible

population prior to carrying out a study. At the time of collecting data, I was able to

establish the accessible population and from there constitute a sample.

Sample

A sample is a selection of study units from a definite population. Majid (2018)

viewed the sample as the extraction of cases from a population of interest with a view to

generalising or trasferring findings to the entire population. Sampling is particularly

important for selecting individuals who can accurately be representative of the entire

population. Alvi, (2016) stated that the more representative of the population the sample

is, the higher the accuracy of the inferences and the better the results. Given the

heterogeneous nature of the population there was a need to consider elements from

different levels of leadership and ethnicity, which is a major issue in the Zimbabwean

discourse due to a polarized society and politicized ethnicities in that country. The

appointed managers at the high and middle levels, given their varying influence in ethical

decision making, formed the sample. I ensured that the participants were well spread

across these levels of leadership in the municipality also taking into consideration

ethnicity differences. In this study, I did not include elected public officials who make the

policies, but rather those that implement them. I used purposeful sampling to gather data

through semi structured interviews to solicit information from managers in the different

city council departments. The CC under study is made up of seven departments which

have different branches and sections performing different functions. From these

departments I planned to interview two individuals from top and middle level management in each department, which would total to 14 managers, however I confirmed saturation when I had interviewed 10 participants. I also reviewed the general public sector code of ethics and was denied access to the site code of ethics. I managed to access the CC's strategy and a few policy documents which were available online available online, for example the gender policy.

Sampling Techniques

According to Alvi (2016), the use of an appropriate sampling technique is crucial towards making a research project rigorous, beneficial, meaningful and successful. Alvi further noted that nonprobability sampling is appropriate for instances where the research study seeks to explore an idea. I employed purposeful sampling where data was gathered through semistructured interviews to solicit information from managers in the different city council departments. Patton (2002) noted that purposeful sampling is a strategy of sampling where research participants are selected according to their ability to provide answers to the research questions. Following the example of Guest et al. (2006) who in their study held 12 interviews to get the information they needed, my aim was to recruit between 14 to 20 participants in the CC. My intention was to continue interviewing until saturation was reached. Guest et al. noted that a researcher realizes that saturation has been reached when no new information emerges from the interviews. I reached saturation after 10 interviews.

Procedures for Data Collection

Data Collection Instruments

According to Buriro et al. (2017), qualitative researchers make use of observations, interviews, and analysis of documents to obtain an understanding of people and their views of phenomena. Creswell (2007) alluded to the instruments chosen as key determinants of the credibility and trustworthiness of a research. The selection of an appropriate instrument hinges on the design, requirements of questions, population and sample (Majid, 2018). For this research, I made use of semistructured interviews because of their flexibility in allowing me to focus on the phenomenon of interest while giving the participant a leeway to freely express their views and giving me the possibility to direct the flow of the interview.

Semistructured Interviews

For this study I used semistructured interviews. Although semistructured interviews have structure, they can be flexible in line with the theory and methods to solicit the information that is needed to answer the research question in a structured manner, when compared to open ended interview questions (Blandford, 2013). According to Buriro et al. (2017), semistructured interviews yield straight reference from people about their practice, view, thoughts and awareness. The purpose of the face-to-face semistructured interview is to engage the participant in an in-depth conversation, yet in a structured manner focusing consciously on the topic at hand. Adams (2015) noted that people appropriate for semistructured interviews are those involved in a given program, and these include all stakeholders like suppliers, contributors and stakeholders, as well as

administrators, staff and board members. In this case study, contextual factors were important in showing how ethical decisions are made. Therefore, I designed questions that specifically ask about interpersonal contextual experiences of managers, guided by the theoretical framework used for this study.

Conducting semistructured interviews involves a blend of open and closed-ended questions with one person at a time (Adams, 2015). Semistructured interviews engage the independent thought of each individual in an organization and invoke in-depth knowledge not obvious to everyone. Adams, however, noted that the researcher should avoid stretching the interview session for longer than is necessary to avoid fatigue on the respondent and on the self.

The Government of Quebec (2009) noted that planning for qualitative research interviews involves engaging the stakeholder in consultations towards identifying key informants. For my data collection, I observed protocol, ensuring the CC was fully aware of all processes making relevant consultations. The Government of Quebec suggested that the semistructured interviews should last for around 60 minutes and should not exceed 90 minutes. As recommended by the Walden ethics policy for interviews, I forwarded the interview plan and consent form to the respondent in advance.

With the consent of the respondent, I generated audio recordings of the interviews for transcription. As a researcher, I prepared with background knowledge of the subject so that the questions I asked would put the participants at ease. I also explained that the goal of my research was not to expose unethical behavior but to understand decision-making processes with the code of ethics in mind.

Document Analysis

Documents are a record of how organizations operate (Bowen, 2009). They provide evidence of activities as well as social rules informing operations, therefore they were seen relevant for this study. Bowen (2009) described document analysis as analyzing data from the examination of documents from secondary sources. Bowen alluded to document analysis as a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents, both printed and electronic. Bowen also noted that documents come in the form of advertisements, policies, regulations, statutes, artifacts, registers, minutes, manuals, background papers, diaries, journals, event programs, letters, memoranda, maps, charts, newspapers, press releases, proposals, applications, summaries, scripts, organisational or institutional reports, suevey data, magazines, and any other written record relevant to a particular study. Even though semistructured interviews were the primary source of data collection, I intended to analyze documents as well to develop empirical knowledge from statutes, policies, frameworks and ethical decisions made in local governance. A look at ethics documents ensured triangulation of data collection. In analyzing documentary evidence, I was able to capture and reflect on the extent of ethics implementation in local governance not only in conduct, but also through documented evidence to support practice. Managers were asked to provide documentary evidence, when possible, of diaries, memoranda, agendas, and regulations relevant to this study.

Document analysis is customarily used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation (Bowen, 2009). Bowen noted that document analysis can be used where intensive case studies of a single phenomenon are carried out,

and internal communication relating to a phenomenon is crucial as empirical data. By engaging in document analysis, my intention was to obtain standard contextual practices towards promoting ethical decision-making. This is also a form of triangulating data, and a way of gaining a clearer understanding of ethics in local governance at the same time breeding confidence and credibility in this study.

The major benefits for me in document analysis was that they would provide information on the context within which participants operate, drawing upon historical evidence to current practice (Bowen, 2009). I also got additional insights, which supplement knowledge obtained through interviews. Bowen further noted that documents help in the generation of new interview questions and assist in tracking developments or modifications to organizational operations. The author warned however that documents alone cannot be used to authenticate the operations of an organization. The primary data collection for this study was semistructured interviews. As it turned out some of the documents such as the site code of conduct were deliberately withheld from me due to organizational policies, and leader perceptions of this research. According to Bowen (2009), the absence or sparseness of a document is also evidence of the amount of attention given to a particular aspect. It was therefore important for me to search for complementary sources to fill up gaps created by the absence of a particular instrument.

Data Analysis Plan

To capture the perceptions of managers on codes of ethics, and to understand how they implement their codes of ethics and how they enforce an environment of ethical conduct in their departments, I employed thematic data analysis method to identify codes,

categories, patterns and themes through the direct examination of contextual data (Saldaña, 2015). Thematic analysis is a method that assists the researcher to identify patterns and themes in qualitative data (Maguire and Delahunt, 2017). I chose this method because it fitted better in this case study as I endeavored to answer the research questions. Thematic analysis is the best method of data analysis when research is underpinned in a particular theory or framework in a particular context. Since I was using a single case study approach, triangulation in data analysis as well would strengthen validity and authenticity of my data.

I used the inductive approach rather than deductive coding to identify codes, categories, patterns and themes to make meaning from the data, this allowed the data to tell the story. According to Braun and Clarke (2012) the inductive approach to thematic analysis is driven by what the data tells the researcher. Nowell et al. (2017) concurred that thematic analysis can be used in different ways according to the objectives and the questions the study attempts to answer, moreover it is a pliable method of analysis that can be used in different research traditions. Maguire and Delahunt, (2017) also contended that because thematic analysis is a method rather than a methodology it can be used in analyzing studies within diverse theoretical perspectives and thus rendering it flexible.

In this study I used thematic analysis utilizing the inductive approach through open coding (Saldaña, 2015) to identify the emergence of meaning and evidence, to illuminate the research phenomenon, and address the research questions and the research problem. According to Bowen (2009), thematic analysis entails pattern recognition, within data, with emerging themes becoming the categories for analysis. Open coding allowed me to

systematically identify initial codes during the first cycle coding. I then moved on to categorizing the codes to expose patterns that informed themes. Because my study attempted to understand perceptions of middle and top-level leaders in local government, the three-step coding allowed me to dig deeper in the content of the data. I engaged with the data informed by the research questions, theory and conceptual framework to identify codes, patterns, categories, to illuminate the phenomenon.

It is important to establish and give thought on the exact type of data to be collected and how it will be analysed. Gustafsson (2017) alluded to the difficulty of analyzing and presenting a case study report. The time and effort required is considerable given the huge volume of notes and hours of producing transcripts (Adams, 2015). According to Nascimento et al. (2018), there is need for immersion into the data collected, then compilation of individual analyses of each interview and thematic grouping. Using a chart to allocate themes and statements and then examine if saturation is achieved.

For my analysis, I also employed the six phases of thematic analysis as defined by Braun and Clarke (2012) who also used thematic analysis using the inductive approach in their study. I made minor adjustments to their approach for example like doing a three-cycle coding.

1. The first step was to familiarize myself with the data, this means writing up the interview transcript and reading through it several times, immersing myself in the data to identify codes.

2. After re-reading the data, I began to identify initial codes and wrote them down during the first cycle (Saldana, 2015). At this stage I used open coding to make sure that I do not miss important codes that would be important for the study.

3. When codes had been identified I then put them into clusters to make categories and figured out patterns and themes.

4. I then revisited the data still in search of new review potential themes being informed by the research question in addition to the theory and literature review

5. In this stage I studied the themes and renamed them to prepare for the write up

6. Writing up

Table 1

The alignment between the research questions, data collection methods and analysis in tabular form

Research Question	What was investigated	Sources of data	Data collection techniques	Where	Data Analysis
1. How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe encourage ethical behavior among their employees?	Managers because, they are in a unique position to influence ethical behavior in their department	Interviewing 10-15 Appointed middle and top-level managers in the city council	Semi structured interviews Reflections from respondents	Within the seven city council departments	Studying transcripts Memos and journals, Doing thematic analysis, Coding, categorizing related themes and establishing patterns
2. How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe view a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes as	Perceptions of managers on how codes of ethics and conduct are useful in their job of encouraging ethical behavior Documents to establish ownership and	National Codes of ethics Strategy documents Site Codes of conduct policy documents. Interviewing 10-15 managers in	Semi structured interviews Reflections from Participants Examining documents Semi structured interviews Public service Codes of ethics	Within the seven city council departments	Document analysis Examining characteristics of the documents Establish the history of the documents Explore the usability of the documents

important for encouraging ethical behavior among their employees?	usability among departments, obtaining standard contextual practices	the city council Supporting documents	Site Codes of conduct		
3How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments?	To understand how codes of ethics and conduct are used to encourage ethical behavior	Public service Codes of ethics Local Codes of conduct Whistleblower policy documents. 10-15 Appointed middle and top-level managers in the city council	Semi structured interviews Public service Codes of ethics Local Codes of conduct Whistle blower policies	City Council	Studying transcripts Memos and journals, Doing thematic analysis, Coding, categorizing related themes and establishing patterns

Issues of Trustworthiness

Qualitative studies have been scrutinized and criticized for not being trustworthy enough. As qualitative research is claiming its space in scholarly research and gaining recognition, researchers are required to adopt rigorous measures to demonstrate that their studies can be trustworthy. Antwi and Hamsa (2015) posited that because qualitative research is interpretivist in its nature it aims   to explore, to discover, and to understand the phenomenon under study. The quality of qualitative research cannot therefore be evaluated using the same criteria as positivist research which uses validity, credibility and generalizability. Trustworthiness in qualitative research can be demonstrative by utilizing credibility, transferability, Confirmability and dependability as standards to measure its quality (Guba,1981).

Credibility refers to the extent to which a study is authentic, authenticity of a study can be compromised if a researcher is not aware of bias, I planned on keeping a reflective commentary as suggested by Shenton, (2004). I used triangulation in data collection by employing semi-structured interviews and reviewing documents such as the strategy, documents informing policy at CC and the constitution to prove or disprove the participants' assertions. I attempted to increase credibility by doing a thorough literature search relating the study to other research done on the topic of study in the context in which the study was located. For this study, I made use of triangulation to ensure the research trustworthiness (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Data was collected from personnel at different levels of leadership, taking care to assemble my sample in an objective manner. Careful study of the data in order to draw out theory and scope for the study was fundamental in this research. The unit of analysis in my study was the city council; the managers provided the needed information to understand perceptions on ethics and codes of conduct. My intention was to interview leaders until data saturation was achieved.

Dependability looks at the consistency of the research process with accepted standards for a particular design, confirmability considers neutrality and the inter-subjectivity of the data. The researcher's views should not lead the discussion, but rather the data. An audit trail, entailing the provision of a complete report, set of decisions made throughout the research, meetings, reflective thoughts, sampling, research materials and data management, should be availed for confirmability and dependability. This ensured that every part of the research was transparent right from its beginning up to the end. To ensure confirmability, I documented every step I took in this project and reflected on

participants consent to this study. I also made notes and kept a reflexivity journal to be aware of any biases. I used some of the memos in my data analysis.

Transferability requires the researcher to demonstrate that the findings of a study are applicable to similar situations and populations. Shenton (2004) purported that research can increase transferability when they describe the context in detail such that other researchers can relate the study to other contexts. In chapter four I expound more more on the strategies I used to ensure trustworthiness in this study.

Ethical Procedures

Ethics pertains to doing good and avoiding harm (Orb et al., 2001). As I embarked on this journey, I considered potential ethical issues that could affect the study, such as informed consent, confidentiality, researcher/participant relationship, data generation, and the protection of participant in the reporting of findings and I followed the necessary precautions as required by the institutional review board (IRB) and I obtained ethical clearance with IRB number 04-27-21-0380580 to start collecting data. Orb et al. (2001). identified three types of problems that may affect qualitative studies, namely, the researcher/participant relationship, the researcher's subjective interpretations of data, and the research design itself. I also took into consideration to acknowledge the autonomy of the participant and that they would willingly share information. The consent form that the participants signed giving permission to use the tape-recorded interview for research purposes was important. According to the ethics of research, interviewees should sign an informed consent, which communicates that the participants are participating voluntarily without coercion.

Protection of participants against harm is a requirement of research ethics (Patton, 2002). According to Orb et al. (2001), researchers have the obligation to anticipate the possible outcomes of an interview and weigh both benefits and potential harm to the participant. I put into action the processes to ensure these requirements were filled. I assured the participants that their identity would be protected, and that they were to sign a consent form that informs them that participation would not be coercive and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Publishing

According to Korstjens & Moser (2018), the process of writing a study report should reflect the iterative process of performing a qualitative report. The report must reflect the research findings and the discussion of the findings. For this study, I generated a comprehensive report detailing all the processes followed from the proposal up to the findings and recommendations.

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Summary

</div>

In this chapter, I presented the research design and methodology. Given the phenomenon under study, I considered a qualitative single case study involving one local municipality in Zimbabwe. I discussed the population, sample and sampling techniques, together with the justification for the approaches chosen. I discussed how data was collected and analyzed and the data analysis plan was presented. In Chapter 4 I present the results of the study. The findings are outlined, and the methods employed in the analysis of data explained. The process of coding and categorizing the data to create

themes is expounded on. I made connections to discussions from other scholars and

linked the findings to the theory informing the study.

Chapter 4: Results

This qualitative singe case study set out to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe encourage ethical behavior among their employees?

RQ2: How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe view a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes as important for encouraging ethical behavior among their employees?

RQ3: How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments?

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe perceive the role of a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes and how they use it to encourage ethical behavior in their departments. In this chapter, I present the results of the data that were collected through SSI and documents review. I expound in detail the findings of the study. I further explain the research setting and the processes I followed as I engaged with the data. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the sampling and analysis process as I discovered the categories and named themes informed by the theory and the literature review discussed in Chapter 2.

The three research questions are used as the frame of reference; hence this chapter is divided into three sections as per the study research questions. First I present data on how department managers in local government in Zimbabwe encourage ethical behavior

among their employees. Then I present results on how departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe view a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes towards encouraging ethical behavior among employees. Finally, I present results on how departmental mangers in local government in Zimbabwe use a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments and the challenges the face in their effort in implementing a code of ethic.

Research Setting

The research setting involved a cross-country engagement. Because of the pandemic, I was located away from the research participants who were in a city in Zimbabwe. I therefore relied on digital solutions to reach the participants. I first obtained ethical approval from the Walden University IRB office to collect data. When approval had been granted, I then sought for international clearance to collect data from the CC under study in Zimbabwe. Data collection for this study involved a combination of email engagement to schedule interviews, telephone interviews and online interviews over the zoom platform. As Gianotti et al. (2017) suggested, I provided clarification about the confidentiality measures that I would take, and I also informed them of their rights regarding their engagement in the study before the study commenced.

Demographics

The study participants included senior and middle level managers at one CC in Zimbabwe. For the purposes of confidentiality of the participants the identity of the CC is anonymized. The participants were all resident in the city of interest and all of them had been working at the CC for more than 3 years. All the participants were from the ages

ranging from 35 to 50. The participants confirmed their leadership status as being active

and this was also confirmed by the human resources (HR) department. All participants in

the sample had higher education qualifications.

Purposeful Sampling

For this research study I used purposeful sampling. As discussed in Chapter 3, the

benefit of purposeful sampling in a case study is that it allows the researcher to capture a

variety of information as well as different perspectives to enrich the study. Different

experiences and views allowed me to get a clear perspective when identifying patterns

and themes for the purposes of comparison. To obtain the contacts of senior management

at the local municipality, I made use of a combination of approaches that included, first

approaching the HR department at the CC where I was cleared to approach senior and

middle level managers. The HR department furnished me with email addresses to the

various departments. I then generated emails and sent them to the different departments.

I selected my sample from a population of middle and top-level managers from

the seven CC departments. There was the possibility of including the elected officials like

councilors in my study; however, I decided against doing this because the objective of the

study was to understand the perspectives of appointed managers. Although there are

scholars in some academic fields who contest the idea of impartiality when it comes to

policy formulation and implementation among public administrators, in the Zimbabwean

context, the role of appointed managers is to implement policy, their role is generally

expected to be separated from partisan politics which is a preoccupation of the elected

officials. I had initially intended to interview 10-15 participants however by the time I got

to Participant 10 (P10) the data was no longer revealing any new information, indicating

saturation. Some scholars have qualified the fact that in qualitative research it might not

be necessarily relevant to have a larger sample as the intention is not to generalize the

findings but to solicit rich descriptions of information that elucidates the phenomenon

under investigation (Patton, 2014). According to Gentles et al. (2015), a case study

sample may range from four to 10 participants but still illuminate what a researcher wants

to find out. Yin (2014) concurred that a qualitative case study can have a smaller sample

and argued that there is no formula to indicate the number of participants for a qualitative

study; therefore, the number of participants would be based on the purpose of the study,

specifications and the resources available, as well as the informed judgment of the

researcher.

Informed Consent

After several attempts of trying to get hold of the participants, I realized that the

responses were not going to come at the pace at which I had envisaged, and given the

data collection timeframe, I then established contact with the participants individually

and recruited them by telephone. I also identified others that were not in the list that had

been provided by HR. I proceeded to send them the consent form and the approval

document from the City Council. As I established contact with a willing manager, I

would then send them an email thanking them for their interest in my study and

explaining the details with a copy of the consent form and a selection of the few

questions to give the managers confidence on what I was likely to be ask. I informed

them of their rights, the right to withdraw if they did not wish to continue as participants,

and informed them that they did not have to answer questions which they felt

uncomfortable to answer during the interviews given the sensitive nature of the topic of

ethics in the Zimbabwean context.

Data Collection

The data collection process started from the first of July 2021 to the 30th of

August 2021. It was generally not easy to interview participants given their busy

schedules and some faltered off along the way due to time limitations. Weak network

connections and frequent power cuts presented another challenge as connection would

sometimes disappear in the middle of an interview leading to delays in the process. When

the network was available connection would sometimes be so poor that a natural flow of

conversation would be very challenging and awkward. The data collection occurred in

the middle of the Covid 19 situation which further complicated things as I could not

travel to Zimbabwe for face-to-face interviews. Furthermore, to get the participants to sit

down for interviews became a challenge as they were working form their homes and

some of them had difficulties in accessing internet from there.

The data was collected through semistructured interviews. I used an interview

protocol that I had prepared prior to the interviews. I had also sent a selected number of

questions to the participants as some of them had indicated that they wanted to see what

kind of questions would be asked. The semistructured interviews were beneficial because

they allowed me to keep in focus the type of information I needed to collect for my data

as opposed to using unstructured interviews, with the help of semistructured interviews I

could steer the conversation towards achieving that goal. Given the challenge of virtual

interviews and the weak connections, the semistructured interview protocol proved

helpful in keeping me focused in terms of time management. The interviews took about

60 minutes and were recorded over the telephone, conference call over Zoom, or using

audio recorders for telephone interviews with loudspeakers on. With permission from the

participants, I audio recorded all the interviews. I interviewed the participants until I

confirmed data saturation. Saturation is reached when supplemental participant

interactions will not result in additional perspectives or new information, and when data

coding is no longer feasible (Fusch et al., 2017). I then transcribed the audios on a word

document where I obtained a large volume of data. I then transferred the responses on a

Microsoft Excel spreadsheet which I generated, indicating responses by question for the

10 participants.

To triangulate in data collection for validity, I inspected a few documents that

were available in the web pages of the CC. When preparing for the study I had assumed

that the site code of ethics would be made available to me. However, I was informed that

the code of ethics was an internal document which was only given to employees as a

conditions of service document. I however managed to get hold of the general public

sector code of ethics which I was told informs the site code of ethics at CC. The strategy,

also available online, acted as a guiding document on the ethical values driving the CC, it

provided therefore an insight into how the CC as an organization perceives ethics.

Data Analysis

To ensure that I had understood the responses from the participants correctly, I

conducted member checking. Member checking of interview transcripts was an

opportunity for study participants to confirm accuracy of the interview and for me to very

certain assertions within the responses.

To analyze the data I collected, I used thematic analysis as explained in Chapter 3.

For anonymity and in line with the research ethics I coded participants identity and

assigned the codes from Participant 1 (P1) to Participant 10 (P10). Guided by the

research questions, I transcribed the responses from the participants. I then compiled a

Microsoft Excel worksheet detailing the collected responses in textual form. I then

systematical analyzed the information doing manual coding by question, following a

three-cycle coding process then proceeding to the generation and emergence of codes,

category clusters and consequently themes which I then assigned names to. I combined

the six-step method and cycle coding as Braun and Clarke (2012) and Saldana (2015)

proposed. Triangulation of thematic analysis methods gave me the opportunity to engage

deeply with the data collection. Noelle et al. (2017) noted that thematic analysis is a safe

method to use for novice researchers and its flexibility allows for adjustment so as to

capture information from the perspectives of different participants.

I began by doing open coding, then I proceeded to code the data in three cycles. I

then created themes informed by the literature review and Trevino's model of ethical

decision making (see Maguire and Delahunt, 2017; Trevino, 1986). In generating

information for analysis, as recommended by Saldana (2015), I first submerged myself

into the data, reading and re-reading to understand the content and what the data was

telling me. I listened to the audios several times while journaling some notes and making

memos during the first cycle of coding. Because qualitative data is primarily inductive in

nature thematic analysis is helpful in identifying and reporting the themes and patterns that emerge, and it allows the data to tell its own story (Maguire& Delahunt, 2017).

I manually coded the content derived from the documents that I reviewed to identify patterns and themes to understand the responses from the research participants. As I was reading and immersing myself in the data, I was making notes and journaling any thoughts that came into mind. This step was important in keeping me focused on my role as the researcher who is aiming to learn, focusing on the primary goal of the study, and in keeping bias in check. When all data had been transcribed and arranged in an orderly fashion in an Excel sheet, I used color codes to identify the first cycle codes. This allowed me to compare the responses from all the participants to form categories, In the second cycle I then put the categories in a table in clusters to generate themes which I then named during third cycle codes. Table 2 shows some of the coding in both interviews and documents.

Table 2

Selected First Cycle Codes

Codes from interviews	Codes from documents
Stakeholder satisfaction, focus on work relations	Transparency and accountability
Work performance	Ethical awareness
Regard for Humanity (ubuntu), honesty, respect empathy(*uzwelo*)	Citizen focus/Stakeholder focus
Restrictive operational space, interference, lack of autonomy	Ethics and the strategy
Conditions of service, HR tool, employee retention strategy	Organizational culture
Disciplinary document	
Moral compass	
Leading by example, walking the talk	
Transparency and accountability	

The themes were generated based on the frequency of appearance within the data mass.

Through the process of categorizing, I identified the themes illustrated in the Table 3.

Table 3

Categories, Themes, and Meanings

Coded Categories/Themes and Emergent Patterns from the Interviews	Theme meaning
Honesty, Humanity, Empathy	Identity
Ethics Infrastructure and Ethics Training	Ethics competency
Access to Information	
Autonomy (lack of) Ownership (lack of)	Political interference
Polarization, partisan politics	
Informal approach to ethics	Professionalism (lack of)
Moral maturity	
Organizational culture	
Availability vs accessibility	Lack of coordination
Lack of ownership	
Fragmentation	
Leading by example, Walk the talk	Leadership and communication
communication	
Transparency and accountability	Ethical awareness

Evidence of Trustworthiness

According to Lincoln and Guba, cited in Korstjens and Moser (2018), the

trustworthiness of a research study is measured based on it being credible, transferable,

dependable, and confirmable. According to Asiamah et al. (2017), credibility is the

essence of every research study and the integrity of the data drives the credibility of the

findings. Credibility is concerned with truth-value of a research. It establishes whether

the research findings are truly the correct views of the participants. Bowen (2005) referred to strategies like prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, and member checking as suitable pointers to producing credible research. The size of the sample and sampling procedures also have a bearing on the credibility of a study. For this study, I made use of triangulation to ensure the research is credible. I obtained data from personnel at different levels of leadership, using as many departments as possible to explore the different perspectives, and probing participants to support their statements where necessary. Careful study of the data in order to draw out theory and scope for the study was fundamental in this research. The unit of analysis in my study was one CC, the leaders provided the needed information to understand perceptions on ethics and codes of conduct.

Triangulation of data collection through interviews, and documents review was helpful in reaching saturation which is important for validity (Roe & Just, 2009). Dentin (2012) supported the idea of looking at data through multiple lenses to understand the meaning inherent within the data. To ensure theoretical saturation I formulated questions that were clear and not dubious to capture the essence of the perceptions of leaders. By using semistructured interviews rather than open-ended interview questions, I was able to direct the interview to focus on the topics of interest to uncover the answers my research questions aimed to illuminate. Soliciting for an independent view in data collection and analysis also added value to my findings. Guest et al. (2006) described saturation as "the point in data collection and analysis when new information produces little or no change

to the codebook" (para.19). According to Nascimento et al. (2018), following a five-step

strategy to achieve theoretical saturation can be useful.

According to Nascimento et al. (2018), the first in the five-step data saturation

process involves recording data from primary sources. For this study, I collected primary

data through semistructured interviews with department managers. The second step

entailed immersion in data. At this stage, I read the data as it was collected, making notes

and keeping a reflexive journal to keep bias in check. The third step involves compilation

of individual analyses and thematic grouping. At this stage, I coded the participants to

hide their identity transcribing the data. The fourth step involved forming patterns,

grouping statements proceeding to assigning themes. The final step involved attainment

of theoretical saturation through absence of new elements for each grouping. This process

was happening on par with thematic analysis as I jotted down notes on a journal.

Transferability is the degree to which the results of a study can be transposed to

other contexts (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Thick description, entailing not just the

behavior and experiences of a people, but also their contexts to attach meaning to their

decisions is paramount for transferability. The authors stated that an understanding of the

context in which the research is carried out (its setting, sample, sample size, sample

strategy, demographic, socioeconomic, and clinical characteristics), inclusion and

exclusion of participants, and the interview procedure is critical for transferability. This

study may be transferrable to other city councils in Zimbabwe because they are similar in

structure and are governed by the same laws. Moreover, the theoretical foundation used

to investigate ethical decision making and the perspectives on the NPM allow the findings to be transferrable to local government in other countries as well.

The study setting is an important component of a research study (Majid, 2018). The nature, context, environment, and logistics of the study may influence how the research study is carried out. Prior assessment of the study context enables the researcher to mitigate some of the foreseeable challenges. Majid (2018) noted that observing a study setting before collecting data enables the researcher to take careful consideration of the problems and challenges, relating to such issues as interview room layout, privacy, links and protocols. Poor settings have a negative influence on reliability and the truthfulness of a study, and can violate ethics. Korstjens and Moser (2018) also alluded to dependability and confirmability of a study. Whereas dependability looks at the consistency of the research process with accepted standards for a particular design, confirmability considers neutrality and the intersubjectivity of the data.

Findings of the Study

Guided by Treviño's (1986) person-situation interactionist model which expounded on the contextual factors, the results were presented and analyzed with a focus on the individual and the context within which they operate as a manager. In this section I present the result as guided by the research questions. Three research questions (noted below as RQ1, RQ2, and RQ3) were purposed to gain an understanding on how managers view the code of ethics as being an important tool in ensuring ethical behaviour in their departments:

RQ 1: How do departmental managers in local government Zimbabwe encourage ethical

behavior among their employees?

Promoting Ethical Conduct in Departments-Ethical Awareness

The promotion of ethical conduct is a key management function. To answer the

research question, participants were asked to give their views on how they encourage

ethical behavior among their employees. Submissions singled out stakeholder reviews

and policies as determining factors for ethical conduct. For purposes of gaining positive

commendation from important others, it was noted, one is bound to perform ethically.

The focus was on doing good, being honest and respectful to satisfy the client. For

example, P1 stated "you look at the feedback that you have been getting from the other

stakeholders especially the external stakeholders about your section ..." Other notable

indicators of the way departmental managers encourage ethical conduct is the use of

intrinsic motivators like honesty, fairness and ownership of decisions and being

respectful and taking undue advantage of the subordinate. Senior managers call for

honesty in service delivery among their employees to promote ethical conduct. For

example, P2 indicated,

> I try to tell my colleagues that in whatever we are doing, let's make sure that we
>
> are honest and own our dealings…" Also notable was the call for fairness and
>
> dignity when dealing with subordinates related to internal relationships within the
>
> organization. These submissions therefore imply the individual manager builds an
>
> image among colleagues by being fair and treating everyone with respect. These
>
> findings concur with Rawls (1971) who encouraged public administrators to put

social equity, and social justice at the forefront of their work, however, Rawls

view implies that these qualities need to be incorporated in service provision to

the citizens and not just within the organization.

Also evident in the collected data is the importance of the need to inform as a key

strategy, effective promotion of ethical conduct to influence organizational culture in

adopting ethics as a way of life for public administrators. However, while proactive

measures are implemented, findings reveal retaliatory measures are also an integral

measure in promoting ethical conduct. As noted by P3 "*...*through engagement of

deterrents like penalties, expulsion when warranted.*"* On the same, P10 indicated

We actually have a code of conduct in our organization and this code of conduct

directs people on how they are supposed to conduct themselves at work. Anything

that can work against the code is called and it attracts a chargeable offence. While

managers engage conformist approaches to promotion of ethics, they on the other

hand display an aggressive arm pillared on the code of conduct and punitive

measures thereto for disobedience (Maunganidze, 2014). To add on P10 indicated

"a code of conduct directs people on how they should conduct themselves, and

anything that works against it is considered a misconduct and a chargeable

offence. In view of these submissions, it can therefore be noted, a code of conduct

while appealing to conscience and morality, and control of behavior, participants'

responses indicated that the code of conduct is considered synonymous with the

conditions of service, which takes conscience as a factor of ethical conduct to

conformity, thus depriving employees of the opportunity for growth in moral

development stages (Trevino, 1986).

Varying views on ethical conduct emerged from the participants' responses, where

managers appeal to conscience and morality and at the same time read the riot act post-

action. These findings are in tandem with Cooper (2004) who noted that big

organizations like local governments tend to stifle conscience. In the same vein, Rohr,

(1989) in context, called for philosophical and religious thought processes that make

people to think in pluralistic forms (Green, 2012). Casting codes of ethics in concrete

stifles the power of conscience in decision making as seen to be drawing from individual

moral maturity. Ethics and ethical behaviour are connected to how individual tendencies

are affected by moral development, cognitions of right and wrong, and situational

moderators such as a code of ethics if used properly (Treviño1986).

Ethical Conduct and Work Performance

Stakeholder satisfaction emerged as a key indicator of performance which is

enhanced by good ethical conduct. Khademfar and Amiri (2013) postulated that ethical

conduct and performance are related and that it is therefore the responsibility of the

manager to cultivate trust among employees by demonstrating ethical values in the

organization. Contrary though P2 indicated, "while the code of ethics stands to promote

commendable performance, we have had instances where people excel in their

performance because there is some personal or unethical behavior, which they are doing."

Here the value of honesty was again emphasized. In the same vein, P4 indicated "ethical

conduct supports good work performance and enhances productivity. It also supports

effectiveness and efficiency and promotes timeous completion of tasks. Ethical conduct

enhances professionalism and helps produce quality work. Still the same, ethical conduct

promotes good relations between supervisors and subordinates, which is conducive for

good performance, and ethical conduct promotes good and harmonious industrial

relations, which may lead to job satisfaction and in that regard may act as a staff retention

strategy." Professionalism, good conduct, commitment, good relations and

industriousness are some of the important justifications for ethics directly influencing

performance. These findings concur with P7 also brought in the mapping of good and bad

decisions, as well as moral uprightness leading to performing well without having to be

pushed, selflessness as opposed to self-gain, whereby this signifies moral maturity.

Contrary though, P9 alluded to one stealing a valuable resource like time from the

employer as a huge setback due to unethical conduct by an employee. These submissions

all point to ethics and performance as related where one may be unethical to the

organization when they steal from it, they also may still be unethical if they use

unorthodox means to get results for the organization. There is an eccentric approach to

ethics by managers, guided by conformity to a set of preplanned patterns of conduct that

influence performance.

Ethical Competency and Policy

Participants indicated their submissions on how they enhance ethical conduct

among employees. Standing out was the code of ethics, where others alluded to the

conditions of service. The opinions brought forward suggested a thin line in

understanding and differentiating of the conditions of service document and the code of

ethics. The code of conduct among managers is always held by the other hand awaiting a call where one acts unethically. One example was P1, who stated "if you look at what we do in dealing with our clients we have got procedures and we have got policies which are guiding us and once we follow those procedures and policies which are the procedures that are already there in dealing with clients then I think we will be following the code. Failure to follow the code means failure to act ethically. So, the code must be there to promote ethical conduct. This dimension though contradicts with P7's submission that "ethics are not taught, let me say ethics are life." While P7 sees ethics from a whole life perspective, defining one and not being taught, there is an element of coercive engagement in trying to promote ethical conduct by P1, which takes away the whole person approach to the action performed and the use of the code of ethics as a moral compass. The contradicting views towards ethics and ethical conduct demonstrated a fragmented and uncoordinated approach in enhancing ethical conduct among managers. In the same vein P3 pointed to deterrents like suspensions and public hearings as some of the ways used by public managers to promote ethics. P3 further noted "We have frequent scenarios where council employees appear before disciplinary committees to respond to cases of unethical behavior". In a context where unethical behavior populates the public discourse, a clear and concise strategy on how ethical conduct is enhanced in CC would be helpful.

Another notable action is the holding of workshops by managers to promote ethical conduct among employees. Submissions by P4 point to the cooperate-wide initiative when noting "periodically what the cooperate organization does is, they have

carried out workshops for all the employees like to give an awareness on the employment code of conduct because all the employees have to be aware to say when I'm doing this, I now know that I'm doing something that is outside of the city council ethics. So, at my position I'm part of the enforcement but the awareness is normally done at cooperate level." This suggests a reliance on a separate arm of the organization handling planning for ethical conduct and the lack of ownership of the code of ethics as a decision-making tool, while managers wait with the button stick for non-conformists. In tandem with the submissions by P4, P5 alluded to training of employees on how to carry themselves around and themselves within the workplace. Further, P5 indicated "implementation of dispute resolution mechanism through use of the code of conduct and conditions of service … for good industrial relations supportive of ethical conduct", implying the code of conduct and conditions of service instruments are measures put in place for the promotion of ethical behavior among employees. Some however place these at par.

Managers also indicated induction at employee entry-point as a measure put in place to promote ethical conduct. As alluded to by P7,

Whenever we have a new employee, they go for an induction and at the induction they are given a copy of the code of conduct that they sign for, then someone goes around to say tomorrow, I did not know.' You are an employee, you go through induction, you are a new employee, you are given a code of conduct, you are asked at the training to say, please go over it and ask those areas you are not familiar with. It's a document that is very accessible."

While participants' responses suggested ease of access to the code of ethics, it was not possible for any of the managers to avail the code for use in this study or to confirm its availability, they however confirmed that the site code is derived from the general public sector code which is in essence a labor relations document drafted in consultation with labor unions. To cement the unavailability assertion, when stating "We do not have a program really set aside for communicating or communicating ethical values to members. I think we would do with such a Program once the code of ethics document is signed …." While some sections pointed to ease of access of the code of ethics document as an action to promote ethical conduct in the local government organization, some sections are still awaiting the document, showing limited professionalism in how the issue of ethics is handled at CC, one participant confirmed that the issue of ethics is new and has not gained much traction within the city council.

Formulation and Communication of Ethical Values

On how they formulate and communicate ethical values to their subordinates, P1 alluded to the existence of a communications department, while P5 indicated "through inductions, written memos, consultations, trainings, feedback platforms, fliers, noticeboards and awareness program." Other submissions included the citizens' charter, conditions of service and code of conduct as valuable communication platforms for ethical conduct. P3 had a different view "We do not have a program really set aside for communication or communicating ethical values to members. I think we would do with such a program once the code of ethics document is signed at the council chambers. We have quite a number of educational programs within council that promote ethical

practice". While there was ample evidence to suggest management at the local

government authority had programs set aside for communicating conduct issues,

communication of ethics with subordinates was noted to be having loopholes owing to

confusion on the line of separation between code of conduct/ conditions of service and

code of ethics. Managers as such are expected to be responsive to community needs as

guided by policy frameworks, which are formulated, discussed and agreed upon with

every stakeholder as alluded to by P10,

> Everything is specified there in the conditions of service. ... if they work against
>
> what is expected of them by the organization, they are supposed to be charged
>
> through a disciplinary action. They would have violated the code of conduct,
>
> because the code of conduct specifies the behavior of a person and this code leads
>
> to ethical behavior. While the response suggests the code of conduct applies to the
>
> employees only, managers have a gap in determining the ethics instrument's
>
> engagement of community structures.

Ethics Infrastructure

Managers were also asked about insights on the materials and resources used to

ensure ethical behavior and decisions during ethical dilemmas. P1 alluded to situations

where a manager is an interested party to a decision that needs to be made by council. In

such a case the member has to "go to another department and apply and also go through a

process which they do not have direct influence over…" P3 alluded to the public eye as

enough a deterrent for ensuring ethical behavior. P5 indicated they have the employment

code of conduct, conditions of service, service charter, policies and Labor Act [Chapter

20:01]. Verbatim, P10 stated

> … if at any given time an employee thinks mmmh, I have a grievance, the
>
> grievance actually is derived from the conditions of service. The individual is
>
> actually thinking maybe, this thing is violating against my conditions of service.
>
> So, there can be a grievance procedure that the person can follow, then if they
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> work against what is expected of them by the organization, they are supposed to
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> be charged through a disciplinary action. They would have violated the code of
>
> conduct, because the code of conduct specifies the behavior of a person and this
>
> code leads to ethical behavior."

This response buttresses again the point that forceful action is implemented prior to

ethical behavior revealing the fragmented approach to ethics in CC. All managers

confirmed that they rely on the members of the public to alert them of unethical conduct

by employees either through calls, mobile telephone messages or come in person to raise

alarm. Some generate emails while others use the council call center. Pressure groups

have also come in handy in quelling unethical behavior and given the local government

organization's open-door policy to whistle blowing, many unethical practices have been

unearthed by the public. From the responses, it was noted, managers do investigate prior

to taking action on any issue. As noted by P3

> We also have newspapers as whistle blowers. … Whenever we get a newspaper
>
> publication, we always sit as council to deliberate, investigate and come up a

position as council. We also encourage wide stakeholder involvement in council

business, so that everyone is responsible and accountable.

From this response it can be noted the organization has some kind of whistle blower

procedure in place which allows wide stakeholder engagement. However, the   search for

a written down whistle blower policy in the CC web pages yielded no results.

Newspapers, suggestion boxes, letters from corporate communication, internal audits,

were referenced as some of the whistle-blower platforms for private and public entities,

employees, pressure groups, consumers all and sundry to express themselves and be

heard. It was noted, the organization has a variety of platforms on which get inputs from

the internal and external world who express their dissatisfaction with organization

performance, and this was noted to promote accountability and responsibility. P7

however indicated "There is no policy eye for whistle blowing, as such, but it's

something that we just encourage. If you see wrong, it's important to point out there is

something wrong." In contrast though P10 indicated "not that I know", to signal lack of

knowledge of any whistle blower platform used by internal and external personnel to

express themselves. This is an indicator that, while the generality of organization

managers have knowledge of how they can get information from the employee and public

population about their operations, there are some who may not be listening to external

opinion in their operations and the informal approach to whistle blowing gives limited

clear direction to both public administrators and the members of the public.

Political Interference and Conflict of Interest

Managers were also asked about their opinions on how they manage conflict of interest in their departments. Notable opinions suggested council does have clear procedures like the declaration of interest by employees on tendering for service provision. Problems were highlighted where councilors as policy makers, for example, involved themselves in administrative issues because they have interests in certain decisions to be made. From the responses, it was noted that the organization does have procedures followed to curtail conflict of interest though it is left to individual managers involved to exercise their wisdom in handling a given situation. Social pressure from individuals of power outside the organization can categorically lame efforts to ethical conduct in relation to conflict of interest. For example, P4 indicated, "l think when such scenarios do happen it's the diligence in the evaluation process and the choice of alternatives, l mean to really narrow down and dig deep into, maybe, who owns this company or who are the other shareholders, I mean all that has to be looked into diligently." This points to lack of clarity on the policy position though bringing on board the need for ethical decision making on the managers. P6 indicated the code of conduct was clear on the aspect of being at competition with council business as a potential lead to one being fired from the organization, bringing on board the need to enforce for ethical conduct to be attained.

To buttress on this point P7 hinted "When I am conflicting, I am challenging my employer in terms of the job I am doing. Then we look at conflicts of interests, u have a mandate, and you are also carrying out the same mandate at personal level, and it is

unpalatable." Trevino (1986) referred to locus of control as being relevant in understanding the ability of managers being able to stand their ground in the face of an ethical dilemma. Given the existence of external bodies monitoring council business, managers expressed conformity was the best stance to take to avoid trouble. P9 indicated, "But now that there is this procurement board, the PRAAZ Regulatory Authority, it's no longer easy to conflict some of these interests."

Managers also relied on the organization being a monopoly which also reduced conflicts of interest, as noted by P10, who stated "… City Council is a monopoly. There is no other company that can duplicate the services for City Council. Are you answered? It's a monopoly. Do you know what a monopoly is? The giant in the in that particular service. No one can duplicate water. No one can duplicate sewer, so there is no way someone can duplicate those services." This however creates room for relaxation on the part of managers to manage conflicting situations believing no one can do the same services unethically.

RQ 2: How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe view a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes as important for encouraging ethical behavior among their employees?

Code of Ethics in Ethical Decision-Making Processes

In this second sub-section managers were expected to focus on the code of ethics and its role in decision making processes. The following submissions were obtained from the questionnaire.

The Code of Ethics as a Labor Relations Document.

Managers viewed the code of ethics as a human resources department issue versus being a moral compass for the organization, while also noting it has been around for some time but not very much practiced. Also noted was the existence of a code of ethics document that provides guidelines on expected ethical practice. As noted by P5, the document "teaches and trains employees to uphold public interest over personal interest." P7 also indicated the document changes with changes in the laws of a state as guide by bills and labor Acts. Also noted, was the document guided managers on how to react to situations, while promoting transparency in an organization by spelling out what is expected of each and every employee. For example, P8 stated "The code of conduct is an instrument that promotes transparency on an organization by spelling out what is expected of them and how they should react to situations that may arise." It was also noted ethics is practice, how things are done, looking at the conscience in an organization when wanting to do things right. As noted by P9 "ethics is how things are done, we are looking at the conscience aspect in an organization when you want to do things right always by others by yourself as an individual, to make sure that you are not involved in any fraudulent activity that may damage your reputation." P10 added on to say "Ethics is a moral principle that actually governs a person's behavior be it at work," These views suggest managers have an understanding of what ethics is and how it influences practice. Wilson (1887) desired a responsive public governance system that demonstrated managers' responsiveness to conscience as an element of self-control.

Contribution of the Code of Ethics to Positive Social Change

Managers demonstrated an understanding of ethical conduct and how this can be done in practice. However, several referred to contextual challenges they confronted in real practice as they carried out their tasks, for example P2 noted "the aspect of ethical leadership as a discipline is emerging and is not yet fully headed in most public organizations in the country…' while P3 acknowledged "it is a big challenge to effectively implement ethical practice given the level of corruption we are at as a nation. You may want to act ethically but external forces may sometimes force you to close one eye and look the other way" Most of the participants noted that the code of ethics contributes to positive social change by encouraging responsibility, accountability, honesty and integrity and it calls for public administrators to have the people they serve in focus. As noted by P8 "it makes someone aware of what they are expected to and are not expected to do and yes the ethics code promotes good behavior patterns." Also pertinent about the code of ethics, is it is a survival tool for organizations. P9 stated

The code of ethics is very important because you realize without it the organization can actually struggle to survive, one, in terms of organizational efficiency, and if there is no code of ethics anyone can do whatever they want at any given time, so if there is a defined code of ethics, people know how to behave, how to dress at work, how not to harass others in the work place, reasons if you feel this is the penalty that you get. Code of ethics is more like a bible of how to run our day-to-day life in a work situation.

The presence of a code of conduct document was noted to empower employees with a scale to test the truth and falsehood of accusations and decisions made.

QR 3: How do departmental mangers in local government in Zimbabwe utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments?

Code of Ethics in Everyday Administrative Tasks and Decision Making

Decisions by managers were noted to be based on policy. P1 indicated, "we are basing our decision on policies which are already in place," while P3 acknowledged, "guided by the local authority regulations, I am compelled to act ethically." Also noted was the code of ethics promotes consistency of practice. As noted by P5, on a day-today basis as employees carry out their normal duties, they are guided by good ethical principles to discharge their duties. This promotes fairness and integrity in the manner an organization conducts business." The aspect of fairness as an ethical issue was also echoed by P7, who stated "While its policy, also we are looking at fairness. There are times people would work under unsafe conditions because they are afraid that if I say I don't have this I might be admonished." The need for the safety of employees under managers' supervision was noted to be an ethical issue sometimes compromised. Such aspects as values to do with provision of equal opportunities, gender equal opportunities and achieving a gender balance were noted to influence managers operations. In view of gender perspectives being an ethical issue, CC council has a gender policy publicly available on their web pages which I reviewed. However, the non-availability of the code of ethics was of concern in this study in view of its everyday usage in management and its importance in guiding ethical conduct. For example, P10 indicated "Everyone who is

employed by City Council is given a Code of Conduct. It's a small book, unfortunately I

don't have it, I thought I had it." Some managers may therefore think they are using the

code, yet they are not. The code of ethics is a document which communicates to the

citizens the seriousness and integrity of an organization, it allows citizens to gain trust

and it also demonstrates accountability and transparency.

Use of the Code of Ethics to Solve Ethical Dilemmas and Conflicts

On solving ethical dilemmas and conflicts managers noted the code of ethics

comes not because there is a problem, but looks at potential areas of conflict, P3

indicated use of council regulations given the code was still awaiting signing and inaction

as part of organization regulations. P5 indicated "The Code of Ethics is the reference

instrument for the application/implementation of the dispute resolution mechanism and

conflict resolution. It gives step to step guide on how various ethical dilemmas and

conflicts can be handled successfully, be it internally or with external parties." P6 alluded

to the rotation of organizational officers in handling public sector issues like the

inspection of shops by the health department, as a way of managing ethical dilemmas,

conflicts and disputes.

Another dimension emerging was on 'uzwelo' (empathy with an accused

employee) where one has to be dismissed because they have violated and ethical issue.

As noted by P7 "some decisions may be considered too hard on this person but that what

the law says." Issues of fraud, physical and sexual harassment, and torture were noted to

be prevalent given the presence of people with varying approaches to life. Emphasizing

ethical dilemmas presented by the aspect of "ubuntu", humanity, P9 noted that "… the

code of ethics is handy in minimizing misbehavior and conflicts." Emphasizing on

conformity, P10 stated "You are not taken just, you are not given a code not to read it but

you are supposed to read it so that you know when they say so and so you have actually

breached the code of conduct so you can confirm doing so knowingly"

Importance of the Code of Ethics to the Manager's Role and the Humanity Aspect

When asked to comment on the role of the code of ethics P2 noted "Well that

code of conduct or conditions of service they bind every employee, so there is still no

room to contextualize it because they are meant to be applicable to every employee

irrespective of the department" these sentiments suggest some managers take the code of

ethics and the conditions of service to be synonymous. P3 indicated "The code of ethics

provides me with a guide on how to act ethically and it acts as a reminder when tempted

to act unethically." The probability to act unethically knowingly or unknowingly is high

in public management as noted, but the presence of punitive measures as well as the

existence of ethics enables managers to act ethically towards individuals. As noted by P5,

the code of ethics assists in team building and allows a manager to make informed

decisions on ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest. P7 indicated the value of the code

of ethics stretches beyond inference of punitive measures, but also applies more to the

whole person and the philosophy of 'Ubuntu'.

> When serving a client, I am bounded by the ethics. Ethics come in various forms,
>
> the code of conduct is an ethics document it tells me what I must do and what I
>
> must not do here at CC, it stipulates the right and the wrong. Apart from that book
>
> I am just bounded by general Ubuntu. You know what I am saying by Ubuntu?

When I'm dealing with the client, I look at myself, I look at the client and tell

myself that every day I am talking to somebody. Am I treating them fairly? There

is a big element of fairness in ethics.

From these submissions a notable pointer is the code of ethics is used to determine right

from wrong, while at the same time pointing to the self-concept visa vee humanity and

the idea of the intrinsic African identity. These findings bring into context Treviño's

(1986) contextual factors that influence leaders to embark on a course of moral action

taken. Treviño suggested that there is an interaction between the individual and

situational factors that determine how a leader may decide whether an action is ethical or

not. While the concept of Ubuntu comes into context, when the managers view the

individual as unique and needing specialized attention, they will evaluate an ethical

dilemma drawing from the empathic value informed by ubuntuness (Sambala et al.,

2020).

Emerging also was the aspect of control and reprimand for violators of the code.

As noted by P10 "Code of conduct is very important, because it actually guides, it

actually tells how the employees are supposed to operate, the parameters they are

supposed to follow when they are working for City Council. If they violate any of those,

they are charged and the charges are having some penalties, which can be as severe as

dismissal. So, it actually assists us." Also emphasizing on code of ethics as an instrument

for reprimanding offenders was P9 who stated "It has high ethical values, because

everyone knows what is expected of them, and the few bad apples are dealt with

accordingly. "This was in contravention of Man's (2012) assertion that a leader is not just

a person or position, but rather a composition of factors that include trust, commitment, a

shared vision and emotion. (Friedman, 2014) concurred that the realization of the leader

as an individual with feelings and perceptions about situations is a key determinant of the

decisions they make at particular points in time. The use of the code of ethic to reprimand

and control negatively affects the individual feelings of the manager, which is a

compromise on ethics.

The Code of Ethics Reflects Organizational Culture

Managers in the local authority believe the organisation is ethical. Its use of a

code of ethics as well as adherence to the ethical code of conduct. As noted by P1, "we

have standard operating procedures for basically all the services that we offer in terms of

sewer, water supply, etc." On the same vein, P4 stated "we also have what we may call

standard operating procedures to say if l am a plumber l have access to the standard

operating procedure of my plumbing work, be it little repairs or sewer chokes or

blocking and so on" Managers believe they have well stated conclusive and exhaustive

rules and regulations that ensure predictable operations in the various sectors of council.

P9 stated "BCC is an ethical organisation. We have if you look at our register for

misconduct, limited cases, we don't have a lot of misconduct cases, so I believe it's an

ethical organisation. It has high ethical values, because everyone knows what is expected

of them, and the few bad apples are dealt with accordingly. Contrary though, P2 stated

"to some extent the conditions of service will influence the organisational culture. Local

authority by its nature is a political organisation and the political culture is reflected in

decisions which are made at a local level. I think we are at a stage where ethics have

almost been thrown out of the window …. people generally consider themselves first and organisation later. People can sacrifice the organisation for personal or personal gain." This comment corresponds with the lack of moral maturity at City Council as discussed by Kohlberg's stages of moral development (Trevino, 1986). It can also be noted that external factors like partisan politics have a huge bearing on the organizational culture and the ethical conduct of local government management. As such there is acknowledgement that ethics in the CC are going down the drain compromised by political influence. Singled out were the political leaders in local governance who were fuelling corrupt tendencies for personal gain. P3 concurred with P2 stating "The documents we use now reflect on government as a central body. You realize, government control over councils cannot be easily relinquished. As such even when we decide to come up with our own code, it has to reflect central government." Managers therefore denounce their role in falling standards pointing out their failures are a reflection of central government.

P5 had a contradicting view and stated, "in my organisation, the culture is all internal conflicts should be dealt with internally and this, if not followed is a violation of the Code of Ethics and punishable." This may suggest pushing dirty linen under the carpet so that an artificially presentable image of the organisation is in the public eye therefore stifling transparency and accountability. P6 also denounced ownership of the document indicating "we don't have any input, but this document was done by a consultant and the consultant was hired that will produce this document and it was initially taken to the department where the HR people are and when the HR people said

its fine then it was cascaded to all the departments. A meeting was called that is the heads of all the departments was called that is ok they are happy with it, so they implemented it" This indicates that ownership of the code of ethics is limited at CC. On a related note P7 stated "the code was done long back it was done by whoever was in office then, it's a code which has a buy-in from, it's an extract from the central government Labor Act and when it is done it is registered with the ministry who Oks it to be fine. It's not a document that be changed willy-nilly. But you know with changes, at some point, you need to review it, and when it's reviewed, things are edited then there is another version. It's not something you can change every day." Also stated was the code was coined before independence and has been around for years. In the words of P2, the CC code of ethics was "designed by the colonial council as a way of deterring mal-practice by stating penalties for various unwarranted actions by council employees. In view of such, all along council has been chasing behind problems, the code of ethics is neither a living document nor a moral compass (Maunganidze, 2014). Pleasing though, from the submissions, management has realized the need to come up with a document that can speak to ethics and ethical conduct. "The alienation of some managers from the development of the code is cemented by P10 who stated, "It's actually generated by the human capital department as you are the employers, we sit together, we discuss and actually put a relevant information for the sake of our organization". From these submissions it can therefore be deduced, most managers have little say on the code of ethics except to read, understand and apply. Those who have not made effort at reading and understanding do not even know it exists.

Effectiveness of Code of Ethics for the Whole Public Sector

The organization uses an institution customized code of ethics document which

addresses issues pertinent to the operations of the institution. As noted by P5," we are not

using a whole public sector wide Code of Conduct/Ethics. We have our own home-grown

Code of Conduct, that was worked on and finalized by an Ad hoc Committee of

Management Representatives and Workers' Representatives. Before we crafted and

registered our own Code of Conduct, we were using a Statutory Instrument, which is a

National Code of Conduct, but it fell short in addressing some of our organization

specific conflicts and disputes and this exposed us in the courts of law." Management

also have a feeling the code in some instances waits for a problem to come then react

which is contrary to their beliefs that proactive measures need to be implemented in

reviews prior to foreseen problems These findings concur with ICMA (2018) who noted

that 91% of such ethics standards refer to conflicts of interest, acceptance of gifts,

appropriate conduct in the workplace, use of public resources, outside employment and

internet usage. Likewise, Svara (2014) purported that most public sector organizations

find it difficult to clearly articulate how codes of ethics must be upheld and implemented.

As such a code of ethics becomes some form of conflict resolution and resource

management strategy. As noted by P4 "as City Council …. right from the cooperate level

when we first look at the values, the vision, the mission the city, compare it with the

operations I think the CC is really striving to maintain an ethical code of conduct in

delivering its services." P7 acknowledge the code of ethics is effective in that "It covers

every area. When there is need, like I said, laws changes, when the law changes, when

there are new issues, people go to parliament, they present bills, they debate on issues, a Labor Act comes in and there are changes that now need to be made in the Labor Act, so must the code of ethics be changed" Where there is need for change changes are made following procedures. Also noted was the element of agreement by officers' discussions and deliberates, then they there are systems that are followed though, as noted by P10 "we can't say now we have the code of conduct then we have to publicize it. It has to go through the steps through up until it goes through the council. I will take it; my organization is very ethical."

Managers' Experiences that Have Caused Reference to Code of Ethics

Managers do make reference to the code of ethics for various reasons. P1 stated "we are guided by these policies when dealing situations that require following of procedures…" also noted by the same was the use of code of ethics for purposes of evaluation. To add on, P3 stated, "I am reminded of the situation where we have to check on qualifications for one to be eligible to contest as a counselor." The code of ethics has been noted to be used to check on regulations to see that one's record is ethically clean. This may however be conclusively certain given managers have been proven to confuse the differences between the code of ethics and the other instruments like conditions of work. Managers also referenced the code of ethics when dealing with tender procedures and reminding members who have vested interests in a given tender to come out in the open and declare their interests, as well as in grievance procedures. Also noted was managers' work for public offices and the code of ethics reflects on the desires of the employer and they are expected to breed loyalty.

P7 gave the example of a situation where one steals from the organization and a decision needs to be arrived at by management. In such cases, there is need to appeal to the code of ethics, for purposes of indicating to the offender the unethical nature of their behavior as well as the magnitude of the conduct and the resulting decision. Managers however expressed mixed feelings on the decisions guided by the code and other instruments in use, which sometimes appear harsh on offenders and do not engage the "human eye". Contrary though, not every manager however uses the code of ethics for reference purposes as noted by P2 who stated, "at the moment we don't have a document that is really coded as being an ethics conduct document but our code of conduct and our conditions of service, they have got issues that have got to do with ethics in them. So that document code of conduct is a result of negotiations between management and the workers as represented by unions." From this response, there are also traces of trivialization of the document given the existence of other exhaustive policy instruments.

Interpersonal and Contextual Situations Faced by Managers in Ethical Decision Making

P9 indicated "its ethical nature for challenges to show up as long as there are human beings." Issues of fraud, issues of harassment at the workplace, like sometimes, once in a while, we have harassment, like the sexual harassment aspect, you cannot rule that out where human beings are, but these are not rampant, Challenges faced by managers cover an array of instances guided by the variables involved. Some of the instances indicated include on performance of subordinates, where some excel ethically while others excel unethically, on the other hand having others who outright are not

performing. As alluded to by P2, "some employees fail to separate between personal interests and ethical conduct. "

Also challenging is the tendering process where interested parties have to excuse themselves from decision-making processes. In some cases, employees hide their links to potential service providers and only surface when tenders have been offered. As noted by P2 "…a member excuses themselves officially if they know they are part of the issue or and under discussion so that independent decisions are made." P3 also indicated "l gave an example of the tender process to say you may have an interested party within the system maybe who then, I mean, goes behind and becomes the part of the bidding process…" Here, there is a conflict of interest there because the code of ethics does not allow one to do that". P3 referred to some instruments like the Procurement Regulations of Zimbabwe, which are violated by individuals to advance self-interests, As noted by P6: "The problem we are having now is like more people are interested in doing illegal activities so that at the end of the day our officers are overwhelmed whereby people are trying to bribe their way."

Managers expressed concern over some key council personnel be they politically elected or employed who took advantage of public services to personalize services. P3 indicated councilors were rampant in doing unethical activities that made managers' tasks difficult. Councilors were noted to be coming from diverse backgrounds with diverse interests and did not have the professionalism displayed by council employees. As noted by P2, "We have come across situations where a councilor puts aside ethical practice to advance their personal interests." Unethical practice therefore shows up in departments

depending on services offered and the interests various stakeholders have in these. Rohr (1989) questioned the effectiveness of codes of ethics in the absence of value regimes, which when taken into consideration can be helpful in enhancing ethics at institutional level among elected councilors.

Notable challenges were also expressed in land distribution where some high-profile employees and councilors became land barons. These findings support Mafunisa, (2001), who argued that the need for professionalism and ethical competency among the leaders and their subordinates in ethical decision-making is crucial and needs to be developed in Zimbabwe.

Another emerging challenge is to do with adherence to the non-disclosure agreements which calls upon managers to keep secretive important decisions which are sensitive and need appropriate times, venues and rightful personnel for them to be disclosed.

Managers viewed being and acting professional as well as following the code of ethics that applies to the City Council on a daily basis. On a different note, P5 indicated "Dealing with a situation where a disciplined, committed and good performing individual fails a promotional panel interview.", while P10 indicated, "secretively keeping sensitive information." Being disciplined as a manager and professionally handling daily processes in an ethical manner was noted to be every manager's target every time they wake up and come to work.

How Managers Ensure Subordinates Embrace Ethical Conduct by use of the Code of Ethics

Managers ensure employees have the liberty to form and be members of employee associations where they can assist management with collective bargaining on issues that may be hidden to management. P2 insisted, "People are members of associations and once in a while issues of ethical leadership are discussed." P3 indicated "We hold chamber meetings on a regular basis, and we also have disciplinary hearings when a member acts contrary." Public private engagement through meetings, collective bargaining through formation of associations ensures subordinates embrace ethical conduct through use of the code of ethics. Notable also was the provision of the code of conduct and the code of ethics documents to employees upon employment for them to make reference to as a proactive measure to avoid behaving unethical in the delivery of their daily duties. Worrying though was the frequency of hearings and reprimands. P3 indicated "Most of the time we are following behind cases rather than leading. It's like, we wait for a member to do wrong then place them before a disciplinary committee, instead of taking proactive measures to curb unethical practice." While the CC management makes efforts to proactively encourage ethical conduct, the results portray a different scenario, and their solace is that where a human being is, there is bound to be a misconduct. This is undistinguishable from resignation to continued hearings as a result of breach of ethics, suggesting that the internalization and robust coordination of ethical procedures through training is something CC needs to consider. P5 alluded to training employees on the Code of Ethics, educating the employees on the benefits of knowing

and adhering to the code, to both the employee and the employer, counselling employees on observing and practicing good principles as guided by the Code of Ethics, and use of disciplinary measures where necessary and enforcing the employment code of conduct, as some of the efforts made to curb unethical conduct. While all these efforts are alluded to the output from these efforts is not evident given worrying hearings by managers.

Workshops were also noted as a mechanism to promote ethical conduct. As noted by P6 "we have quarterly meetings which we hold four times a year these meetings usually take about 2-3 days aah where there are lot of issues discussed and the way people conduct themselves are brought up. These quarterly meetings are more like workshops and we train people on how to conduct themselves" To add on P7 indicated the presence of an office of industrial relations which is always open and dealing with all issues of human relations. P8 asserted that the induction of workers and training at employment stage ai a pointer to the organization's commitment to ethical practice. P9 alluded to the code of ethics being registered in 2012 and regular trainings taking place. To cement P9's sentiments, P10 stated "Yes, they are continuously reminded about the code in its just because its Covid time, the Covid time has actually derailed quite a lot of things because they used to be some refresher courses on employment code of conduct". These opinions indicate the city council has programs in place to ensure continued capacitation of employees on ethical conduct.

QR3 How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments?

Utilization of a Code of Ethics to Encourage Ethical Behavior in Departments

The third and final question required information on how department managers in local government utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments.

Accessibility and Availability of the Code of Ethics

P2 stated the code of conduct or the conditions of service are available and provided. To emphasize on the absence of the code of ethics in circulation, P3 noted, "The code of ethics document is yet to be policy, but it is complete. As secretariat, we involved in the generation of documents and were known for now the document is ready but not yet a policy document". P3 confirmed the existence of a national Urban Councils Act from which specific information as it applies to given local government situations. P6 alluded to the conditions of service detailing what CC employees are expected to do and not to do. Through trainings the information is cascaded to all the employees. P7 indicated new employees are given the code of conduct which they sign. These submissions suggest, managers have varying opinions about what a code of ethics is and more frequently than not consider policies like conditions of service to mean code of ethics. P9 indicated the code of conduct was available but only for BCC employees only and not for any other person. Only the service charter is availed to the public but not the conditions of service. As quoted P9 stated "This is a document for the organization and its employees and not for public consumption. And mostly because some of these things, if you publicize this, because this is what the employer has agreed with the employee, when we formulated code of conduct, if you look at the back of it, we have names of the

employer, the counselors who were there during that time and then names of the

employees and then we have got names of the union. So everything is there." This

therefore confirms management at the City Council attests to the Conditions of service to

be the Code of Ethics.

Increasing Awareness of the Code of Ethics

Managers indicated they take proactive action in ensuring ethical conduct. As

noted by P1 "you should first of all look at potential areas where some of these conflicts

can arise and then come up with a way of dealing with those areas not waiting for a

problem to arise and then you come up with this thing." It was however noted there is

need for an all-stakeholder engagement to attain generally accepted ethical behavior. P3

indicated up until the code of ethics becomes policy, then implementation strategies will

follow. P6 indicated awareness campaigns, Workshops, Distribution of documents like

the Employment Code of Conduct were some of the strategies used by managers to

increase awareness of the code of conduct. P9 pointed to induction, stating "in 2012 we

got a roll out program with our union, and we also from time to time do discussions on

the code of ethics." As noted, a number of strategies are used by managers at the City

Council to promote awareness of the code of ethics.

How Managers Incorporate Ethical Behavior Goals for Employees

There were mixed feelings on the ethical behavior goals of the Local government

authority. P1 indicated "you see so when you really want this thing to be effective you

then need maybe a focal person at HR or so that to these other departments then they will

also see the importance of having all these reports and all these policies and procedures in

place to deal with the with the employee behavior" Further, it was noted in the human resources department, there is a focal person for each of the areas of council services, but there was none for ethics and managers viewed this as a human resource gap. Managers also viewed the organization as firefighting, with adequate instruments and procedures for handling employees who act unethically, but no preplanning instruments or strategies.

Ethics Training and Education

Participants had diverging views regarding ethics training, a few acknowledged that training is an important part of their operations and they make sure every new employee undergoes training that involves ethical issues and general guidelines on how they are to operate and behave. P5 indicated "once trained and educated they are expected to comply with something they know." Contrary though, P7 stated, "Ethics are not taught, let me say ethics are life. The best way to repeat ethics if you are a leader is to walk the talk…. ethics have to be seen more than they are taught." This finding reflects an acknowledgement of the managers' role as role model, that subordinates can emulate ethical conduct from a leader who walks the talk. This is in line with Trevino's model of decision making on the importance of significant others.

Code of Ethics in the Overall Strategy for Departments

Managers indicated drawing upon value systems and the vision of the organization as well as experiences. Documentation was also identified as a strategy for effective integration. It was noted managers consider it broad and important for everyone be they in management or ordinary employee. Through education and training employees are given guidelines on how they should operate and then monitored as they operate.

Where an issue is at stake, P4 indicated "one is given the opportunity to present their case or present their grievance with the supporting documentation" The sustained reference to grievances rather than ethical dilemmas when referring to the code of ethics indicates the level at which the CC code of conduct operates, as a labor relations document. It would be important for CC to define parameters in the separation of a code of ethics and the conditions of service for better coordination and enhancement of ethical conduct.

Other Materials and Resources Used to Ensure Ethical Behavior and Decision Making During Ethical Dilemmas and Conflicts

Besides the code of ethics, managers have standard operating procedures of doing some of the work within the office in a coordinated manner outside of the-the code of conduct. P5 indicated "Employment Code of Conduct, Staff Conditions of Service, Various workplace policies, and Regulations and Procedures. P7 indicated "Besides the ethics policy we have got other instruments that guide how people should operate in their offices and there are times when we are supposed to provide a certain condition to make employees work in a suitable environment, and see if it's in a suitable environment for people to work in." The union also engages the employer on behalf of the employee so that there is engagement and bargaining where one party may feel hard done.

Results From the Documents

In this study interviews were the primary source of data collection. However, I reviewed some documents that were available online. The site code of conduct was not made available for analysis, as it was viewed as an employment document which was only for employees. I therefore made use of the national employment code of conduct

(2006) used by the public sector in Zimbabwe. The participants confirmed that the site code of conduct was informed by this code. The employment code is mostly a conflict resolution document which mostly focuses on proper termination of employment contracts and was developed in consultation with labor organizations. Maunganidze (2014) concurred that codes are mostly used as industrial relations guides as opposed to being ethical codes and they are for window dressing. This finding was also confirmed by some participants who felt that they had no autonomy in the formulation of the contents of their code of conduct and therefore had limited ownership.

The constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) was also reviewed, and the findings revealed that the constitution calls for public administrators to act with integrity, accountability and transparency. These values also appear in the City Council strategy (2020-2024) which outlines, integrity, transparency, accountability, innovation, fairness and consultation. These values guide City Council and act as guidance towards ethical conduct in the everyday tasks of the managers and their subordinates.

The City Council also has other policies in place that point to ethical conduct towards clients. An interesting example was the City Council Gender Policy which gives guidance on issues like poverty reduction, equitable economic development.

Summary

Deductions from the information collected through interviews, revealed a number of emergent themes. While the code of ethics document does exist in the Bulawayo City Council, it is not yet been ascertained whether it is policy or not. Some managers believe it is in circulation and given at induction, while others indicate the code of conduct

document is the one given to new employees, why others do not know of its existence and furthermore others suggest it is in the production pipeline. While still, some refer to the conditions of service being given to new employees at induction stage. Some managers at the City Council attest to the Code of Conduct to be the Code of Ethics and the conditions of service. The confusion between the code of conduct, code of ethics and conditions of service triggers questions of understanding.

The local authority managers realize the need to have a document that speaks to ethics and ethical conduct in the City Council. The document however was constructed by those who were there before they assumed offices and therefore reflects the ethical constructs of central government suggesting lack of ownership of the code of ethics and some degree of lack of autonomy to influence ethical decisions due to political interference. While Rohr called for centrality of governance, Overeem (2015) however contested such assertions, noting that the government is an imperfect mediator of moral responsibilities, as it may not exhibit baseline morality espoused in ethics, and also mentioning the challenges of pinning down the fluid values that underpin the decisions by government particularly in the Zimbabwean context. Overeem's assertions are proven correct in this instance and context given the rift between government and local government managers on ethics which translates into the feeling of big brother always watching among managers. The ever-present cases of unethical practice in the organization means the code of conduct document remains mainly an instrument for reprimanding ethics defaulters rather than a moral compass. While the CC management makes efforts to proactively encourage ethical conduct, the results are conflicting, and

their solace is what they fall back on, their African identity in the philosophy of ubuntu, that where a human being is, there is bound to be misconduct and we draw on human values to solve these dilemmas.

Another notable theme is the influence of political interference which affects local authority adherence to ethical conduct. Elected public officers like councillors are a threat to the efficiency of managers. The political arm of local governance mainly represented by elect councilors affects the efficiency and ethical management. Such cases as grabbing of services and resources like land is rife due to compromise on ethics by well-positioned personnel such as managers and councilors.

Another notable theme is the punitive measures inferred in the code of conduct document. For an offence like stealing, immediate dismissal can be conferred on the accused, this demonstrates that the code of ethics is used as an HR tool to modify behavior. Realizing, in some cases one would have stolen small items like gloves and to be dismissed as guided by the code of ethics, sometimes compromises on the principle of U*buntu* and conscience may not allow and this creates a dilemma for the managers.

The CC managers do believe they have well stated conclusive and exhaustive rules and regulations that ensure predictable operations in the various sectors of council. Such regulations narrate conduct as council employees and also are used when verifying procedures for performing certain tasks as well as when verifying qualifications for one to be eligible to participate in a given event. Trevino et al. (2014) arguments for routine ethical behavior, are reflected in how the CC managers handle ethical issues.

Another notable emergent theme is the ability of managers to adhere to the non-disclosure policy ad transparency in communication. While sensitive information may be discussed within council with only managers present in the chambers, integrity is sometimes compromised. Managers desire to be sensitive, professional and acting ethical always, but they sometimes find themselves compromising due to pressure from within and without. In Chapter 5 I discuss the findings from the study and how I interpreted them informed by the theoretical framework and the literature I reviewed. The emergent themes confirm what other researchers have found out in other studies conducted other contexts.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to explore how departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe perceive the role of a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes and how they use it to encourage ethical behavior in their departments. Data was collected through semistructured interviews and transcribed using a Microsoft Excel worksheet. I interviewed 10 senior and middle level managers at the CC over a period of 2 months. I asked open-ended questions which were divided into three sections according to the research questions.

In this chapter I discuss the findings from the study including my interpretations of the results. I also discuss implications for social change followed by recommendations for future research. The interview guide is the frame of reference, as per the research questions.

The findings of the study were in line with Trevino's (1986) person situation interactionist model of ethical decision-making. Results revealed that there are environmental, individual, and social factors that influence ethical or unethical decisions among managers in local government. In addition, results showed that the interactions that happen within the organization impact decision making. The themes identified in this study were in tandem with the arguments brought forward in other studies by scholars who have investigated the topic of ethical decision making, particularly reflections by Trevino (1986) on contextual factors affecting ethical decision making. The results showed that managers can act as role models, facilitating ethical conduct by being ethical themselves, thereby confirming the assertions by Trevino on the role of the significant

other. The findings showed that how managers communicate about ethics and codes of ethics to theirs subordinates has an impact on how they are adopted and internalized in the organization. At CC, it was evident that communication related to ethics was done mostly through oral approaches, which are informal. These findings connect with the discussions on the need for formalizing ethics infrastructure, putting in place policies that support the adoption of ethics infrastructure (Anderson, 2019), as well as facilitating some form of training or education to increase ethical awareness and competency (Fuertes, 2021). This was found to be a challenge at CC.

Cultural and moral identity emerged as a contending external factor that influences how ethics are understood at CC. In the Zimbabwean context, conforming to certain behaviors which are informed by humanity (ubuntu) values as experienced by managers and their subordinates emerged as being a factor that strongly influences ethical decision making. These findings are in line with what Ford (2021) defined as the human condition, which emphasizes the importance and relevance of the interactions that occur between actors within a given context influencing ethical decision making. Ford argued that moral identity cannot be separated from experiences of being human within the sphere of operations where managers are making decisions. Feelings, lived experiences, and the general world view is brought forward when managers make decisions. In agreement with Trevino (1986), Guy and Mastrachi (2018) concurred those interactions and the holistic lived experience of individuals has an influence on how problems are solved in public administration. Managers made reflections on the values outlined in the strategy which act as a guide to ethical conduct within the organization, suggesting that

the strategy is a document that they use to instill a culture of ethics in the CC. I reviewed

the strategy document and confirmed these claims to be true and that there was a

potential for incorporating ethics in the culture of the organization to enhance the CC

brand. Matsiliza (2013) contended that local governments can perform better in their

service delivery if they instill an ethical culture and climate in their departments.

   The results revealed that the adoption of the code of ethics and subsequently

leading to a shift from unethical to ethical conduct is a function of an increase in ethical

awareness and proper coordination of ethics procedures in the organization. While all the

managers in the study seemed to be aware of what ethical decision making should entail,

there was a disconnect however between their assertions and what is practiced. The

contradicting views among managers on the existence of the code of ethics at CC and the

evident confusion on the understanding of the code of ethics and the conditions of service

exposed the fragmentation of ethics procedures within the organization. These findings

are in line with the arguments fronted by Shollenberger (2015) on the need for

understanding ethical decision making and adopting this in their everyday tasks.

Shollenberger opined that understanding ethical decision-making structures and processes

deliberately put in place in the organization can potentially guide managers to make

better decisions to benefit the citizens they serve. Furthermore, Bawole and Sakyi (2009)

found out that there is confusion among managers on the distinction between the code of

ethics and the code of conduct. However, for the purposes of this study, the differences

here were not emphasized but what emerged however was the confusion in distinguishing

between a code of ethics and the conditions of service document. This finding validated

Maunganidze (2014)' s assertions that in Zimbabwe the code of ethics or codes of conduct are coined in collaboration with the labor unions to be used as a labor relations document. Bawole and Sakyi argued that codes of conduct need to be based on ethical principles that empower employees to manage their own behavior and that of others, rather than to be use in disciplinary and grievance procedures as this study revealed.

The interference by central government and politicizing of local government operations emerged as a barrier to the proper implementation of ethical codes and ethical conduct. A substantial volume of studies conducted by researchers such as Zhou (2013), Chilundika, (2014), Jonga and Chirisa (2009), Chigwata and de Visser (2018), as well as Mngomezulu (2020) lamented government interference in the running of local government as restricting autonomy in the formulations of codes of ethics and that ethical behavior should be instilled with local government as well as in the general operations of the local government, a factor that results in poor service delivery. Some studies like those of Jonga and Chirisa as well as Chigwata and de Visser place the blame for political interference on the COZ (2013) which is not clear about the boundaries defining local authorities' autonomy in the running of their affairs. This raises questions to the ideas presented by Rohr (1989) (1971) who posited that public administration should be informed by regime values and be enshrined within the constitution. Research situated within some African contexts, particularly Zimbabwe, demonstrated that there are challenges in doing so as the power vested to the constitute can easily shift. In the following paragraphs I present a more detailed interpretation of the findings.

Interpretation of Findings

The study's research questions were as follows

RQ1: How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe encourage ethical behavior among their employees?

RQ2: How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe view a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes as important for encouraging ethical behavior among their employees?

RQ3: How do departmental mangers in local government in Zimbabwe utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments?

Discussion on Findings for RQ1

Communication and Leadership

With the first research question, I wanted to explore how managers encourage ethical behavior among employees before going deeper into the codes of ethics. Cheteni and Shindika (2017) noted that ethical conduct has a strong relationship with ethical leadership. The findings revealed that while managers in CC are dedicated to ensuring that ethics are upheld in the entire organization structures down to each and every employee, there are circular misconceptions about what the idea of ethics entails. One participant referred to ethics as a new subject which is not in the agenda of public sector in that part of the world while another referred to ethics as a way of life which does not require to be taught to employees, inferring that subordinates ought to know and distinguish what is right and wrong as they perform their duties, hence diminishing the potential for proper guidance from the manager to the subordinate on proper ethical

behavior. Most of the participants alluded to word of mouth as the mode in which they communicate ethical behavior among their subordinates, P2 indicated *"I try to tell my colleagues that in whatever we are doing, let's make sure that we are honest in own our dealings"*. Oral communication was mentioned as an intervention to implement ethics and manage conflict. There was a general assumption and expectation that employees ought to know what they are expected to do and how they are expected to behave in the workplace based on what the managers tell them. This finding is in line with the arguments presented by Downe et al. (2016) that managers need to have a degree of flexibility to informally give guidance to employees to enhance ethical behavior.

As to how the managers formulate and communicate ethical values to their subordinates, some participants alluded to the existence of a communications department, while P5 indicated it was "through inductions, written memos, consultations, trainings, feedback platforms, fliers, noticeboards, and awareness program." Other submissions included the citizens' charter, conditions of service, and code of conduct as valuable communication platforms for ethical conduct. Findings from the documents reviewed were consistent with the claims. However, P3 admitted that

> We do not have a program really set aside for communicating or communicating
> ethical values to members. I think we would do with such a program once the
> code of ethics document is signed at the council chambers. We have quite a
> number of educational programs within council that promote ethical practice.

Add summary and synthesis to fully conclude the paragraph. Avoid ending paragraphs in a quote as this reflects a lack of analysis.

While there was ample evidence to suggest management at the local government had programs set aside for communicating conduct issues, communication of ethics with subordinates was noted to be having loopholes and a lack of proper systems for follow up, owing to confusion on the line of separation between policy documents the CC uses to encourage ethics. Anderson (2019) suggested that there is need for open communication with the citizens and workforce about what codes of ethics expect of them so that these act as boundaries of behavior and performance. Managers are expected to be responsive to community needs as guided by policy frameworks, which are formulated, discussed, and agreed upon with every stakeholder. Transparent communication about activities of an organization such as CC creates trust among employees as well with the clients in the wider community. As P10 alluded

> Everything is specified there in the conditions of service. . . if they work against what is expected of them by the organization, they are supposed to be charged through a disciplinary action. They would have violated the code of conduct, because the code of conduct specifies the behavior of a person and this code leads to ethical behavior.

While the response suggests the code of conduct applies to the employees only, managers have a gap in determining the ethics instrument's engagement of community structures. Garcia-Sanchez et al. (2011) suggested that as leaders it is the managers' task to devise effective and professional systems of communicating the organization's expectations on how individuals should behave in observance of ethical standards.

Leading by example was one of the themes that emerged from the data collected. One participant noted that to influence others to behave in an ethical manner, a leader had to behave ethically too, "walk the talk". Trevino (1986) suggested that the authority of the significant other plays an important role in influencing others. The managers at the CC are influential; if their behavior is unethical, it can be emulated by employees. Brown et al. (2005) observed that ethical managers model appropriate conduct and communicate the importance of ethics to make ethical practice salient factor in the organization. In addition, Shin et al. (2015) suggested that managers have the responsibility of setting the tone at the top by demonstrating good behaviour to their employees.

Ethics and Identity

Humanity, honesty, respect, and empathy (which I named as identity) were some of the themes that revealed the guiding values that informed the managers on how to assess ethical conduct in their departments. One manager, emphasizing the value of empathy, noted that it was challenging to deal with ethical dilemmas given that how one would act would be informed by the severity of the offence committed by the employee and that empathy would have to come into play. Ubuntu, or African humanity, was communicated to be an intrinsic value among all human beings which was expected to guide individuals when they perform their duties both internally in the organization and in their service to the citizens. Sambala et al. (2020) suggested that the concept of ubuntu is a core value in African identity, an ideology and a way of life guided by the sub values of respect of all human beings, humility, and solving issues from the perspective of the collective rather than self-interest. This finding reveals the importance of considering

cultural contexts in understanding human behavior in decision making in given settings, an individual from another culture may find it difficult to understand that humanity may hold more power over a written down set of rules.

The findings also showed that managers view ubuntu as being important in enhancing work performance. The notion of ubuntu ethics was seen as important in maintaining good industrial relations. When employees feel respected, they perform well and the result will be positive feedback from the stakeholders which will enhance the identity and the image of the organization. These findings concur with previous research which point to a direct link between ethical leadership and overall organizational performance (Eisenbeiss et al., 2015; Mayer et al., 2009; Mozumder, 2018).

Discussion on Findings for RQ2:

Ethical Competency and Professionalism

The second research question investigated how managers view a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes as important for encouraging ethical behavior among their employees. Findings revealed that all the managers acknowledged that the code of ethics promotes positive social change. However, the results revealed that managers intermixed the code of ethics and the conditions of service documents and used these terms interchangeably and assumed these to mean the same thing. As noted in the findings, managers make every effort possible to eliminate unethical behavior through oral communication and punishment inflicted on those who behave unethically. Rose and Heywood (2013) resonated that there is a direct relationship between ethics and performance. However, Garcia-Sanchez et al. (2011) suggested that the mere existence of

codes of ethics may not necessarily lead to ethical behavior; codes must be institutionalized such that managers and their subordinates internalize them. According to Beeri et al. (2013), unethical behavior has been noted to be one of the most dangerous ills of modern governance, hence the need to engage in ethics and its influence on behavior and performance. The managers concurred that through the code of conduct, their ability to manage was made a lot lighter and simpler, given subordinates know what to do and what not to do.

Although there were contradicting opinions about the existence of the code of ethics managers considered new but complementary to other instruments that the council has been using for years. Trevino et al. (2014) alluded to routine ethical behavior as a result of the presence of a code of ethics. These findings revealed however the uncoordinated efforts in the CC ethical infrastructure and how to implement available resources in the attempt to encourage ethical conduct. There is a need for ethical procedures to be organized in a professional manner for efficiency and effectiveness. In one related study, a survey on the ethics policies, staffing and training in local governments showed that 55% of local governments deal with ethical issues and violations as routine elements of organisational management therefore better coordination of ethics infrastructure is crucial (see ICMA, 2018).

The handling of ethical dilemmas is influenced by ubuntu philosophy at CC (Matsiliza, 2013). This is the largely intrinsic collective inclination that defines being a human being identifying as Zimbabwean. Matsiliza indicated that the new NPM environment is ambiguous, complex, and volatile resulting in an increase in ethical

dilemmas in the public sector which in turn results in the need to design irregular solutions in efforts of cultivating an ethical climate when formal systems are not in place or not functioning well. Views from managers in this study also confirmed the existence of ethical dilemmas in the local government sector, therefore an informal and carefree attitude towards ethics may not serve the CC well in their attempt to alleviate unethical behaviors in the organization.

Managers use the code of ethics to reprimand delinquent employees. All the 10 interviewed managers alluded to the fact that the code of ethics was an instrument for separating between good and bad, and an instrument for reprimanding offenders. Trevino et al. (2014) indicated that unethical behavior happens when one does something contrary to accepted moral standards like cheating, stealing, and lying. Educating employees on how to handle ethical dilemmas can be helpful given the complex contextual factors discussed above.

The findings in the study revealed that managers consider ethics training and education important to their roles as managers. As noted by P5,

> Educating employees and repeatedly training them on the Corporate Values of the organization, so that they live those values during their employment life, emphasizing the values in the Strategic Plan and Departmental Action Plans, so that in their day to day discharging of their duties they are exposed to the values.

Chigudu (2014) however asserted the NPM implementation in the Zimbabwean scenario is fragmented and lacks proper coordination and requisite administration skills. Chigudu

also described it has suffering from shortage of resources and politicking while being ill-timed and driven by political stagnation and failing to deliver the expected results.

Given the fragmented engagement between council management and elect officers, there is still need for more training and education on how ethics can be upheld in local governance. Mozumder (2018) opined that local authority leadership, given its multi-layer form, creates opportunities for conflict, which have a bearing on ethical practice, hence, there is need to train and educate to avoid conflict situations. Ethics training is important to reinforce the message that violation of ethical codes or rules is not tolerated in the organization. Limitations in the understanding of what ethics essentially entails was demonstrated by a participant who noted that ethics does not need to be taught, every individual is supposed to know without being taught how ethics should be practiced. This claim emphasizes the component on cognitive abilities in Trevino's model (Trevino, 1986).

Managers have other materials and resources that are used to ensure ethical behavior and decision making besides the code of ethics. External and internal documents are provided in addition to the code of ethics to ensure the management task is simplified. Such tools and resources as the employment Code of Conduct, Staff Conditions of Service, Workplace policies, Standard Operating Procedures are used to equip employees within ethical standards of operation. As noted by P5 "programming and policy documents serve to ensure the code of ethics is not a lone instrument in the management of employees. Such experiences as inductions, consultations, writing of memos, trainings, feedback platforms, suggestion boxes, fliers, notices on notice boards, and awareness

programmes all work to ensure there is transparency and subsequent ethical conduct among employees. To add on P9 indicated "we are also listening to the citizens' charter that is there at City Council. We also have got our conditions of service as well. We've got our code of conduct and then we got our conditions of service as well. These also help us in ethical conduct

Discussion on Findings for RQ3:

Ethical Awareness and Coordination

The third research questions examined how departmental managers utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments

The effectiveness of code of ethics and how it is used is compromised by frequent hearings, suspensions and dismissals. As noted by P4 "we are also invited to –to sit through hearings like I can be invited to be the one who –what who conducts a hearing most preferable for people outside of your department to say I'm part of the hearing committee and more often when that happens l definitely have to refer to the-to the code of ethics because you have to check to say maybe if it was a grievance did this person submit his grievance on time, did it go through the other relative people and did they respond on time , so all those things you have to make reference to the to the ethical code of conduct. Was the grievance procedure followed to say when you finally reach a verdict are you being consistent with what the code of ethics says" In the same vein, P3 stated,

We hold chamber meetings on a regular basis, and we also have disciplinary

hearings when a member acts contrary. Most of the time we are following behind

cases rather than leading. It's like, we wait for a member to do wrong then place

them before a disciplinary committee, instead of taking proactive measures to

curb unethical practice.

In such situations, the efficiency of the code of ethics is measured against its ability to

address whatever unethical conduct may arise in the organization. Managers expressed

disgruntlement in working with elect councilors because the latter did not uphold ethics

in their operations and were bent on gaining from being councilors at the expense of

office tasks. This was in line with what Garcia-Sanchez et al. (2011) found in their study

on the effectiveness of codes of ethics in controlling corruption. Garcia-Sanchez et al.

found that codes of ethics were not quite effectively observed in less developed countries

and their existence did not necessarily result in ethical behavior confirming the argument

on the influence contextual factors.

Managers rely on whistle blowers despite the absence of a policy on their use as

management tools. As noted by Treviño et al. (2014), whistleblowing is also key towards

reporting unethical conduct. The WHO (2017) also notes, leaders are expected to among

a host of other responsibilities, encourage whistleblowing, foster healthy practices and

care about staff wellbeing. P3 indicated "members of public are free to-to alert us on the

conduct of our-our staff members. It's either they can phone us, they can come in person

or they can write emails, or they can use our call center those are some of avenues which

members of the public can use or whistle blowers can-can use*."* As such, it is expected

that there be coordinated efforts towards ensuring whistleblowing. The absence of policy

raises implementation gaps which may leave some valuable information unused, and the

managers not feeling guilty about it. Code of conduct was developed by external

personnel and simply adopted and used by the City Council- lack of ownership and autonomy

NPM and Political Interference

Managers reported that they experience challenges working with modern-day elected councilors. The engagement of councilors in the management of local municipality resources like land creates a dilemma for managers. As noted by Matsiliza (2013), in the context of the New Public Management (NPM), the task of public administrators becomes more diverse and complex, requiring discretion at an individual level, therefore when a manager cannot exercise autonomy in decision making it can have a negative impact on the general delivery of goods to the citizens. Furthermore, the demands imposed by the NPM calling for a market inclined approach towards public management further adds complications in ethical decision making in the Zimbabwean context. As such managers in the City Council have expressed challenges working with councilors who are bent on syphoning resources like land and engaging in unethical practices that compromise the reputation of the City Council. As noted by P2 "You will find that for example, a counselor by his nature is meant to be a policymaker but when he starts involving him/herself in administrative issues because they have got an interest that becomes a problem." P4 also pointed out "There have been cases where councilors and council employees have interfered in their operations due to conflict of interest. One incident that comes to mind is a case which I think you saw in the papers, where a senior council employee abused their position to sell a low density stand at a price of a high-density stand. It came out in the newspapers; you might have come across it." The

obtaining questionable land distribution processes raises questions of ethics where

scholars like Rawls (1971) call for public administrators to anchor their work on the idea

of social equity, and social justice, to ensure that public resources are distributed fairly

among all citizens.

To meet the expectations of the NPM, local government now cooperates within

Public Private Partners (PPPs) arrangements to improve services to citizens, however

without a robust operational framework, local government is rendered vulnerable to

unethical behavior by corrupt politicians who misuse their power for self-

aggrandizement. Findings in this study revealed that managers in CC engage Public

Private Partners for various services. This involves among others hiring of vehicles and

services that call for engagement in contracts. The tendering and selection processes

demand ethical conduct on the part of the managers. On the engagement of PPPs and the

ethical dilemmas they bring, P1 stated,

> …suppose I'm in a transport business that is my, the other thing I do separately
>
> from council, but you will then find that at council we also have a situation if
>
> you are a resident of …. you have got a truck, maybe it's less than three tone
>
> truck you want to participate in refuse collection, right? By right as a council
>
> employee, I'm not supposed to take my truck and put it and respond to a tender
>
> for those things you see but at the same time I'm also a resident you see, I'm
>
> also supposed to benefit from maybe all these opportunities maybe which will
>
> also support council in terms of refuse collection. Then there is that conflict
>
> which you can't then say you emphasize and say aah. ok I'm a resident so

because I'm a resident I am also entitled to this l can also put my truck cause

there is that conflict of interest so in such a situation you thus when you also

find that from ethical point of view some people- say no you are not supposed

to put your-your truck there in as much as you are a resident of Bulawayo but

you are a manager when these guys are coming to negotiate you can't then

negotiate and say at the same time and negotiate for increase maybe in

payment because you are also part of that.

This response demonstrated the necessity of having robust systems for handling ethical

dilemmas and developing moral maturity and heightened ethical awareness. Such

contextual factors faced by mangers frequently in City Council were noted to be another

challenge which has room for compromise on ethical conduct. Many conflicts of interest

to do with tendering processes involve large amounts of raising the need for a proactive

and professional approach to ethics as opposed to the reactive manner with which they

handle ethical issues currently, this was confirmed by one participant who noted that it is

as if they are always waiting for an offence to happen then they come alive with the

disciplinary action.

Limitations of the Study

Adding to the limitations of this study discussed earlier on in Chapter 1, it was not

easy accessing the sample of senior and middle level management due in part to the

Covid-19 pandemic which made it almost impossible at some point to collect the required

data for this study. Restrictions on travelling and insistent lockdowns meant there was to

be no physical contact at some point, resulting in time limitations and barriers to ordinary

flow of conversation to allow the participants to relax as face-to-face interviews would have allowed. The use of managers' website was initially viewed as the most ideal engagement platform given social distancing, but responses to the emails sent to managers could not come so easily, and alternatives had to be used. The denial by the city council to allow access to the site code of conduct meant that I had to rely on the National Code of Conduct to analyze the content of a public sector code. Even though the managers confirmed that their site code was an adaptation of the national code, analyzing it would have provided more insights into the perspective of the whole organization towards ethical codes.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, I proffer the following recommendations: Firstly, managers at City Council should consider an increase in education campaigns on the code of ethics. This stands to improve individual employees' responsiveness to the code of ethics. Giving employees a copy of the code of ethics is not adequate given the continual cases of hearings that are a worry to managers at the organization. There is also the possibility of availing the code of conduct in electronic form through various organizational e-platforms, especially the organization website may also be a quick solution to browsing through to specific information in the code of ethics without having to go through the whole book

There is need to train and educate to avoid conflict situations. While managers alluded to regular holding of workshops, there is still a gap between council employees and elect officers like councilors that compromises on ethical behavior. Workshops for

appointed managers and elected legislators on the code of ethics stands to improve managers' performance of daily duties and reduce misunderstandings in the management of council affairs. In view of squabbles that have surfaced over the years influenced by councilors, and compromising on the ethical conduct of managers, extensive workshops for incoming councilors stands to improve the image the city brags about.

Given the figure-pointing between government and managers on falling standards, there is need for central government to decentralize operational powers and for the improvement of ethical practice at local governance level. While local government is a political arm which the government will not want to release with ease, there is need to explore avenues of independence in administration and management at local government level for improved service delivery to the local communities.

The alienation of some managers to the development and compilation of the code of ethics, is a source of concern given they are the implementers. There is need for alignment workshops that will ensure managers claim ownership of the code of ethics for improved education and application in practice.

Also noting the confusion in referencing the code of conduct and the conditions of service, there is need for managers to delve into the similarities and differences between the code of ethics and the code of conduct so that they can explicitly know whether their decisions and actions are based on the code of ethics and when they are acting as a result of the code of conduct. This will improve reference to the two documents and increase awareness of ethics as separate and unified with conduct.

This study leaves room for other researchers to explore the administration and politics dichotomy to find out to what extent it is damaging efforts to implement the code of conduct and how it reinforces unethical conduct among senior offices. In view of findings, there is still a need to establish the focus and consistency of referenced quarterly meetings in terms of how they convert to workshops. There is also a need to determine the differences and similarities between the code of ethics and the code of conduct in the context of the BCC, whether these are different or it's the same document double barreled. The training offered to new employees also stands to be interrogated to establish amount of emphasis on the ethical conduct of employees.

Implications

There has been frequent negative reports all over the world in the newspapers and social media on unethical behavior among public sector officials. These reports have been more prevalent in Africa where public institutions have been put to disrepute for being corrupt. Zimbabwe is no exception. Unethical behavior puts the well-being of citizens who are supposed to be the clients at compromise. Public administrators are expected to perform their duties with integrity serving the public with honesty and integrity. Public administrators are the custodians of the wealth belonging to the public and they must therefore be accountable to the public. They must also demonstrate that they have processes in place to ensure ethical conduct. It is their responsibility to demonstrate to the public that they can be trusted.

Unethical behavior among public official robs the citizens of their dignity. It robs the citizens of what is rightfully theirs and interrupts service delivery. Because of

unethical practices and poor decision making in local government, citizens in Zimbabwe are deprived of basic services like clean water, refuse disposal, public health services and may other important services that are crucial for people's livelihoods.

Managers at CC sit in positions of influence, they have a vantage point where they can utilize the power, they have to implement policy decisions that gear toward enhancing social justice, improving livelihoods and people's well-being and promoting overall development in their constituencies.

The issue of ethics is complicated and complex and requires a collaborated effort among the public administrators to coordinate how it is enforced in local government. Ethics is muddled up in many variables such as politics, the law, the constitution, and the general public sector as an institution, especially in the Zimbabwean context, this can cause confusion in ascertaining what the wrong and the right behavior is, ethical awareness and competency is therefore imperative. The fact that public sector has many stakeholders can be a challenge for public sector officials, it is therefore imperative that coordinated efforts are engaged in putting in place ethics infrastructure that will assist in fostering ethical conduct in decision making to benefit the citizens.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore ethical code of conduct and its impact in decision-making among managers in one Municipality in Zimbabwe. It was meant to address a gap in literature in administrative ethics among local government leaders. To understand ethical decision-making, I used Treviño's interactionist model of ethical decision-making because of its ability to explore contextual interactions and the

moral compass of individuals. Findings of this study were arrived at after interviewing

ten top and middle-level managers at the local authority. Results revealed that the code of

conduct is extensively referenced as a corrective tool in the Bulawayo municipality with

limited proactive action to curb unethical practice.

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Appendix A: List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACCZ	Anti-Corruption Commission of Zimbabwe
BUPRA	Bulawayo Progressive Residents Association
ADG	Auditor-General Zimbabwe
AIIPA	Access to Information and Protection of Privacy ACT
CECA	Corruption and Economic Crime Act
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
COZ 2013	Constitution of Zimbabwe of 2013
GOZ	Government of Zimbabwe
MDC A	Movement for Democratic Change Alliance
MLGRUD	Ministry of Local Government Rural and Urban Development
NACF	National Anticorruption Forum
PAIA	Promotion of Access to Information Act
PDA	Protected Disclosure Act
POCO	Prevention of Corruption Ordinance
POSA	Public Order and Security Act
PSIM	Person-Situation Interactionist Model
SPB	State Procurement Board
TI	Transparency International
UCA	Urban Councils Act
UCA	Urban Councils Act
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

WEA   Working Environment Act

ZANU-PF   Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front

Appendix B: I Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol Topic: Ethical decision-making in local governance and leadership:

Exploring ethical code of conduct and its impact in decision-making among managers in

one Municipality in Zimbabwe

Time of Interview:

Date:

Interviewer:

Respondent

I will begin by greetings followed by self-introduction and then I will remind the

respondent of the research topic and why I am doing this study

I will thank the respondent and remind them of their rights as per completed consent form

I will inform the respondent that the interview will be recorded, and that the transcript

will be available for their examination to add or subtract on the information they would

have provided

I will also inform the respondent how long the interview will take place and that I may jot

down some notes during the interview.

I will ask if the respondent is ready and if the answer is positive the interview will

commence

Appendix C: I Interview Guide

1.How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe encourage ethical behavior among their employees?

- Could you please share some thoughts and insights on how you as a manager promote ethical conduct in your department?

- What are your views regarding the relationship between ethical conduct and work performance?

- What actions do you put in place to enhance ethical conduct among your employees?

- How do you formulate and communicate ethical values to your officials?

- Please provide some insights on the materials and resources that are used to ensure ethical behavior and decision making during ethical dilemmas and conflicts?

- If you have whistle blower policies, please comment on how whistle blower procedures are conducted in your department.

- How do you manage conflict of interest in your department?

2. How do departmental managers in local government in Zimbabwe view a code of ethics in ethical decision-making processes as important for encouraging ethical behavior among their employees?

- Could you please share your thoughts about what you think the code of ethics is and its role.

- What are your views on the code of ethics on whether you see it as a tool to contribute to positive social change?

- How is the code of ethics used in your everyday administrative tasks and decision making?

- How do you use the code of ethics to solve ethical dilemmas and conflicts in decision making?

- How is the code of ethics important to your role as a manager?

- Please explain how the code of ethics reflects your organizational culture

- If you are using a general code of ethics for the whole public sector please share your thoughts on its effectiveness

- Please share the experiences that have caused you to refer to your code of ethics in the past?

- What interpersonal and contextual situations are the most challenging to your ethical decision making in your department?

- What interpersonal contextual situations are the least challenging?

- How do you ensure that subordinates embrace ethical conduct by use of the code of ethics?

3. How do departmental mangers in local government in Zimbabwe utilize a code of ethics to encourage ethical behavior in their departments?

- What systems do you have in place to ensure that the code of ethics is accessible and available when needed?

- How do you increase the awareness of the code of ethics in your organization?

- How do you incorporate ethical behavior goals for your employees?

- Please share your views on whether training and education on ethics is important to your role as a manager and for your subordinates?

- How do you integrate the code of ethics in the overall strategy for your department?

- Do you have any other materials and resources that are used to ensure ethical behavior and decision making during ethical dilemmas and conflicts?

Thank you very much for your time.