

Corruption in South Africa: an ongoing challenge to good governance

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ABSTRACT

The article seeks to examine the phenomenon of corruption within the specific context of South Africa. The primary inquiry posed in the study is, 'What are the instances and underlying factors contributing to corruption in South Africa?' Corruption arises from a multitude of factors, including avarice, the pursuit of authority, and the dynamics of elite networking, among others. The presence of these factors within the nation fosters an atmosphere of impropriety at both the political and bureaucratic tiers of governance. The nation has instituted a range of anti-corruption bodies and strategies; however, the existing gaps in implementation pose significant obstacles to the effective realisation of these initiatives, thereby hindering efforts to combat or mitigate the prevalence of corruption. The research adopts a qualitative methodology and employs desktop analysis to gather information. The information was obtained through a thorough examination of existing literature and document analyses. The findings indicate that cultural and normative frameworks that undermine democracy and the Bill of Rights are perpetuated by corruption. The ethical frameworks that dictate institutional ethics stand in contrast to the principles of public administration. The populace may experience a decline in trust towards governmental institutions and their operations due to the capacity to question the integrity of their elected officials. The article culminates in a proposal for the establishment of codes, strategies, and a culture governed by ethical principles, aimed at fostering ethical values among both employees and employers. It is of paramount significance that individuals embrace personal responsibility and accountability to engage ethically within the workplace, thereby contributing to the overarching organisational culture and values. This research enhances the understanding of public governance, human resource management, organisational development, and leadership studies.

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Introduction

Corruption encompasses a multitude of interconnected concepts, including misconduct, maladministration, and various forms such as fraud, greed, the abuse of power, and mismanagement of funds, to name just a few. Certain categories may be linked to systemic challenges characterised by an absence of monitoring and evaluation frameworks; deficient reporting mechanisms; inadequate channels for whistle-blowing; and suboptimal practices in procurement and human resources, to name a few. Institutional factors may be rectified through the establishment of legislative and institutional frameworks that mandate a code of conduct for employees. Nonetheless, the personal element associated with individual avarice may prove challenging to amend, as it is likely intertwined with one's intrinsic values. Defending such values within an organisational context presents a considerable challenge for a human resource or labour relations officer. The article examines the notion that greed may serve as a fundamental catalyst for corruption, manifesting in the behaviours exhibited by individuals within political, governmental, and bureaucratic spheres. This reflects a profound self-interest that compels an individual to exploit power, manipulate processes, wield authority improperly, and ultimately lead to the mismanagement of funds, resources, and procedures. As articulated by Kirchgassner (2014:1199), the essence of greed is characterised by a self-centred interest that comes at the expense of others. Furthermore, it is 'their own interests at the expense of collective value'. When an individual seeks wealth purely for its intrinsic value, detached from its traditional function of facilitating consumption or other meaningful objectives, such behaviour is deemed avaricious. Navot, Reingewertz, and Cohen (2016:581) assert that even those officials committed to public service may exhibit a greater tolerance for bribery when high earnings, self-interest,

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and greed are viewed as commonplace, as it is presumed that others will be similarly motivated. There may be a diminished propensity among the public and legislators to impose sanctions on unscrupulous bureaucrats. Consequently, empirical evidence highlights the challenges encountered by anti-corruption initiatives and lends support to the notion that, contrary to widespread assumptions, increasing wages may not serve as a particularly effective strategy in the fight against corruption.

In his ethical treatises, Aristotle identifies greed as the singular vice that compels individuals to transgress legal boundaries and the tenets of justice, particularly when it aligns with their self-interest (Navot et.al. 2016:581). Greed manifests as an incessant yearning for accumulation, accompanied by an inability to find satisfaction in one's current holdings (Li, Dang, Liu, Liang, Wei & Gu 2021:165).

