

**EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING
ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF COLLINS CHABANE
LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Chabalala Rivalani Precious, (15007616), hereby declare that the dissertation titled “Exploring the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance: A case study of Collins Chabane Local Municipality” submitted by me in requirements of the degree of Master of Administration at the University of Venda has not been previously submitted for any degree at this University. This is my original work, and I have indicated and acknowledged all sources through comprehensive reference.

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ABSTRACT

This study used the Collins Chabane Local Municipality as a case study to investigate how ethical governance might improve organizational performance. As they work to create a service-oriented local government that upholds public trust, municipal administrators face more difficult moral conundrums. Almost every level of the public sector's service delivery has seen a decrease in ethical governance since the new democratic era in South Africa. According to the literature study, ethical problems that plague public organizations—such as a decline in work ethics, a lack of discipline, corruption, and inadequate control systems also affect municipalities, leading to subpar performance and low productivity. Additionally, the study looked at the ethical consciousness of municipal officials and how it affected their behavior. The study has used both a qualitative research approach and quantitative research approach. The Collins Chabane Local Municipality's local authorities were the target population. In this investigation, a purposive non-probability sampling strategy was used. Semi-structured interviews and questionnaires were used to gather data. The researcher used statistical and thematic data analysis. The study's findings have shed light on tactics that should be used to encourage moral behavior in the municipality.

Keywords: Ethics, Ethical Conduct, Ethical Governance, Organizational Performance, Public Trust.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

NPM	:	New Public Management.
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.
IDP	:	Integrated Development Planning.
SCM	:	Supply Chain Management.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The delivery of necessary services to the people living in the Malamulele area is the responsibility of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. It is supposed to conduct itself in accordance with the highest ethical standards, just like any other public organization. However, according to recent publications, like the Auditor General Report (2023), the Collins Chabane Local Municipality and other municipalities deal with serious ethical issues that impact their operations. Corruption, subpar performance and governance, a lack of accountability and transparency, and inept and underqualified municipal officials are all consequences of these ethical dilemmas. Section 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (hereafter referred to as the Constitution of the Republic, 1996) outlines the objectives of municipalities as follows: (a) to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities; (b) to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; (c) to promote social and economic development; (d) to promote a safe and healthy environment; and (e) to encourage the involvement of communities and community organizations in the matters of local government.

According to Singo (2018), ethics are regarded as the pre-requisite for good governance. This implies that municipal officials should adhere to the ethical values and standards for public accountability, transparency, openness, efficiency and effectiveness. Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic, 1996, prescribes the democratic values for public administration, stressing a high standard of professional ethics, efficient use of resources, and public accountability, among other principles. This means that the government expects public administration to be carried out based on the highest ethical standard to promote the ethical behaviour of municipal

managers and junior officials. Gustafson (2021) asserts that ethics is a normative principle, as the activities of public officials depend on moral and ethical guidelines such as the Code of Conduct and the Executive Ethics Code of Conduct.

It is against this background that this study seeks to explore the role of ethical governance in enhancing municipal performance, using Collins Chabane Local Municipality as a case study to develop a mechanism that promotes ethical behaviour and enhance municipal performance.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

While carrying out their obligations and duties in organizations, governments everywhere are required to encourage moral behavior. The ethical rules reflected in their organization's clearly defined value system should serve as the foundation for ethical behavior. Government administrative conceptions and functions have evolved in accordance with the New Public Management (NPM) standards, and ethical issues are thought to be the primary trend defining the global discourse on administrative changes (Frederickson & Rohr, 2019). Ethical concerns in South Africa are intended to prevent corruption and encourage good governance in the public sector. Unethical behavior, including corruption, can weaken democracy and negatively affect the economies, hindering public service reforms and every development effort in South Africa. Therefore, civil society expects the government to develop mechanisms that promote an ethical culture to restore public trust in the government (Sebola, 2018).

A new system of governance and political organization for the public sector was introduced by South Africa's democratic government in 1994. Prior to the establishment of local government, officials were appointed with greater national expectations to serve communities in a morally and democratically responsible manner and to rectify historical inequalities appropriately. Political authority and the public's freedom to participate in decision-making are thought to be greatly impacted by the moral behavior of local politicians (Sebola, 2018). Communities under Collins Chabane are unhappy about the hiring process in the municipality; they claim that the municipality only hires politically active community members.

The Collins Chabane Local Municipality's local government problems were brought to the attention of the country in 2022 when a Presidential Imbizo was held in Malamulele. The Imbizo brought attention to several troubling concerns, including claims of unethical behavior by the local authorities. Locals were outspoken about their complaints, which included dubious procurement procedures and favoritism in municipal appointments. Additionally, there were claims of widespread corruption and debates on the misappropriation of public funds (The Presidency, 2022). This high-profile event magnified the extent of the ethical challenges facing the municipality and underscored the urgent need for comprehensive reforms. The issues raised during the Imbizo attracted nationwide attention and left an indelible impression that ethical lapses within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality were not just isolated incidents but symptomatic of a broader governance issue.

The *Daily Marverick* (dated 22 February 2022) investigative journalism reports that the Imbizo by the President unearthed and exposed unethical practices within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality in relation to poor service delivery to communities. Additionally, the news media have highlighted several instances where the municipality failed to adhere to ethical norms and regulations. For instance, the public has been made aware of allegations of nepotism, tender process violations, and misappropriation of public monies through a variety of news outlets. In one obvious instance, local media revealed that senior officials had embezzled certain community development funds for their own personal benefit. The public's confidence in the local administration has been further damaged by the findings of these reports. Pillay (2018) backs up this claim by pointing out that when citizens believe their expectations are being undermined by the actions of local officials, ethical violations cause them to lose faith in the government.

This also raised serious questions about the effectiveness of existing mechanisms to enforce ethical conduct. Given the context of this study, a targeted investigation into the role of ethical governance in improving organizational performance is urgently needed, particularly in municipalities such as Collins Chabane Local Municipality. It provides the context for this study's examination of the systems that can encourage moral behavior, reestablishing public confidence and enhancing service provision.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Today's public managers face increasingly complex ethical dilemmas, having to respond to the expectations of the media and society while creating a service-oriented local government. According to Section 195 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996, it requires that public officials refrain from abusing the public trust and conduct themselves in an ethical and respectable manner. For some time now, most municipalities have been a liability to taxpayers rather than an asset. Håkansson (2022) acknowledges that erosion work ethics such as indiscipline, flouting of rules, weak control, corruption among others are prevalent in most municipalities in South Africa. The concern is that the erosion of work ethics culminates in unethical conduct by municipal officials, with negative implications for the work environment. Furthermore, unethical conduct is costly to the public organizations with negative impact on organizational performance.

Singo and Mafunisa (2022) lament that the South African public administration is being confronted with obstacles such as a lack of transparency, accountability, inefficiency, mistrust, and corruption. Furthermore, the professional roles of municipal managers also include acknowledging politics, acting as moral managers in promoting an ethical climate in working environment. In the context of this study, the Collins Chabane Local Municipality is not immune to challenges of ethical conduct by its officials. The Collins Chabane Local Municipality has been in the media due to lack of professionalism amongst its officials, which has impacted negatively service delivery to its community (Malamulele View, 2020). In 2016, the Collins Chabane Local Municipality adopted the Fraud and Corruption Prevention Plan and Strategy (FCPPS) of 2024/2025 which outlines how individual municipal officials should behave. It stipulates that the Collins Chabane Local Municipality is committed to fighting unethical behaviour at all levels within the Council. Unfortunately, act of ethical transgressions in some parts of the municipality continues unabated.

Malatjie (2016) conducted a study entitled "Community Perception of Water Service Delivery in Collins Chabane Local Municipality". The findings of the study re-affirms that poor water service delivery was worsened by the systematic issues of maladministration from the Municipal officials. The widespread protest from 2014 up

to 2023 by the community premised on the notion of poor performance by the Municipality to the detriment of organizational performance.

This dissertation aims to solve the two sustainable goals, NDP, Agenda 2063 namely poverty and inequality. Good governance requires rule of law, democracy, justice, respect for and human rights. Inequality is caused by the lack of practise of rule of law wherein those in power abuse the power and authority they are given by doing unethical practices. Poverty is also a big problem in communities under Collins Chabane Municipalities, this is caused by the Municipality failing to provide basic services due to corruption.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to explore the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance and recommend strategies to improve ethical conduct in municipalities, with specific reference to Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To examine the state of ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.
- To determine the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.
- To identify causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.
- To analyse the effect of ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality.
- To propose mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions of this study:

- What is the current state of ethical governance and municipal performance in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?
- How does ethical governance influence or enhance organizational performance within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?
- What are the primary causes or factors contributing to ethical transgressions by municipal officials in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?
- What are the effects of ethical transgressions on the performance and service delivery of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?
- What mechanisms can be proposed and implemented to foster an ethical culture that would enhance the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Since there is a perception of a high level of ethical violations that impact municipalities' performance, especially in governance, this study is important for South African municipalities. The significance of ethics in municipal performance and the impact ethics have on the conduct of municipal officials will be understood by the municipal council. Additionally, the study aids in the examination of the role of ethics in municipal performance by municipal officials, including those in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Nonetheless, this study will also be used as a guide for academics and researchers who want to investigate how ethical behavior affects organizational success. The findings will be beneficial to the Collins Chabane Local Municipality as they will provide a basis for developing strategies to promote ethical conduct among employees. The study will also contribute to the body of knowledge on the role of ethics and its influence on municipal performance, providing insights that may be relevant to other public sector facing similar challenges.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study focused specifically on the municipal officials of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality, including managers, supervisors, and front-line workers. It will not include stakeholders such as customers or suppliers. Secondly, the study only assessed the employee awareness of ethical conduct and its influence on municipal performance. However, the implementation and evaluation of these mechanisms could not be within the scope of this study. The findings will however be generalized to related challenges that municipalities encounter across the country.

1.9 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

The following are the operational definitions of concepts to explain the main variables of the ethical phenomenon in organizational performance:

1.9.1 Ethics

Ethics studies the acts of the individual, understanding by act "a voluntary disposition of the intelligence that arouses controls and directs mental operations to achieve a specific style of occurrences" (Beh, 2017). Ethics is the discipline of knowledge that studies the attitudes, habits, and customs of the human being. According to Singo (2018), ethics in public administration are regarded as standards, norms, legal regulations and social values that guide and direct the behaviour of public officials. Ethics set standards of what is good and what is bad, furthermore it deals with the character and conduct of people to be able to distinguish from good and bad behaviour. These standards are applied in the personal and professional life of municipal officials and enable them to achieve the government's objectives to the communities.

In this study, ethics deals with the behavioural conduct of municipal officials and political office bearers and how they affect the communities they serve. Their behaviours are also examined within the context of public administration.

1.9.2 Ethical principles

When it comes to public ethics, it is not that there is a special ethic for this sector, it simply refers to ethics applied and put into practice in the public sphere. The ethics applied to public servants implies full awareness in the attitudes of each public servant, which is translated into concrete acts oriented toward the interest of citizens. In Weber's words it implies achieving an “ethic of responsibility” (Chapman, 2019). Public ethics provides the public servant knowledge to have alternative in any ethical dilemma confronted with. This indicates that the study of public ethics is important in outlining what ought to be done by municipal officials to ensure good governance and better performance in municipalities.

1.9.3 Ethical Dilemma

Maguire (2022) head of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Public Management Service program, notes that “most officials will face dilemmas that cannot be solved with a simple choice between right and wrong management issues are plagued with ethical dilemmas”. According to Yoder and Cooper (2016) contend that when individuals are faced with such ethical dilemmas, the absence of a well-defined value system may lead individuals to make incorrect decisions, unable to distinguish the appropriate course of action from inappropriate alternatives. Now when man decides and acts, the answer can be fair or unfair, good or bad, adequate or inadequate. It is important for municipal officials to have a framework of values to guide them in their decisions.

Therefore, ethical principles such as transparency, accountability, openness, efficiency among others, guide municipal officials on how to confront ethical dilemma. Ethics provides alternative choices determine positive or negative conduct on the part of the individual.

1.9.4 Good governance

Good governance entails efficient and effective use of power and resources, constitutionalism and rule of law, justice and equity, electoral and participatory democracy to redress the abuse of resources. The rule of law, transparency and accountability are outcomes of the democratization processes which form part of good governance. Effective leadership encourages the participation of citizens in the local government as this builds a good relationship between citizens and the local government and enable the local government to know what the citizens expects from them (Singo, Mafunisa & Vermaak, 2022). In the context of this study, good governance is one of the factors of democracy essential for the efficient and effective distribution of state resources fairly and equitably. Considering the backlogs that municipalities have in terms of service delivery, municipalities, particularly in rural areas, are required to practice good governance.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study will be divided into five distinct chapters as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

This chapter encompasses the introduction and background, problem statement, objectives, research questions and significance of the study. This chapter discusses what ethics are and their importance in municipalities. The problem statement showcases the dilemma organizations, and the Vhembe District Municipality encountered towards enhancing municipal officials' behavioural conduct. It further discusses the challenges municipalities face when public officials are not ethical.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides a literature review on ethics and how it influences municipal performance. Two theories are discussed in this chapter, and both prove that ethical conduct can be instilled in municipal employees, which will result in efficiency and effectiveness in the municipal performance. This chapter discussed the legislative

framework and the objectives of this study. Theoretical frameworks were presented and analyzed. Ethical principles that define the organizational behaviour were identified and discussed.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter provides information on the research methodology that the researcher used to conduct the research. This chapter aims to provide a detailed description of the research paradigm, the research design, the research methods, the study area, the population of the study, and the sampling procedures applied. Data collection instruments and how the analysis was carried out were indicated. The study highlights ethical considerations that were followed when conducting the research.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This chapter presents the data collected, analyzed and interpreted. The findings of the study were indicated and discussed. The data of this study was collected at the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Municipal employees were interviewed and given questionnaires; the researcher used the findings to provide a detailed analysis.

Chapter 5: Findings, Recommendations and Conclusions

This chapter provides a conclusion of the study, and a general summary of all chapters discussed. The researcher provided recommendations on how municipalities can instil a culture of ethics to enhance organizational performance.

1.11 SUMMARY

This chapter covers the introduction and the background of the study, problem statement, research aim, objectives and research questions, significance of the study, delimitation, operational definition, and the organization of the study. This chapter serves to orientate the study on the phenomenon to be researched. The background of the study attempts to highlight the importance of ethics in organizations, the public

sector, and the influence on the behavioural conduct of municipal officials. Ethics are instrumental in fostering good governance for optimum organizational performance. further reveals the importance of ethical conduct in good governance of the municipalities. The problem statement highlights the ethical dilemma that confronts the municipalities and the consequences thereof.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study is to explore the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance and to recommend strategies to improve ethical conduct in municipalities, with specific reference to the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. The literature review in this section explores the intricate relationship between ethics and municipal performance, particularly in the context of municipal services. Drawing from an array of scholarly sources including peer-reviewed journals, this chapter aims to provide a robust theoretical framework that elucidates how ethical governance can affect, and ideally enhance, the performance of municipalities. It also examines the theoretical relationship between ethics and municipal performance, the legislative frameworks guiding ethical conduct in municipalities, and the practical implications of ethical or unethical behaviour on municipal performance.

This investigation is essential given the increasing acknowledgement that ethical governance is a fundamental component of public trust, accountability, and the efficient provision of services in municipalities. This chapter seeks to clarify how ethical practices and values affect the operational effectiveness of local government organizations, like the Collins Chabane Municipality, by thoroughly reviewing the body of available material. Understanding the scope and depth of research on ethical governance, identifying existing gaps in the literature about its implementation and effects in municipal contexts, and investigating how these governance practices can be optimized to enhance municipal performance were all made possible by the study's objectives. By doing so, this review sets the stage for a nuanced investigation into the mechanisms through which ethical governance can serve as a catalyst for organizational excellence in the public sector, ensuring that municipal administrations are not only responsive and accountable but also aligned with the principles of ethical integrity and public service.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This section discusses the theoretical frameworks that underpin good governance through the ethical conduct of municipal officials. Sreekumar (2023) defines theoretical frameworks in research as a set of concepts, ideas, theories, and assumptions instrumental in understanding a specific phenomenon. Theories explain the relationship between variables, identify gaps in existing knowledge, and guide the development of research questions and methodologies to address that gap. In this study, different theories play an important role in analyzing the relationship among variables to explain the phenomenon under study. Theories such as virtues and deontology remain the most important in behavioural conduct; items 2.2.1 and 2.2.2.

However, this study will also provide an overview of other theories that also assist in defining the behavioural conduct of municipal officials such as utilitarianism, egoism, stakeholder and New Public Management will be presented and discussed its role in fostering an ethical culture environment within organizations and municipalities:

2.2.1 Virtue Theory

The philosopher Aristotle, who is considered the father of virtue theory, is the one who advocated it. According to this notion, a good person excels in both reason and character. According to Abakare (2023), Aristotle held that people conduct morally by nature because qualities are acquired via habit and practice. In the context of governance, virtue ethics emphasizes the importance of moral character on an individual basis in moral decision-making and promotes the development of moral leaders who model moral behavior for their companies. A virtuous person can distinguish between good and bad and is emotionally committed to doing good. Morris (2016), on the other hand, assumes that Virtue ethics shifts the focus from the act or its consequences to the character and virtues of the moral agent. It emphasizes the importance of developing good moral character traits, such as honesty, integrity, and compassion, arguing that ethical actions stem from a virtuous character.

This is especially important in the context of public administration and governance, where moral conundrums frequently have intricated and wide-ranging effects. In his

groundbreaking work, "After Virtue," Morris (2016) expands on Aristotle's idea by addressing the significance of virtue in institutions and societies. Virtues are not merely personal qualities; they are developed and maintained by practice within societies. This implies that in a municipal setting, characteristics such as responsibility, honesty, and transparency should be ingrained in the organization's culture rather than being solely personal traits.

Additionally, Maguire (2022) goes into detail about how virtue ethics might direct behavior in different situations. According to her, everyone should act in the same way that a good person would in any circumstance. In the public sector, where choices that impact entire communities are frequently made by local authorities, this is particularly pertinent. The application of virtue ethics in decision-making can help authorities make morally and legally good choices. According to Mayr and Teller (2024), virtue theory is the cornerstone of all ethics because it encourages people to be morally upright and non-harmful to others. This idea is reinforced by utilitarian theory, which holds that one should act in a way that maximizes the good of the greatest number of people. The municipality work with the community, the municipal officials should conduct themselves in virtuous manner, meaning that they must be virtuous when fulfilling their obligations. Abakare (2023) further stipulates that the behavioural conduct is at the centre of personal motives to act.

This theory emphasizes the importance of municipalities upholding the highest standards of behavior as stated in Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic, 1996, in the context of this study. Among other things, egregious maladministration, corruption, and fraud plague South African municipalities. A person should embrace the qualities that are essential to the long-term success of any company, such as justice, integrity, and trust. With its emphasis on character and the development of virtues, virtue ethics is especially pertinent for public servants, claims Maguire (2022). Developing good habits of mind and character like transparency, accountability, and fairness which can significantly improve the ethical quality of decision-making. Such an approach ensures that ethical considerations are not merely afterthoughts but are integrated into the very fabric of the organizational culture. Consequently, officials equipped with a virtuous character are better prepared to navigate the ethical

complexities that come with governance, thereby positively impacting the performance of their respective municipalities.

Therefore, virtue theory, with its emphasis on individual and communal character, offers a robust framework for improving the ethical conduct of municipal officials. Through the cultivation of virtues, officials are more likely to make ethical decisions, which, in turn, can enhance municipal performance and restore public trust.

2.2.1.1 Relevance of Virtue Theory

The virtue theory places a strong emphasis on the role that moral qualities and character play in moral behavior. This theory holds that a person's acts, which ought to exhibit a balance between reason and emotion, are what best represent their virtue. It asserts that when a person is led by virtue, their acts are in line with eudaimonia, or the good life, and help them fulfill their human role. This idea offers a helpful foundation for comprehending and fostering an ethical corporate culture in which staff members endeavor to exhibit qualities like accountability, honesty, courage, integrity, and fairness. By doing so, they contribute to their personal growth but also to the overall success of the organization. Gkeredakis, Swan, Nicolini, and Tsoukas (2023) contend that ethical expertise is a requirement at a personal level, where one's character can apply moral reason to deal with a dilemma of conflict of interest.

2.2.2 Deontological Theory

The Deontological Theory, also called Duty-Based Ethics, is a key idea in moral philosophy that has its roots in the writings of several well-known philosophers, including Immanuel Kant, who was instrumental in developing its guiding principles (Byars & Stanberry, 2018). According to deontology, an action's morality is decided by its adherence to rules or duties rather than by its effects. This theory is mainly linked to the philosopher Immanuel Kant and emphasizes the idea that some actions are always right or wrong and that ethical actions are those carried out of duty to uphold these moral laws. Deontology promotes rigorous adherence to laws, rules, and ethical

codes in governance, arguing that public servants must behave in accordance with these standards regardless of the consequences of their choices. By guaranteeing that activities are in keeping with the values of justice, equity, and respect for people's rights, this strategy emphasizes the importance of procedures and intentions in ethical governance (Alexander & Moore, 2020). Since moral behavior is crucial in all organizations and professions, deontological philosophy has a significant impact on many professional ethics rules, such as those in the legal and medical fields. Moreover, deontological ethics distinguishes between perfect and imperfect responsibilities. Perfect tasks, such as speaking the truth or refraining from murder, must always be carried out. Conversely, imperfect obligations are ones that permit discretion, like the

The deontological view emphasizes upholding moral obligations or laws regardless of the results. According to this idea, an action's moral value is determined by its adherence to moral standards rather than by its effects. Deontological ethics emphasizes people's intrinsic worth and promotes viewing them as ends in and of themselves rather than as merely means to an end. Even though they might not produce the best results, it highlights the value of maintaining moral values like honesty, transparency, responsibility, and justice in a corporate or organizational setting. This improves the reputation and performance of the municipality by fostering a sense of trust and respect among stakeholders (Byars & Stanberry, 2018).

2.2.2.1 The Relevance of Deontological Theory

According to Singo (2018), deontological theory emphasizes the significance of officials abiding by laws, rules, and regulations in the context of public administration, regardless of the repercussions. Furthermore, according to deontology, a municipal official's first concern when deciding should be whether it complies with accepted norms and regulations. Deontological theory provides a convincing framework for assessing moral judgments in this way. It holds that moral judgment is based on responsibility, laws, and people's intrinsic dignity. This viewpoint has important ramifications for both personal and professional settings. The theory's detractors point out that despite the existence of these legal and policy frameworks, corruption and unethical behavior by public servants persist. This indicates that rules have limitations, but deontology theory helps senior managers in municipalities enforce moral judgment

by using compliance as a criterion. For instance, senior management's implementation of Consequence Management a concept that demonstrates that unethical behavior is unacceptable in individuals is justified by municipal officials' violations of the Code of Conduct.

2.2.3 Utilitarianism and New Public Management Theories

This section discusses other theories in Public Administration. Although in this study they are not regarded as instrumental as Virtue and Deontology, they do support ethical conduct amongst the municipal officials:

- *Utilitarianism*

Utilitarianism, contrastingly, determines the ethical value of actions based on their outcomes, specifically in terms of their ability to produce the greatest good for the greatest number. This theory, developed by philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, suggests that the consequences of actions are the ultimate standard of right and wrong. Applied to governance, utilitarianism supports policy decisions and actions that maximize public welfare and happiness. This perspective encourages public administrators to weigh their decisions' potential benefits and harms, aiming to achieve the most positive overall outcome for society (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2019).

- *New Public Management (NPM)*

Efficiency, accountability, and performance-oriented management are the main focuses of the New Public Management (NPM) principles, which constitute an important framework in public administration. NPM, which was first implemented in the latter half of the 20th century, attempts to make the public sector more receptive to the demands of the people by incorporating management strategies from the private sector. It highlights how crucial it is to establish precise goals, track results, and use competition to enhance service delivery. Although NPM does not specifically address ethical governance, ethical governance is supported by its principles of accountability and performance evaluation. Openness, transparency, efficiency, and effectiveness

are some of the key tenets; therefore, when performing their duties, municipal authorities should make sure that the principles guide their operations.

2.3 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK GUIDING ETHICAL CONDUCT

In South Africa, the ethical conduct of the municipal officials is guided by the legislative and policy frameworks. Adherence to the acts and policies highlights the importance of ethical values in shaping the conduct of the officials towards integrity and effectiveness of public administration as follows:

2.3.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Republic of 1996's Constitution is the cornerstone of the nation's morality and civic governance. Section 152 of the Constitution delineates the goals for municipalities, including fostering a safe and healthy environment and guaranteeing the sustainable delivery of services to communities. Additionally, Section 195 outlines the governance principles that public administration must follow, such as public accountability, effective resource use, and a high standard of professional ethics (Constitution of the Republic, 1996). It promotes a moral and responsible public administration; Section 195 of the Constitution establishes the fundamental values and principles that govern public administration in South Africa. Section 195(1) stipulates that public administration must be guided by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, which include the following principles:

- (a) A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
- (b) Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted.
- (c) Public administration must be development oriented.
- (d) Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- (e) People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy-making.
- (f) Public administration must be accountable.
- (g) Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.

- (h) Good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximize human potential, must be cultivated; and
- (i) Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation (South Africa 1996:101).

Professional ethics in municipal government have its roots in Section 195 of the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution. According to the aforementioned provision, South African public entities are required to uphold a high degree of ethical conduct. Section 195 of the Constitution of South Africa (1996) serves as the basis for all legal and policy frameworks pertaining to ethical behavior by municipal governments throughout the Republic. Since community development and raising the standard of living for South Africans are rooted in the local level of government, upholding the highest ethical standards is crucial to municipal service delivery. Therefore, how municipal employees (and council members) behave has a significant impact on how municipal services are provided at the local level. The provision of municipal services depends on the ethical standards expected of municipal officials; therefore, these standards must always be maintained to prevent the delivery of services at the grassroots level from being derailed. Therefore, when performing their tasks, public officials must adhere to ethical standards. When properly maintained, ethical behavior aids municipalities in combating unethical actions and behavior in local government (municipal) and public sector organizations (Munzhedzi 2016).

In addition to weakening the resolve of loyal subordinates and junior staff in public organizations, unethical behavior by municipal employees has a profoundly detrimental impact that encourages others to attempt similar dishonest behavior in their own roles (Mafunisa 2013:761). Essentially, Section 195 of the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution places a significant legal compliance responsibility on municipal officials and their elected representatives without unduly restricting their behavior.

However, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 alone, is not sufficient to guide the day-to-day ethical considerations of municipal officials. For this, we must look at other legislation and policy guidelines that aim to operationalise the Constitutional provisions.

2.3.2 Municipal Financial Management Act, 56 of 2003

Public officials are required to perform honorably by the Local Government: Municipal Financial Management Act, 56 of 2003 (henceforth referred to as MFMA), which also punishes financial wrongdoing (National Treasury, 2000). The MFMA is an essential instrument for upholding budgetary restraint and guaranteeing the moral and responsible use of public monies. Planning, coordinating, regulating, and monitoring the financial resources that allow entities to achieve their goals is the responsibility of financial management, according to Enwereji and Uwizeyimana (2019). According to Nyamita, Dorosamy, and Garbharran (2015), financial management includes financial reporting, auditing, accountability, budgeting, funding, and expenditure management. Because it makes public officials accountable for the use of public monies, this MFMA is crucial to municipalities. The Act protects the public and public authorities by ensuring that they do not misappropriate public funds. Additionally, by stopping public officials from abusing government funds, the MFMA seeks to safeguard municipal resources.

Municipalities in South Africa are expected to comply with the MFMA as a key for financial management. Section 62 of MFMA requires that the accounting officer is responsible for managing the financial affairs of municipalities, for example, Collins Chabane Municipality's financial management must be answerable by people hired (Municipal Manager) to deal with any imbalances and explain as why such expenditure occurred. Therefore, this Section 62 requires that;

- a) Municipal take all reasonable steps to ensure that unauthorized, irregular; fruitless and wasteful expenditure and other losses are prevented; and
- b) Ensure that disciplinary or, when appropriate, criminal proceedings are instituted against any official or councillor of municipalities who has allegedly committed an act of financial misconduct or an offence in terms of Chapter 15 of the

MFMA. Therefore, this Section ensures that effective, efficient and transparent systems of financial, risk management and internal control.

According to Fourie and Opperman (2016), this legislation safeguards the public by ensuring that public money is allocated appropriately to provide services that communities require. According to Fourie and Opperman (2016), establishing strong financial governance in each municipality is one of the main goals of MFMA. Additionally, via consistent reporting, this act aims to establish a culture of responsibility and openness. The foundation of this act is performance management, which also oversees municipal budgets.

2.3.3 Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000

The Municipal Systems Act goes into additional detail about the duties and obligations of municipalities, with a strong emphasis on openness, responsibility, and community involvement. To promote an ethical culture within the municipal framework, the Act establishes Codes of Conduct for council members and municipal employees (Department of Cooperative Governance, 2000). This Act establishes guidelines for how municipalities should function. For municipalities to achieve their set responsibilities stated in the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution, public officials must abide by these Acts.

2.3.4 National Anti-Corruption Strategy, 2017

Another important part of the legislative environment is the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS), 2017. By encouraging openness, honesty, and responsibility in all spheres, including local government, it presents a multi-sectoral strategy to fight corruption (The Presidency, 2021). This approach offers a broad foundation for moral behavior, which enhances current legislation. According to the foreword by President Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa in NACS, 2017, corruption is a serious danger to the democratic principles that guide public administration if it is not addressed. He goes on to say that the goal of being a moral and progressive state will never come true. This demonstrates that the local government's mission of being developmental in nature is harmed by unethical behavior by municipal officials (NACS, 2017). This law

encourages public servants to carry out their responsibilities in an open and reliable manner.

2.3.5 Public Audit Amendment Act, 25 of 2018

Because it seeks to promote clean governance, this Public Audit Amendment is important to the public sector. The law increases the authority of the office of the Auditor-General of South Africa to take action against employees and public officials who embezzle public monies. Additionally, this act empowers the Auditor General to exert pressure on departments to take action and follow the recommendations. There would be repercussions if the Public Audit Amendment Act was broken. Given that they will be held accountable through audits for their expenditures, the Public Audit Amendment Act guarantees and incentivizes public officials to use public monies efficiently (Public Amendment Act, 2018).

2.3.6 Batho Pele Principles

The White Paper on Transformation of Service Delivery, 1997 outlined eight (8) principles that will strengthen the ethical conduct of municipal officials when executing their official duties as follows:

Consultation: All stakeholders should be consulted on the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided to determine the needs and expectations of the end users. Citizens can be consulted through conducting customer surveys, campaigns, imbizos and workshops.

Service Standards: Citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect. This can be achieved through service charters, Strategic plans, booklets with standards and service level agreements.

Ensuring Courtesy: Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration. Public officials ought to treat citizens with politeness and considerate behaviour. Public officials need to have the right attitude towards the public.

Information: Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive. This is achieved by having help desks, brochures, and posters. Press Information to be available at service points, in various official languages to accommodate all South African Citizens.

Access: All citizens should have equal access to the services to which they are entitled. The municipalities have an obligation of treating all citizens fairly with no favour.

Openness and Transparency: Citizens should be told how departments are run, how much they cost and who is in charge. The Citizen should know who the Head of the Unit is and have access to them. Public officials must be transparent and open to all staff members and the public. This can be achieved through regular staff and public meetings.

Redress: This principle promotes mechanisms for recording any public dissatisfaction. This can be done through toll-free number, suggestion boxes and customer satisfaction questionnaires. All public units must have a complaint handling system in place. Public officials must be trained to handle complaints fast and efficiently.

Value for Money: Public services should be provided economically and efficiently to give citizens the best possible value for money. This will improve internal controls and the use of expenditure controls.

The above mentioned Batho Pele principles ensures that the attitude of public officials towards the citizens of South Africa is right/fair. Municipal officials need to follow these principles to offer excellent service to the public.

2.4 Role of Leadership in Ethical Governance

As the foundation for creating and fostering an ethical culture within municipalities, the role of municipal leadership in advancing and maintaining ethical governance is crucial. In this context, leadership is more than just positional power; it also includes a wider

impact that molds organizational norms, attitudes, and behaviors. Sincerity, integrity, and openness are the hallmarks of ethical leadership, which sets the standard for acceptable and expected behavior within the entire organization. According to research by Treviño, Hartman, and Brown (2000), moral leadership has a big impact on company culture and inspires workers to imitate similar actions in their day-to-day work. Similarly, research by Den Hartog and De Hoogh (2009) highlights that leaders who prioritize ethical standards and practices not only enhance the ethical climate of their organizations but also contribute to establishing a strong foundation of trust and accountability.

It is impossible to exaggerate the significance of moral leadership in influencing company culture and output. Trust is fostered by moral leaders not just by their words but, more significantly, by their deeds. They play a crucial role in ensuring that moral ideals permeate every aspect of the company and serve as a guide for decision-making at all levels. According to research by Brown and Treviño (2006), moral leadership is linked to improved performance, organizational commitment, and employee satisfaction. This is due to the fact that moral leaders cultivate an atmosphere in which workers are treated with respect and feel appreciated, which in turn fosters a productive workplace culture that encourages cooperation, creativity, and efficiency. Moreover, Weaver, Treviño, and Agle (2005) contend that moral leadership affects how the organization is seen by others outside of it in addition to internal organizational dynamics. