# A Relationship between Leadership Work Ethic and Organisational Performance in the Public Sector

## M.C. Vimba, J.E. Coetzee and W.I. Ukpere

*Department of Industrial Psychology and People Management, Faculty of Management,
University of Johannesburg, South Africa*

**ABSTRACT** This article explores the relationship between work ethics and organisational performance in the public sector with special emphasis on Government Funded Organisation (GFO). In addition, the current work is an exposition of the roles of Leadership Work Ethic (LWE) in the strategic management process of an organisation. The application of LWE to managerial decision-making processes helps to accelerate organisational effectiveness. It is part of the objective of this study to scrutinise the concept of LWE and its potency within the public sector. A qualitative research methodology with a variety of data sources was used to assess the applicability of LWE in the public sector. The approach enables the researcher to explore how the relationship between individuals and power dimensions of work ethic contributes to organisational efficacy. Based on the data analysis, six (6) fundamental themes from the responses of the GFO executives have been identified namely, leadership, leadership work ethic, organisational strategy, strategic management, organisational learning and organisational structure.

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership Work Ethic (LWE) has been recognised as an integral part of strategic management, which contributes to an organisation's long-term success and competitiveness (Steward 2008: 123; Bandura 2007: 193) Researches have encouraged the scrutiny of aspects relating to the Work Ethic Model (WEM), and how the two work ethic dimensions, namely power and individual, influence quality management and organisational strategy (Hariparsad 2005).

There is always a good case to advocate for LWE, which complements with the dignity of work life. Jackson (2004: 67) is of the view that management should develop an ethic strategy aimed at providing a road map to ensure the ongoing development of individual and organisational character. Cherrington (2003: 123) seems to be in the same line with Jackson and observed that work ethic should stem from good policies, effective strategies, buy-in from internal customers or staff and good leadership/supervision. In addition, Cherrington (2003) posited that inclusion of LWE leads to greater satisfaction of employees and customers because of improved product quality, which in turn delivers better value for money.

## Problem Statement

There has been growing concern regarding poor performance of organisations within the public sector without due consideration to how leadership work ethic contributes to high performance. As it stands, previous researches (Cherrington 2003; Hariparsad 2005) have not entirely explored the relationship between leadership work ethic and performance within the public sector organisations.

## Research Questions

- What is the relationship between leadership work ethics (LWE) and organisational performance in the public sector within government funded organisation?
- What is the role of LWE in the strategic management process of an organisation?
- What is the role of LWE in managerial decision-making and organisation effectiveness?
- What is the potency of LWE in the public sector?

## Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:
- To explore the relationship between work ethics and organisational performance in the public sector within a Government Funded Organisation (GFO),
- To appraise the roles of Leadership Work Ethic (LWE) in the strategic management process of an organisation.
- To evaluate roles of LWE in managerial decision-making and organisational effectiveness,

- ◆ To scrutinise the concept of LWE and its potency within the public sector.
- ◆ To propose a model that could enhance the level LWE in the public sector

**Contribution of the Study**

Theoretically the study is anticipated to generate scientific knowledge in the field of HRM and, hence foster a greater understanding of the concepts of work ethic including leadership work ethic, and the application thereof within the organizational context. The modified work ethic model should be best suited for both public and private sector as well.

**Potential Value-add of the Study**

Most research (Cherington 2006; Dewey 2007), in the field of work ethic is theoretical. This article will analyse and critique the existing WEM and will attempt to enhance the model by outlining the relationship between LWE and organisational performance. Practical experience and input by experts and practitioners in the field of management at GFOs will constitute an important facet of the research, which also takes into account various theories found in the relevant bodies of knowledge and in the area of ethics as it informs the creation of value-driven organisations. The findings will be extended to other GFOs in order to get a holistic idea on the role of LWE in the public sector.

**Literature Review**

According to Hariparsard (2005), there are two dimensions to leadership Work Ethic, namely, the power and individual dimension. The power dimension consists of respect for authority, independent work and autonomous power, while the individual dimension consists of job satisfaction, recognition and reward, perseverance, time for work, self-worth and responsibility. It is important to elaborate on these dimensions in the proceeding section

**The Power Dimension of Work Ethic**

Central to the power dimension is respect for authority based on the power bestowed on that authority by the organisation (Rost 2008: 63). Vied (2003: 40) has stated that those en-

trusted with authority should exercise such authority with a consciousness of the fact that they have been assigned a holy function. Daniels (2007: 80) has observed that the respect for authority gives rise to power, and power comes with responsibility. The legitimate power of individuals in an organisation is mainly derived from their authority and responsibilities. Hence, the allocation of authority to organisation's management should delineate what is required of them in order to meet organisational objectives. Daniels (2007) has defined authority as the right to command and induce compliance, which is derived from the central feature of the formal organisational structure. Authority is always associated with leadership.

Leadership is about relationships, authority and respect, which can be improved in numerous ways. Effective leaders nurture teamwork. Teamwork draws on all skills as a 'people person'. Hence, a manager's skill at teambuilding will generally relate to how good he/she is as a leader. In other words, the question of 'how one becomes a leader' is really a question of 'how one can lead a team'. In order to become an effective team builder, a person should be very confident in order to command authority and respect of team members; The person should as well be able to give orders and ensure that the job gets done without stepping on toes; He/she should be able to coordinate and manage efforts without coercing people to take notice of him as a manager and should also be enthusiastic to inspire the team to greater productivity (Dewey 2007).

It is however necessary to draw a distinction between leadership and authority. There may be certain individuals with authority and power but who lack the requisite leadership skills. At the same time, some others may display exemplary leadership skills without holding positions of power or authority (Kotter 2008).

**Individual Dimension of Work Ethic**

As earlier stated, the aspects of individual dimension of work ethic include job satisfaction; recognition and reward; time at work and self-worth and responsibility. Job satisfaction is attributed to the nature of job as it is believed that good jobs increase satisfaction (Vahed 2001: 231). Researchers such as Youl (2003: 78) and Hendricks (2008: 123) believe that there is a

relationship between job satisfaction, motivation and productivity. Job satisfaction occurs as a result of job enrichment, improved compensation packages and workers' participation in decision making (Fredericks 2008: 104; Hall 2006: 267). A good job is said to increase satisfaction, while repetitive menial jobs are related to boredom, alienation and discontent. Work is an important activity that brings meaning, satisfaction and fulfilment of life (Rothstein 2006: 431). Work values are positively related to both job satisfaction and productivity (Fiedler 2007: 234). According to Graef (2008: 90), job dissatisfaction leads to high turnover, tardiness, loafing on the job, disruptions, poor workmanship and indifference to customers. He maintained that a popular solution to the problem of job dissatisfaction is job redesign.

However, Rothstein (2006: 461) argues that job redesign is not enough and may not necessarily ameliorate the problem, and suggests that such a job redesign must incorporates strategies that recognise the role of the worker. How the worker chooses to respond to the job has been almost entirely disregarded, even though it is obvious that job satisfaction or dissatisfaction depends on the perception of a work environment (Hall 2006: 277). Fredericks (2005: 104) states that high performers are very work-oriented and derive enormous satisfaction from their work because of either pay or good working conditions. Moreover, the individual work ethic dimension is primarily concerned with job satisfaction, recognition, rewards, perseverance, and time at work, self-worth and responsibility.

Kanter (2006: 456) has stated: "recognition and reward are important factors that encourage productivity". He further stated that employees become more accountable, develop a sense of ownership and act in the best interests of the organisation if they are involved in the decision- making process. Pay and taking pride in their work seem to be the most desirable outcomes that make employees more productive and happy (Benson 2006: 104). Porter (2005: 34) is of the view that people work because of the positive feeling they get from doing a good job. According to Lawler (2005: 79), there is no doubt that pay increase is an important outcome. It is much more important than fringe benefits and promotions and essentially as important as intrinsic rewards. Carnel (2008: 76) seems to concur to the above and remarked that people need

money to live. Therefore, getting more money is a desirable reward for working. If a job did not pay well, no matter how intrinsically rewarding it may be, a worker would probably be forced to leave it for some other form of more profitable employment.

Grayson (2008: 129) states that the other two extrinsic rewards, such as fringe benefits and promotions, are related as slightly desirable but closer to neutral. Kanter (2006: 479) argues that top management and manager's compliments are always a desirable work outcome while too much criticism is highly undesirable. Brenton (2006) argues that an organisation has an important role to play in ensuring employee happiness and productivity. The road to success follows the path of hard work, diligence, thrift and perseverance. Time at work improves worker productivity and helps maintain standards of quality at work (Richards 2007: 321). The perception and experience of time are among the most central aspects of how any group functions when people differ in their experience of time, tremendous communication and relationship problems typically emerge (Richards 2007: 231). For example, supervisors get anxious and irritated when someone is late for work or when he or she feels time has been wasted on non-work issues. In an analysis of time, De Pree (2003: 14) points out the central role of time in human affairs. Time at work is a fundamental symbolic category that a person uses for talking about the orderliness of social life. In a modern organisation, just as in an agrarian society, time at work appears to impose a structure of work days, calendars, careers and life-cycles that one learn and live in as part of a culture. Managers should view time very seriously as it has everything to do with how one view organisational milestones and how one perceives organisational future in general during the planning process.

Self-worth and responsibility is defined as the degree to which an employee personally feels accountable for the results of the work he or she does (Malcom 2008: 55). Peter (2009: 89) argues that workers not only need to feel accountable for the result, they also need to feel that the task is meaningful and they should be motivated to do their task well. Workers determine what they are worth by getting more money, autonomy, responsibility and opportunities to participate in decision-making. In order to have a feeling of self-worth, workers seek for more enriched jobs.

Fielder (2007: 123) argues that workers feel self-worth and responsibility when they are offered more specialised and efficiently organised jobs. Specialised tools and resources can significantly increase performance. Taylor (2007: 239) states that specialisation also increases management's flexibility in allocating job assignments, which give workers greater mobility in terms of changing their jobs.

## RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to Babbie and Mouton (2004: 74), a research design is a plan or blueprint of how a person intends to conduct his/her research. The researchers have adopted a qualitative research methodology in order to understand first hand, the social phenomena. By so doing, they strive to describe subgroups (such as senior or middle management workers) from the point of view of the persons being studied. Babbie and Mouton (2007: 76) favour qualitative research methods and posits that the "primary nature of the relationship between the observer and the subjects allow for an in- depth study of the whole individual". Hughes (2006: 321) states that the advantage of qualitative methods is that they are open to using a range of evidence and discovering a whole range of new issues. He states further that they are very appropriate for a study which involves exploration. Qualitative research is valid when it gives an accurate and useful representation of the particular instance that has been studied (Stake 2008: 263). Data is rich in that it has been collected from participants who have not participated in any other similar study. The trustworthiness of the data in this research is based on the fact that questions and answers are available for validation.

Qualitative research is primarily intended to be used in order to understand, describe and sometimes explain social phenomena from the insiders' perspective by analysing experiences of individuals or groups; interactions and communications in the making and documents or similar traces of experiences and interactions. Qualitative research is often the method of choice for the social science enquiry because it usually produces a wealth of detailed data from a small number of participants and the emphasis is placed on words (Maxwell 2005: 432). According to Schurink (2004: 14), it stems from a largely anti-positivistic, interpretative approach that is ideographic. Thus, it is holistic and mainly aims at understanding social life and the meanings people attach to it. Neuman (2009: 8) states that scholars some years ago started debating positivism and the legitimacy of social research based on the scientific method. They found that practitioners of qualitative research came to place emphasis and value on the human, interpretive aspects of knowing about the social world and the significance of their own interpretation and understanding of the phenomenon under study.

### Case Study as a Research Strategy

A case study is a typical research design of the qualitative research tradition (Schurink 2004b: 2). A case study approach was as well utilised in this research Case study has been defined as intensive investigation of a single unit. This unit varies from individual, people, families, communities, social groups, organisations and institutions, studies of events, roles and relationships and studies of countries and nations.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2004), an individual case study entails a detailed account of one person. Studies of organisations and institutions entail an in-depth study of a firm, company, corporation and trade union. However, organisational studies have many foci including best practice, policy implementation and evaluation, human resource practices, management and organisational issues, organisational culture, processes of change and re-engineering and so on. Case studies are particularly popular in organisational research and are well suited to capturing the social world of people in understanding a real life situation (Beer 2005: 102). Banks (2008: 153) identifies four characteristics of case studies namely, facilitating the clear identification and description of boundaries; representing something that is obviously important so as to determine the unit of analysis; ensuring a specific study focus, which is underscored by the research questions and using multiple sources of data. As this study is exploratory, the case study approach was utilised. This preference was informed by the very characteristics of case studies as advocated by Beer (2005). More specifically the researchers opted for a single exploratory case study as they intended to explore and describe the GFO's status on the applicability of LWE, in order to provide

a social science basis for this process and possibly to refine it.

## Data Collection

The population of this study were the Executive Board of the Department of Trade and Industry (GFO) national office in Pretoria.

Qualitative interviews and ordinary conversations share much in common. Qualitative interviewing builds on the conversational skills that one already have. According to Beebe (2006: 100), interviews entail direct personal contact with the participant who is asked to respond to questions. The method used in this study was that of a semi-structured interview, in which the interviewer has a structured plan of investigation, namely a set of pre-determined questions (Bennis 2008: 113). The interview focussed on obtaining qualitative data. The use of interviews is often criticised because of the effect of leading questions. Most often, the way a question is phrased or the way in which an eye witness is probed can influence the answer given by the participant (Bertodo 2007: 154). The interviewer attempted under all circumstances not to influence the participants either by leading questions or by means of eye contact. A comfortable relaxed atmosphere was kept throughout all interviews, which ensured that the participants were not influenced in answering questions or giving opinions. A framework of all the GFO Executive Board members was obtained after which it was decided to include all in the study. The reason for that was because the GFO is big enough in terms of size to be used to represent all other government departments. A pilot study was conducted on the executive board members before the main interview. All nine (9) GFO Deputy Director Generals (DDGs) were interviewed.

This strategy is closely related to theoretical sampling, which is mainly associated with grounded theory. Although phenomenology emphasises the meaning of an experience for a number of individuals, the intent of a grounded theory study is to move beyond description to generate or discover a theory. It is an abstract analytical schema of a process (Strauss and Corbin 2003). Participants in the study have all experienced the process and the development of the theory helped explain practice and provided a framework for further research. Grounded theory holds that theories should be grounded in data from the field, especially in the actions, interactions, and social processes of people. Thus grounded theory provided for the generation of a theory of actions, interactions, or processes through inter-relating categories of information based on data collected from individuals (Carmaz 2008: 63). Ritchie and Lewis (2004: 80) refer to grounded theory as a strategy where a researcher samples incidents, people or units on the basis of their potential contribution to the development and testing of theoretical constructs. The process is interactive, as the researcher picks an initial sample, analyses the data and selects a further sample in order to refine emerging categories and theories. This process is continued until the researcher reaches data saturation or a point at which no new insights can be extracted by expanding the sample further.

## Trustworthiness of Research

A reliability analysis was performed to determine whether it is possible to develop composite scores for the subjects by combining their own ratings (for each quadrant, and for flexibility and adaptability) with those of the Senior Management, Deputy Directors, Assistant Directors and Team Assistants. Validity refers to the correctness or credibility of a description, conclusion, explanation, interpretation or some other account, the extent to which the research accurately reflects the phenomenon being researched (Hubberman and Miles 2008: 123). The use of the term 'validity' does not imply the existence of any objective truth to which the account can be compared. Validity has more to do with the relationship of conclusions to reality and there are no methods that can completely guarantee that the researcher has captured this. Thus, it is more accurate to consider the concept of validity threat as a precautionary measure. These threats are often conceptualised as alternative explanations or rival hypotheses. Validity as a component of this research design consists of strategies used to identify, try and rule out these threats.

## FINDINGS

The researchers have identified six (6) themes from the responses of the GFO executive board:

**Theme 1: Leadership**

One of the respondent noted: "Yes, I can certainly say that government funded organisation (GFO) leadership consult with the employees and in many instances if not all, leadership always reach an agreement with employees. "Employees work hard and really adhere to GFO leadership decisions" Therefore, effective leadership is crucial to organisational success (Keller 2010: 111). It was evident from the participants' responses that leadership is a process and not a phenomenon. A leader is a central figure in leadership. Hence, without a leader, leadership cannot take place and leadership styles cannot be determined. There is also evidence pointing to the fact that leadership at the GFO has the ability to influence people willingly to adhere to decisions made by the executive and to work hard and do their best in order to achieve organisational goals. The leaders also strive for group interaction and team work, which is directed toward a solution to common problems.

**Theme 2: Leadership Work Ethic**

Another respondent stated: "Yhaa, I think you can talk of leadership work ethic in the GFO even though in certain instances we manage to get things done and to meet our targets. We use performance agreements to get commitment from the staff and appraised those who have performed well. I can then say that we apply certain elements of leadership work ethic indirectly." Leadership work ethic (LWE) is defined and analysed with due reference to its role within organisational management and hierarchical levels of responsibility (Dewey 2007: 124). Therefore, LWE refers to a set of values database on the moral virtues of hard work and diligence (Cherrington 2003: 13). LWE is located within the social dynamic and action as well as the complex interacting components in the organisation (Schwandt 2004: 23). It is an understanding of how individuals are motivated towards a positive work ethic within a milieu of organisational structure and tasks. One respondent observed: "In fact the correct answer would be we really know much about leadership work ethic, for example, quality of management decisions and how it determines to a large extent the effectiveness of plans." Hence, it does not only impact on the performance outcome of the individual but also

impacts of the extent to which the organisation encourages a positive work ethic of the individual to the benefit of the organisation (Hariparsad 2005: 79).

**Theme 3: Organisational Strategy**

Another respondent posited: "The GFO has a strategy and that is why we continue to grow as an organisation. In practice the development of strategic plans for the GFO involves taking information from the environment and deciding on an organisational mission and objectives, strategies and a portfolio plan. This has helped in developing a unity of purpose across the organisation; the strategic planning process needs to be tied to objectives and goals at all GFO levels of management." It was therefore evident from the responses that an organisational strategy brings into play the critical managerial issue of how to achieve the targeted results in light of the organisation's situation and projects. It became clear that objectives are the ends while strategy is the means. In addition, the responses indicated that strategic implementation is fundamentally an administrative activity, which involves, amongst others, organising, budgeting, motivating, culture building, supervising and leading. It was also evident that evaluation of performance, reviewing of strategy and implementation of corrective adjustments are only done in the next strategic planning session. He further stated: "This we address during strategic planning as we consider the environment and government policies so that we do not deviate." Hence, it was clear that all managers are involved in the formation and implementation of organisational strategy.

**Theme 4: Strategic Management**

Strategic management was seen as key only if it is based on strategic management principles with a well conceived mission that is aimed at preparing the GFO for the future by establishing long term direction, which indicates the GFO's goals and how they can be achieved. All respondents indicated that strategic management involves identification of objectives and the formulation of policies. One of the respondents stated: "Yes, the GFO has a clear strategy to achieve its objectives." They all viewed it as comprising three component processes, namely strategic

planning, resource management, control and evaluation. However, they all admitted that there is no monitoring and evaluation policy in place. Strategic management is not a task, but a set of managerial skills that should be used throughout the organisation, in a wide variety of functions (Kotter 2008: 171). Lawler (2007: 123) argues that successful organisations are those that focus their efforts strategically and understand that strategy should be projected over a period of time and should be reviewed on a yearly basis. Kotter (2008) and Lawler (2007) agree that to meet and exceed customer satisfaction, an organisation's team needs to follow an overall organisational strategy. They further noted that a successful strategy adds value for the targeted customers over the long run by consistently meeting their needs better than the competitors. One respondent argued that, "From the management point of view, the desired future outcomes are objectives and they are the end points of an organisation's mission and are what it seeks through the on-going, long run operations of the GFO." Likert (2007: 543) states that overall purpose of the experimental strategic learning and management process is to establish which strategic options or elements thereof are robust across the scenarios, thereby using the healthiest elements to develop one's strategic intent. There are various key strategies to consider, namely extended structure of the enterprise, reconfigurations, extensions and strategic relationships that is necessary to deliver the espoused strategy; new skills and capabilities that will be required and how this will affect workforce composition, talent acquisition, development needs, process and operational capability improvements that will be necessary; talent management practices necessary to create a high performance workforce and adjustments that is needed to create a climate that stimulates and engages the total organisation for peak performance; the operating culture of business and how it might need to change to fit the value proposition and operating style required; performance results that will be needed and what is necessary to achieve them; purposeful integration and fit of all operating activities to ensure total enterprise alignment to the cause.

## Theme 5: Organisational Learning

One of the respondents answered: "Yes, as the GFO grows it is important that leadership must create a space for organisational learning or development. We as the leaders view this seriously." Evidence shows that the GFO executive board facilitates organisational learning in all its divisions, in order to continuously transform itself. The essential concern was how to enhance processes of learning so as to improve individual and collective actions by means of better knowledge and understanding. Another respondent stated: "generally, speaking the GFO is doing everything in its best to address those issues and to open up its lines of communication." From the responses of participants, three themes have been formulated by the researcher under organisational learning, namely how to structure the organisation to enhance performance; how to facilitate individual learning and development in the public sector; and how to ensure that organisations adapt quickly to changes in the external environment. One of the respondents noted: "For some of us, we still do not understand the concept of organisational learning as we were still grappling with organisation development. This new concept is said to be incorporating an element of lessons learned as opposed to organisational development." It also emerged that the GFO does not have an organisational learning approach strategy in place. A learning organisation is an organisation which facilitates the learning of all its members and continuously transforms itself (Braude 2009: 56). Boschoff (2008: 342) argues that organisational leaders are designers, stewards and teachers and they are responsible for building organisations, where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity, clarify vision and improve shared mental models. Dumain (2009: 76) describes a learning organisation as a process, one which strives to improve its performance by detecting and correcting errors and adapt to its environment through evolving knowledge and understanding. Another respondent posited: "As leadership our focus is on ensuring that socio ethical issues are discussed to inform organisational learning". Hence, learning is the key characteristic as it enables the organisation to sense changes (both internal and external) and adapt accordingly in the face of an increasingly discontinuous environment. According to Dumain (2009) the crucial issues at the heart of a learning organisation are:

*Social:* - The beliefs about society that are reflected in organisations themselves;

*Ethical:* - How and why organisations operate and how they establish an environment and

ethos in which people can grow and mature into effective human beings; and

*Organisational:* - The different learning and change contexts within the organisation, as well as the impact and management of these learning and change contexts.

Dewey (2007: 32) seems to agree with Dumain (2009) when he stated that the leader's role in a learning organisation is that of a designer, teacher and steward who can build the shared vision and challenge prevailing mental models. He/she is responsible for building organisations where people are continually expanding their capabilities to shape their future. In other words, leaders are responsible for learning. Dickson (2007: 98) outlines the relationship between strategy and learning organisation and suggests that the key is not getting the right strategy but fostering strategic thinking. Dickson (2007) further argues that a key ingredient is on how organisations process their managerial experiences and how managers learn from new experiences rather than being glued to past experiences. He states further that a manager is not measured by what he knows (that is the product of learning), but rather by how he learns the process of learning. Rotherford (2008: 54) echoes Dickson's views and argues that management practices encourage, recognise and reward openness, systemic thinking, creativity, a sense of efficacy and empathy.

**Theme 6:  Organisational Structure**

Under this theme one of the respondent remarked:  "Yes, our organisational structure is perfect and it enables us to organise, lead, control and evaluate." An organisational structure is mainly a hierarchical concept of subordination of entities that collaborate and contribute to serve one common objective. Organisations are a variant of clustered entities (Gracious 2008: 123). An organisation can be structured in many different ways and styles, depending on their objectives and ambience. Another respondents said " Oh yes, the structure of the organisation serves as a catalyst in ensuring that the organisation is effective and it delivers according to its mandate." The structure of an organisation will determine the modes in which it operates and performs. Organisational structure allows the expressed allocation of responsibilities for different functions and processes to different

divisions such as the business units and individuals (Doyle 2009: 432). Another respondent argued that "Organisational structure is key to the fluidity of organisational activities and if properly done, ensures that everyone contributes to the success of the organisation." An effective organisational structure facilitates working relationships between various entities in the organisation and may improve the working efficiency within organisational units (Dumain 2009: 76). There was a clear evidence that the executive believes in the decentralisation of power so as to devolve power to divisional heads to formulate strategies in line with their individual mandates. Each division within a divisional structure contains all the necessary resources and functions required to fulfil its mandate, which is derived from the GFO's core function and strategic goals such as economic development and job creation.

## DISCUSSION AND INTEGRATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this research was to attain a clear understanding of the concept of leadership work ethic (LWE) and its relationship with organisational performance in the public sector. This relationship is discussed as under:

**Leadership Work Ethic and Management**

The success of any organisation is dependent on its leadership and in the manner in which the leadership develop its organisational strategy. This is one of the primary tasks of management. If an organisation is to reach its goals, a leader must set certain activities in motion and keep them going. Leadership work ethic therefore has to do with how the leader performs each of the above management functions. As noted earlier on, the concept of work ethic has two dimensions, namely, individual and power.

In terms of the power dimension of work ethic, the executive has a critical responsibility and task of formulating policies and to develop organisational strategies. The executive must involve all management levels in the process of formulating polices and developing strategies. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such strategies and policies reside with senior management. It further shows that senior management must communicate such strategies to

all staff in the organisation. If the staff members do not have the necessary skills and experience, it is the responsibility of the leader to ensure that there is skills development programme in place to empower the staff members. The leader should also make sure that the skills development programme (SDP) is included in the personal development plan of staff members. Personal Development Plan (PDP) must be designed by the organisation to provide its members with the opportunities to learn necessary skills to meet their current and future job demands. It further illustrates that for leadership to be effective, it must adopt participatory, delegative styles of management and encourage team work.

The above signifies that it is incumbent on the person appointed to lead the organisation to choose the ways to exercise such power bestowed on him/her. Work is an integral part of a persons well being. Therefore, workers espouse the work ethic, in that, their work values are positively related to their work ethic. This explanation suggests that if people like their work, finds satisfaction and fulfilment in it, they will believe that work is important and that doing a good job is desirable. It further suggests that people who accept ethics in their works are more productive. It is also evident from both literature review and responses received from the GFO staff and executive members that there is a link between strategic management and leadership work ethic. In this case, the executive is expected when strategising to take into consideration issues of employment equity and intent strategy. It is further evident that the causal link between strategic management and leadership work ethic significantly contribute to quality management and organisational learning. This shows that quality management can only be achieved if it is prioritised and there is an alignment of work processes with strategy and values. This can be achieved by defining and measuring key priorities, core work processes and criteria for measuring outcomes. The above work ethic model shows the role of leadership work ethic in improving production, outputs and quality management in the delivery of services in the public sector.

There is a distinct relationship between the power dimension of work ethic and leadership tasks and organisational strategy. The task of a leader is to influence people to carry out an order, provide support, necessary resources and allegiance to the core functions of the organisation and implement management decisions. The credibility and integrity of leaders is very much dependent on how they use their power and influence. Leadership tasks must be carried out in a more cooperative and trustworthy manner based on ethical principles with the aim to accomplish shared objectives. These tasks become central in developing a sound organisational strategy, which requires a buy-in from everyone in the organisation. If leadership tasks are carried out inefficiently with total disregard of the employees of the organisation, organisational strategy is likely to suffer and the plan is unlikely to succeed. Unlike in a situation where leadership consulted and involved everyone in order to gain insight about the leadership's reasons or underlying the organisational strategy.

Collaboration may involve an offer from employees to help accomplish the leadership's objective in a different way. It is much easier to gain cooperation and commitment from people when there is a high level of mutual trust and respect. Leaders should use their autonomous power in a subtle, non threatening way to achieve worthwhile objectives, and should not attempt to deceive or manipulate people. Furthermore, leadership must consult and involve people when developing organisational strategy as that is critical in ensuring that work processes are aligned with strategy and values by defining and measuring key priorities, core work processes and criteria for measuring outcomes.

**Job Satisfaction as a Tool**

Job satisfaction is important both because of its bearing on the physical and mental wellbeing of individual employees and because of its demonstrated implications for job related behaviour, which accelerates the productivity and profitability of organisations. This is the reason why job satisfaction is critical to the individual dimension of work ethic. Job satisfaction is also central to power dimension of work ethic because even executive managers are not excluded from job satisfaction. In order to properly perform their functions, executive managers also need to be happy with their jobs. Development of a tool that can generally be used as a measuring yardstick for job satisfaction can go a long way in ensuring that job satisfaction is used as an indicator for effective work ethic. It is for this

reason that development of a job satisfaction model is necessary. Research has established that the facet, which correlates most highly with overall job satisfaction, is the work itself. Satisfaction with the work is usually measured in terms of the core job characteristics. These were proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1999: 56), who noted that the measures of presence of autonomy, skill variety, task identity, risk significance and feedback in the work itself implicitly address present opportunity.

### Training Initiatives

It is imperative to conduct training in all levels of the organisation in order to make sure that everyone is capacitated in his/her field as this is critical in achieving improved quality of product or output and central to customer satisfaction. For executive management, it is critical that the executive receives training on strategic management, people management, project management, project monitoring and evaluation, talent management, communication skills, time management, quality management, interpersonal skills, ethical decision making skills and negotiation skills. The aim of training should be to improve organisational effectiveness and maximise performance.

### Practical and Managerial Implications

This research has implication for Human Resources management, because it is designed to provide solutions to problems in organisations. It focuses on the relationship between leadership work ethic dimensions (individual and power). This exposition has shown how best leadership work ethic can be utilised by senior management to provide decision support information for critical operational as well as for policy decisions. It tests the readiness of the organisation to deal with the issue of lack of leadership skills. The treatise has impacted on HR by contributing towards performance management strategy of organizations, thereby ensuring effective performance management system. This is made possible through input in the design of a performance management policy; input in developing organizational and divisional or departmental plans; monitoring of performance and provision of feedback; formulation of development plan; determination of ratings

of performance; and establishing responsibilities. The above, shows the value of the study towards human resources development.

More than that, the study will go a long way to assist the GFO to incorporate LWE in its strategic management, in an attempt to improve the quality of service, management capacity and more significantly the general work environment in the GFO. In order to ensure that there is sustainable tool to assess LWE in the context of organizational management, the work ethic model (WEM) will be made available for use by other government departments. The work ethic model will be tested and adapted for application in a diverse environment and will be validated for a high level of acceptance by other public sector departments. It is expected that the model will significantly contribute to better quality of management and satisfaction of all levels of management, support staff as well as trade unions and donors and more importantly, to address the issue of equity in the workplace. If leadership works ethic and organizational management become the priority for all organizations, it will take care of the imbalances that exist. Organisational values and moral regeneration are expected to be revived for better management efficiency.

### Research Limitations and Future Research Opportunities

Government Funded Organisations (GFOs) have become notorious for poor leadership with many employees lodging grievances against their supervisors, which negatively impacts on service delivery. In the current study, we have used qualitative research method to explore the relationship between work ethic and organisational performance. In future, there may be a need to utilise a quantitative method to validate and compare the current finding, which may necessitate good problem formation. According to Landman (2008: 44), problem formulation requires the exact formulation of questions that must be answered by means of questionnaire. Landman argues that relevant questions serve to direct and motivate the researcher to find meaningful solutions and to disclose the reality of the phenomenon under investigation. In future the following research may be worth exploring:
- To test a model of leadership work ethic in a sample of GFO employees;

⬥ To validate a leadership work ethic questionnaire for the GFO employees;
⬥ To use the modified and adapted questionnaire to establish the relationship between LWE and organisational management in GFO according to WEM;
⬥ To gather and analyse data on perceptions relating to LWE and organisational management in GFO environments using the WEM;
⬥ To show the important role, contribution and the effect of LWE dimensions to quality and organisational management in GFOs from the information gathered through the questionnaire; and
⬥ To examine and analyse LWE practices to illustrate the influence of the model on organisational management in the current public sector.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the study has established that there is a relationship between leadership work ethic and organizational performance. Analysis of the results show that the development of leadership work ethic is dependent on strong work values whereas high productive work behavior is highly dependent on development of self discipline, self control, and personal initiative, which are all correlates of work ethics. This treatise suggest that effective leadership is critical to organizational success, and that can be achieved if leadership has the ability to influence people to adhere to decisions made by the executive, and endeavor to achieve organizational goals. Thus, an understanding of how individuals are motivated towards positive work ethic within the milieu of organizational structure and tasks, impact on the performance outcome of the individual. This indicates that strategy implementation is fundamentally an administrative activity which to a certain degree involves amongst other things, organising, budgeting, motivating, culture building, supervising and leading. Evaluation of performance, reviewing of strategy and implementation of corrective adjustments are critical for organizational performance and core to leadership work ethic.

More than that, strategic management involves identification of goals and formulation of policies. These comprise three important component processes such as strategic planning, resource management and control and evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation policy need to be developed to ensure that there is proper monitoring and evaluation in the GFO. It is as well crucial to identify the need for organizational learning as a way of transforming the organization. This is achieved by enhancing the processes of learning in order to improve individual and collective actions by means of better knowledge and understanding. There is a causal link between leadership work ethic and organizational performance because organizational learning facilitates the learning of all members of the organization and equips them with new skills and capabilities. Organizational leaders are designers, stewards and teachers, and responsible for building organizations where people continually expand their capabilities to understand complexity through clarified vision and improved shared mental models. Organisational structure determines the modes in which an organisation operates and performs. Organisational structure allows the expressed allocation of responsibilities for different functions and processes to different divisions such as the business units and individuals. An effective organizational structure facilitates working relationships between various entities in the organization and may improve the working efficiency within organizational units. The relationship between leadership work ethic and organizational performance is reflected in the inclusion of work ethic in decision making process, which is aimed at ensuring that the organisation operates as a nucleus. As a matter of fact, a strong relationship seems to exist between leadership work ethic and organizational performance.

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