The study seeks to elucidate the primary research inquiry: 'what are the instances and underlying factors contributing to corruption in South Africa?'. The aims of this research are to investigate the prevalence of corruption and to analyse the underlying causes of corruption within a specific national framework. This examination within the South African context holds significant relevance to the broader global conversation surrounding corruption and governance. The reasoning is that due to the extensive corruption purportedly perpetrated by public officials in the nation, South Africa has increasingly been viewed as a predatory state, as emphasised by Smit and van Graan (2020, in Dhlamini 2024:1). The Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) evaluates territories and nations based on the degree of corruption present within their governmental institutions. As reported by Transparency International (2023: 2), South Africa achieved a score of 41 out of 100 on the CPI. Dhlamini (2024:2) underscores that this score reveals that, while not the most egregious globally, South Africa grapples with a range of corruption-related activities within its public service. This study examines various dimensions of corruption, providing a comprehensive outline of the recent financial misconduct and corrupt practices within the South African government. The research elaborates on the adverse effects of corruption on public service and trust, highlighting how elected officials and competent bureaucrats are increasingly being revealed for their misconduct and corrupt behaviours through social media platforms. The absence of transparency, accountability, and adherence to professional ethics has adversely impacted service delivery and has consequently led to an increase in various demonstrations. This situation, however, has not seemingly prompted the administration to implement any corrective measures. Consequently, corruption is becoming more entrenched and pervasive within government ministries, departments, state-owned enterprises, and local government entities. As a result, all tiers of government are adversely affected, which further undermines the principles of good governance.

Literature Review

Corruption Cases in South Africa

The section explores few corruption cases recorded in the State capture reports and discussed the level of corruption in public sector institutions. Various themes are created to explore varied aspects of corruption.

Political Corruption

The State Capture studies are extremely pertinent towards the inquiry of corruption in South Africa since they offer in-depth proof of pervasive corruption and abuse of authority in significant institutions, including governmental organizations and state-owned businesses (South African Government 2018). Recently, there has been a lot of discussion about state capture in South Africa's political as well as economic spheres. The findings, which were put together by a Judicial Commission of Enquiry set up by Cyril Ramaphosa, the head of state in South Africa, centred on claims of 'state capture', a term used to characterise the deliberate appropriation of public institutions by private interests for the benefit of the individuals involved (South African Government 2018). According to the studies, senior officials and executives have engaged in widespread corruption and unethical behaviour, including claims of bribery, kickbacks, and the manipulation of procurement procedures. The reports also named a network of people and groups that are accused of working together to sway government decisions and policies to further their interests, frequently at the expense of the public (Martin & Solomon 2016:22). It also seems evident that under the current administration, South Africa is collapsing from within. The South African currency, the rand, has depreciated, exports are shrinking, and commodity prices are falling (Martin & Solomon 2016:22) and the situation has not improved yet. The State Capture reports are significant because they demand a variety of reforms to solve these problems while providing extensive proof of the amount of dishonesty and abuse of power in South Africa. The allegations against Jacob Zuma, formerly the leader of South Africa, who was suspected of accepting bribes and indulging in corrupt behaviour, led to several high-profile arrests and trials (BBC News 2021). According to Madonsela (2019:114), the most corrupt democratically elected leader the country has ever had is Zuma. This assertion was based on the notion that, under his leadership, the nation's credit rating had dropped to junk status, its economy had been stagnating, and there was a large rate of joblessness (Madonsela 2019:114).

In recent years, South Africa has had several high-profile corruption scandals involving politicians, businesspeople, and government officials, refer to the political corruption index, table 1.

Table 1: Political corruption index

South Africa	Political corruption index
Latest value	0.438
Year	2022
Measure	index points
Data availability	1960-2022
Average	0.418
Min-Max	0.370-0.480
Source	Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem)

Source: The Global Economy 2024.

According to the information stated in Table 1, 2022's most recent value is 0.438 index points, up from 2021's 0.399 index points. By contrast, the global average, which is derived from data from 171 countries, is 0.479 index points. From 1960 to 2022, South Africa's historical average is 0.418 index points. 1996 saw the lowest value of 0.37 index points, while 2018 saw the highest value of 0.48 index points (The Global Economy 2024:1).

Role and Involvement of Elites

The State Capture reports are a series of investigations into claims of corruption and abuse of power by government officials and business executives that were investigated by Thuli Madonsela, the former Public Protector of South Africa (Public Protector 2016) and her team. The investigations centred on several important issues, including the Gupta family's power over government appointments and procurement procedures. According to Bracking (2018:169), wealthy corporate family Guptas, who have close relationships to former president Jacob Zuma, used their position as 'brokers-cum-fixers' in state-run company agreements in an attempt "to convert political influence into financial gain". Guptas would create a legitimate company, often with members of the Zuma family as participants, and then 'bully' other parties into signing the contract by saying that it could never be done without their strong political connections (Bracking 2018:169). They would then amend the contract's terms using this negotiation position, frequently to extract astronomical fees (Bracking 2018:169). For instance, Transnet sold off both its network service provider and data center in 2007 after realizing they weren't essential to the company's operations. It hired Neotel and T-Systems, two businesses connected to the Gupta family, according to the report (Smit 2022:1). It was further published in the media that Taufique Khan, the chief financial officer of Homix, received R30.3 million. According to the Zondo report, Neotel made the payment as compensation for Homix's role in persuading Transnet officials to award the contract. Homix, Khan, Neotel, and subsequently Francois van der Merwe, the manager of Neotel, were associated with and participated in the affairs of the Gupta racketeering enterprise by virtue of their involvement with this transaction (Smit 2022:2). The State Capture reports therefore described several corrupt practices, such as giving government contracts to businesses connected to the Gupta family, influencing procurement procedures to serve their interests, and appointing family members to important government positions (Dadawala 2020:486). The Guptas charmed (or bribed, depending on your point of view) their way into the ruling party in South Africa's inner sanctum (Dadawala 2020:486). Duduzane Zuma, the son of Jacob Zuma, became a director of many Gupta enterprises, and Ajay Gupta (the eldest Gupta brother) secured a position on Thabo Mbeki's advisory council (Dadawala 2020:486). The Gupta family soon had a stake in nearly every industry where having the appropriate political connections was advantageous, including mining, aviation, dairy farming, the media, and even nuclear energy (Dadawala 2020:486).

The procedure of dismissing and hiring the Minister of Finance was carried out by President Zuma's immediate family member with the assistance of the Gupta family in December 2015, in violation of the Executive Ethics Code (Desai 2018:500). According to the Public Protector (cited by Desai 2018:500), the Gupta siblings may have had knowledge of Nhlanhla Nene's dismissal six weeks after Mcebisi Jonas informed Nene of the Guptas' offer of a position in return for favours, Mr. Van Rooyen visited the Guptas' neighborhood (Saxonwold) at least seven times in prior to his appointment as Minister of Finance, including on the day of the announcement. Lastly, Nhlanhla Nene was removed after being warned by Mcebisi Jonas that he would be (Desai 2018:500).

If the Guptas were aware of Des van Rooyen's hiring, this would be against Section 2.3(e) of the Executive Ethics Code, this prohibits senior members from exploiting confidential knowledge for activities unrelated to their official responsibilities (Dassah 2018:6). Additionally, failing to investigate Mr. Nene's claim that the Gupta brothers offered him a job in exchange for favours could be an abuse of Section 34 of the Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act (12 of 2004), it mandates that people in power who are aware of possible offenses notify the police (Dassah 2018:6).

Not only the political level, but the South African public sector is also plagued by several issues, which present themselves in many different forms. Among these, corruption represents the most prominent feature. In this case, corruption has remained at the core of South Africa's current governmental and economic challenges. Such challenges culminated in the establishment of the Zondo Commission which has been making headlines since its inception in August 2018 (Gray, 2021: 369). Gray (2021: 374) goes on to assert that this mostly focused on Jacob Zuma and the Gupta family, together known as 'the Zuptas' in popular culture. Evidence points to the reality that the onslaught of African National Congress (ANC)-linked profiteers has crippled government agencies, rendering them powerless to contain the stream of corruption (Koelble 2022: 1137). The Zuma cabal and other ANC-linked

corruption networks accumulated vast riches inside and outside of South Africa, ignoring or manipulating law enforcement authorities and manipulating Parliament, taxpayers, and voters (Koelble 2022: 1137).

Bureaucratic Corruption

Research from the non-profit group Corruption Watch (2020), in South Africa claims that there are many instances of bribery, embezzlement, and improper procurement practices in governmental services, where corruption is particularly pervasive. However, there is misconduct in the business sector as well, especially in sectors like financial services, mining, and construction. This statement is substantiated by the Corruption Watch report that published its annual report on corruption trends on September 22, 2020. Whistleblowers in the South African Police Service (SAPS), municipal offices, schools, traffic and licensing centers, and the health sector reported one-third of the corruption incidents. In 2019, complaints concerning corruption within the SAPS comprised 9.2% of all complaints. By 2020, that percentage increased to 13% (Accram 2020: 1; Maile & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2023:11). The Department of Public Works and Infrastructure (DPWI) incurred R4.76 million in irregular spending in the 2020–2021 fiscal year because of officials whose appointments were found to be irregular in prior years following an investigation by the Public Service Commission (PSC) ((DPWI 2021: 238; Maile & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2020:81). South Africa has a high level of corruption in both the public and private sectors, according to the National Development Plan (NDP) (Rispel, De Jager & Fonn 2015:2; Maile & Vyas-Doorgapersad 2023:11). Figure 1 shows the cases of alleged corruption since the inception of the National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH) in September 2004 to March 2020.

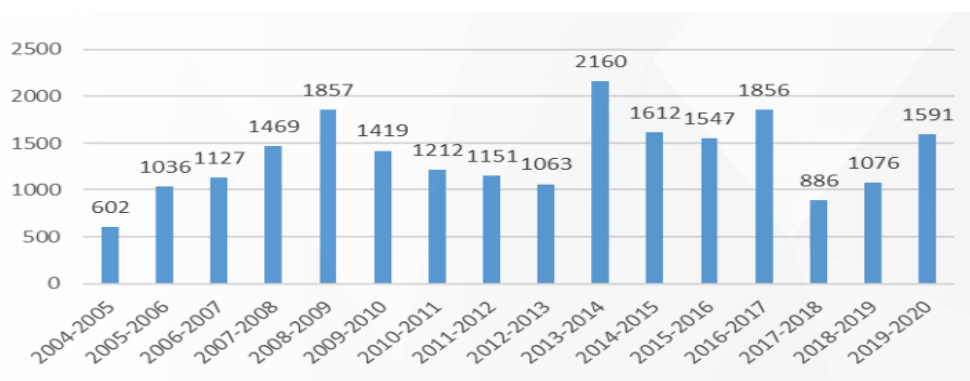


Figure 1: Cases of alleged corruption since the inception of the NACH in September 2004 to March 2020; *Source:* Public Service Commission (PSC) 2020.

Trends shown in Figure 1 indicate that despite the implementation of anti-corruption measures, the situation has not improved yet.

Research and Methodology

The study used a qualitative approach to gather information and data. To gain insight into a problem or to generate ideas or hypotheses for future quantitative research, qualitative research is used to comprehend underlying causes, viewpoints, and motivations. To uncover patterns in beliefs and viewpoints and acquire a comprehensive comprehension of the issue being studied, qualitative research is also utilized, as suggested by DeFranzo (2023:1). The information was compiled through literature and document reviews. As part of the process of responding to research questions, a literature review helps to identify crucial points of contention and knowledge gaps that call for additional investigation, according to Snyder (2019:363). While providing background information on theories and concepts that influence how a study's sections are organized, a literature review also helps readers understand those theories and concepts, as further explained by Dudovskiy (2021:1). A platform for interactive method complementarity is provided by document review. Documents also offer additional research data. Records offer a way to track development and change, and information and insights gained from them can be useful additions to a knowledge base (Bowen 2009:27-29). The researcher can compare different drafts of a given document to determine changes made. Documents can also be analysed to confirm results or validate data from other sources, as further suggested by Bowen (2009:27-29). Journal articles, newspaper articles, dissertations and theses, official documents of transparency International, Corruption Watch, South African Public Service reports, acts, internet sources were considered to compile relevant information for the article. These documents are available in public domain. The information was analyzed through conceptual and documentary content analysis. Colorado State University (1993:4) states that selecting a sample, or samples and formulating research questions are the first steps in conceptual analysis. The text must be coded into reasonable content categories after it has been selected. Coding is essentially a process of selective reduction. The researcher can concentrate on and code for particular words or patterns that are suggestive of the research question by breaking down the text into categories that comprise a single word, a group of words, or phrases. Wamboldt (1992:314) explains that documentary content analysis is a methodical and objective way to describe any phenomenon that is being studied. Luo (2019:1) states that both quantitative and qualitative content analysis are possible, with the former focused on counting and measuring and the latter on

interpreting and comprehending. However, this study utilised the qualitative content analysis method to understand the status quo of corruption in South Africa.

Discussion and Results

According to Phiri (2013:87), fighting corruption can be difficult when resources are scarce. A lack of manpower, equipment, and resources can prevent anti-corruption organizations, law enforcement, and the judiciary from efficiently investigating and prosecuting corruption cases. Because they were created with the premise that corruption might be reduced by administrative and legislative interventions, among other factors, many anti-corruption efforts in Africa appear to be ineffective (Phiri 2013:87). Resources shortages, political meddling, and a lack of human resources have hampered the bulk of these institutions, causing intentions to "outnumber accomplishments and tangible successes" (Phiri 2013:87).

A significant reason could be a lack of accountability. Responsibility for actions, decisions, consequences, and policies have a direct relationship with accountability. Accountability is synonymous with effective execution, ethical leadership, integrity-driven management, and clean government. Every member of the public service pyramid has duties allocated to them for every job position that are clearly stated, or they should be obliged to accept accountability for their activities' performance, inputs, outputs, and outcomes (Pillay 2016:116). There can be no political accountability on the part of elected politicians if they fail to respond to, value, and listen to the population in addition to the current legislative entities, regulations, and laws. The concept of 'accountability' refers to the obligation of those in a position of power to justify, explain, and take ownership of their decisions, actions, and results. It is the duty of administrators to act in conformity with the requirements and promises made clear by legislation, rules, instructions, processes, and policies (Vian 2020:2). Failure to hold people accountable does not always indicate corruption, but it does point to a pattern or, at the very least, warning of potential future problems. Of course, there are strong incentives against exposing corruption, especially when it concerns influential people or interests (Sole 2005:87).

Another reason is linked to the complex bureaucracy. According to Luiz and Steward (2014:389) South Africa's public service is renowned for its intricate bureaucracy, which can provide chances for corruption. Corrupt people may use protracted and complicated administrative procedures to demand bribes or participate in other corrupt activities. When individuals or organizations conduct business with South Africa, they frequently must bear the expense of bureaucratic delays (either by complying, refusing to comply, or being forced to comply with corrupt objectives of officials) (Luiz & Stewart 2014:390). Because of its complexity and unpredictability, bureaucracy has been implicated as a cause of delays (Luiz & Stewart 2014:390).

Patronage and nepotism are widespread problems in the public sector. Jobs and promotions that are given out based on political connections rather than qualifications may place people in positions where they are more likely to engage in corruption. The procedures of career growth, hiring, recruitment, and selection are where it most frequently occurs (Dorasamy & Kikasu 2023:6203). This dishonest/illegal activity appears to be widespread throughout most of Africa, especially in South Africa. The high level of public acceptance of these activities is regrettable. When this happens, the doors are wide open for theft and misappropriation of public property as well as the exploitation of public positions for private advantage (Gumede, Uwizeyimana and Chilunjika 2023:86). It may be claimed that the present state of underdevelopment of most South African communities, across urban and rural regions, had its origins in the apartheid administration's inadequate funding of local economic growth in black communities, even though systematic corruption and nepotism have a major impact in the underdevelopment process of most local governments in post-apartheid South Africa (Gumede et al. 2023:86).

The way political organizations try to rent-seek inside a country and use its resources for party promotion and party organizational longevity is through party patronage. Patronage assets can provide party leaders with the means to maintain the organization of their parties by offering "selective benefits" to party leaders and activists in return for loyalty to the organization or other advantages (Kopecky 2011:714). According to Mainwaring (1999:72), party patronage can also assist parties in creating clientelist networks to sustain their electoral support. Finally, patronage networks may serve as a springboard for the spread of corrupt behaviours that are pervasive in many developing nations. On all fronts, "it became an enormous challenge to go from a politically sanctioned racially divided community to a democratically run government" (refer to Shava & Chamisa 2018:1). According to Bless (2023:234) alongside the favourable policies meant to stimulate the country's economy, lawmakers and sympathizers of the African National Congress (ANC) were urged to occupy prominent posts in the public sector. Deployed through cadre deployment, this political favouritism led to poor performance within government institutions and across the nation (Bless 2023:234). Cadre deployment is a strategy by the ruling party to strategically control all levels of government and state. The deployment of cadres has reduced accountability and made conditions favourable for corruption and impunity. Politically placed cadres have a higher level of loyalty to the political party that selected them than to the organizations of the government where they are placed (Bless 2023:234).

Olver (2018:278), presents a version of this phenomenon, in which ANC branch level gatekeeper politics are practiced. Political power is utilized to get access to state benefits and rents, and these benefits and rents are then used to perpetuate patronage systems and keep power holders in place. According to Labuschagne (2017:60), "accountable patronage is given out to revive the political clout of 'big men', and political clout (access to state spoils) is utilized to restock the materials required to keep these networks operating." Because they give out rewards to secure loyalty, political elites have the unintended consequence of fostering a system of patronage control within the political system. The patronage system will only get worse in a dominating one-party state with a

parliamentary system for electing officials and where the opposition is powerless to hold rulers accountable (Labuschagne 2017:60). To maintain this unlawful relationship, the patrimonial elite continues to give favours, access to wealth, and other resources in exchange for the business of friends, family, clients, and close allies (Thomson 2000:108).

A reason that cannot be avoided is the existence of an inadequate legal framework. Some contend that South Africa's legal system for combating corruption is insufficiently thorough or toothless. It can be vital to reinforce laws against corruption and make sure that punishments are strong and strictly implemented (Ettang 2023:187). High levels of criminality are a result of prolonged poverty, unemployment, uneven social support, shoddy law enforcement, flimsy state initiatives, and permeable borders (Ettang 2023:187). South African policies and legal frameworks are often not achieving their intended goals and are often falling very short of expectations. According to Maseko (2023:1), to reduce overcrowding, officials decided not to send former South African President Jacob Zuma back to prison. This was after the former president declined to appear before a tribunal looking into financial fraud and favouritism committed under his presidency, he was then sentenced. But only two months into his sentence, he received a health-related parole discharge. Such instance shows how truly weak the South African legal framework and organisation is.

Cultural factors may contribute to the persistence of corruption. In some instances, society may tolerate corrupt behaviour or hold the view that corruption is required for one's own or one's family's survival (Mutie 2023:341). Most theories addressing the root causes of corruption have focused on the political and economic elements. However, in such formulations, culture has been disregarded. Given that cultural values have such a strong influence on a wide range of business operations in various countries, this disregard appears peculiar (Husted 1999:340). Different norms and the manners in which different cultures deviate from them are factors that lead to differences in behaviour. There are instances when cultural differences in values are evident. It is simply false to state that, despite differences in details, cultures typically agree on the essentials (Hooker 2009:251). These truths are well illustrated by the corruption phenomena. The best way to understand corruption is to understand corrupt behaviour that weakens the cultural system in which it takes place. Since cultures can operate in different ways, certain behaviours can have corrupting effects (Hooker 2009:251). Studies on corruption frequently encounter the problem of cultural relativism. What is deemed corrupt in one culture might not be in another, according to the theory of cultural relativity. Many analysts argue that the definition of corruption in the West cannot be applied to developing countries in Asia, Africa, or Latin America (Collier 2002:7). The argument based on cultural relativity has lost credibility as more developing nations adopt anti-corruption programmes that adhere to the traditional Western definition of corruption. The problem of cultural relativism is not resolved by this, though (Collier 2002:7).

Economic inequalities in South Africa can contribute to corruption. Low salaries for public servants may push some individuals to engage in corrupt activities as a means of supplementing their income (Wilson & Magam 2017:40). People are drawn abroad by countries that provide promises of better working conditions, higher wages, or even just survival because of national economic inequality. This explains why there was a major migration of Ghanaians into Nigeria at one point and of Southern Africans into South Africa, including Malawians, Zimbabweans, Zambians, and others (Wilson & Magam 2017:40). Corruption has tarnished South Africa's image and impeded its economic expansion, trading activity, foreign and local direct investment, and its international competitiveness. Ultimately, this has hindered the country's population growth and advancement (Corruption Watch 2023). The potential long-term consequences of failing to address corruption may have a negative impact on South Africa's economic and political stability as this country is still grappling with the dilemmas of economic downgrading and political instability.

There are global factors that may also be considered significant to mention. International elements like money laundering and transnational bribes can make corruption easier. Due to its involvement in the world economy, South Africa may be more susceptible to international corruption (Sandholtz & Gray 2003:764). International epistemic groups, multinational coalitions of activists and groups of advocacies, international and supranational entities, the openness of international markets, shifts in prices in international marketplaces, and global economic crises are just a few of the pathways and mechanisms by which international variables have an impact domestically (Sandholtz & Gray 2003:764). International economic influences on domestic results typically take the form of shifting relative pricing; rational actors looking to maximize their material well-being base their decisions on shifting cost-benefit ratios. Some multinational business deals raise the price of corruption or reduce its rewards. Normative modes function differently, relying on social norms of suitability and appropriateness (Sandholtz & Gray 2003:764).

For South Africa to fulfil its potential as a creative, adaptable, and energetic hub for people-centred governance (the aspirations of a developmental state), it is imperative that South Africa appropriately applies the morals and anti-corruption standards that originate from nations that are developing successfully (Mphendu & Holtzhausen 2016:73). This will help to further establish South Africa as the continent's top economy that is built on sustainable economic growth. Because they are aware that corruption impedes progress, many new premiers, managers, ministries, and mayors are motivated to minimize corruption (Mphendu & Holtzhausen 2016:73). Political and administrative authorities must understand that, to stop and ultimately reverse the spread of corruption, the fight against it requires innovative ideas, knowledge, strategies, and all-encompassing projects (Mphendu & Holtzhausen 2016:73). Any policy's execution needs strong political and administrative leadership, but anti-corruption policies are particularly difficult to manage. In essence, leadership is essential for restraining political and administrative excesses, arbitrary behaviour, and the use of public authority for personal advantage, such as the theft of limited public resources (Sakyi, Azunu & Mensah 2010:73).

There is presently no comprehensive policy covering short-, medium-, and long-term strategies in the country. As a result, the country's anti-corruption strategy's establishment and dissolution of institutions is inconsistent, which has a negative impact on how

the structure is generally organized. Government actions and political pressures would be further separated by a unified anti-corruption strategy that included all Republic of South Africa (RSA)'s anti-corruption architecture tiers (Pereira, Lehmann, Roth & Attisso 2012:10). A policy developed independent of political requirements and interests would also grant the system more autonomy. It should be emphasized once more that a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy needs to be reviewed and evaluated on a regular basis to make sure the objectives outlined in the document are met while taking any potential changes and outside influences or pressures into account (Pereira et. al. 2012:10).

Conclusions

The role of the South African government and its stakeholders is crucial in addressing corruption and financial impropriety. The primary and most significant of these entities is the government itself. Through a social contract, it is incumbent upon the government to bridge the divide between the affluent and the impoverished, as this endeavour lies at the core of articulating the collective welfare. This is achieved through a commitment to advancement, the eradication of poverty, and the reduction of economic disparities. E-governance has the potential to mitigate corruption by leveraging internet and technological avenues to enhance direct communication between the government and its citizens. It is imperative for citizens to ensure that the government is held accountable for its actions, or the absence of meaningful actions. By remaining engaged in the mechanisms of service delivery, this objective should be readily achievable; hence, it is imperative that citizens participate in all processes that will ultimately impact them. It is essential for various stakeholders, including shareholders, suppliers, investors, customers, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to engage in decision-making processes to address and rectify corrupt behaviours and practices.

The article posits that corrective measures should be initiated from the upper echelons of the hierarchy. It is proposed that all political parties commit to fostering an ethical culture within their political manifestos. It is imperative for members of each political party to participate in ethics workshops to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nuances and ramifications associated with corruption, nepotism, patronage, and illicit connections with influential figures, such as the Guptas. The Presidency should implement a comprehensive ethics code for political parties across all three levels of government, mandating that elected officials participate in ethics workshops and obtain certification of compliance. It is recommended that all government ministries and departments adhere to a uniform structure in which human resource managers facilitate ethics workshops. These workshops aim to enlighten appointed public servants across all tiers of management about the various forms and repercussions of misconduct. It is essential that these workshops are ongoing and integrated into the performance management framework. The various tiers within the public service ought to establish distinct key performance areas, with an emphasis on ethics and the necessity of employee participation certificates being paramount. At the institutional level, it is recommended that the ethical culture, strategies, values, and code of conduct undergo continuous evaluation to address areas in need of enhancement. Establishing sufficient monitoring and evaluation practices is of paramount importance to gauge the prevalence and dissemination of corruption. This arrangement may facilitate the timely implementation of corrective measures by strategic role-players. It is imperative that institutional processes, including human resources and procurement, maintain transparency for both internal and external stakeholders in order to eliminate any potential gaps that could facilitate corrupt practices. At a personal level, it is essential for employees to engage in ethics workshops, aimed at mitigating personal biases, interests, prejudices, and preferences, thereby fostering a culture of honesty and integrity within the organisation. The journey is undoubtedly challenging; however, by attaining these incremental milestones through heightened awareness, comprehensive training, and informed guidance, one can significantly mitigate the impact of corruption.

In an effort to diminish the pervasive nature of corruption and to lower its prevalence, South Africa has instituted a range of anti-corruption initiatives, strategies, and legislative frameworks within the nation. All these measures and frameworks exhibit a thorough and systematic approach. While it is essential to engage in a thorough examination of these measures and juxtapose various viewpoints regarding the efficacy of anti-corruption initiatives in South Africa, it remains unfeasible to encapsulate the multitude of opinions, perspectives, and arguments within a single study. Furthermore, numerous advancements are occurring on a global scale aimed at improving transparency and governance in the aftermath of 2020. The measures that South Africa is implementing to improve transparency and governance within its context represent a noteworthy domain for future enquiries, particularly in the creation of databases for comparative analyses. The significance of civil society and grassroots initiatives must not be overlooked. Subsequent publications will delve into these dimensions, enriching the domains of public administration and local governance.

The forthcoming research may elucidate several public service departments to be included in the study. The official documents from selected departments will serve as a basis for collecting information and assessing the extent of misconduct, thereby facilitating the implementation of corrective measures aimed at enhancing governance. Another avenue for investigation involves the application of digital governance or technological advancements within selected departments, which could aid policymakers and strategic stakeholders in addressing corruption at the institutional level, and ultimately at the national level. This could serve as a component of the extensive and comparative research that adds to the domains of public management, political science, and information technology.

The study's limitation is rooted in its reliance on secondary information, which constitutes a qualitative desktop analysis of the available data. The rationale lies in the fact that corruption represents a delicate domain to investigate, and the likelihood of obtaining insights into the magnitude of corruption within any department or organisation appears to be exceedingly challenging. Individuals may find it challenging to engage in conversations regarding instances of corruption. The motivations may include the apprehension

of job loss, inherent biases, allegiance to the organisation, and a sense of intimidation, among others. The research consequently depended on the information that was accessible. The reports and documents were meticulously chosen according to the themes examined in the article, thereby ensuring the exclusion of personal biases. The forthcoming research may similarly rely on desktop analysis of secondary data, with the objective of fostering an ongoing discourse on the eradication of corruption.

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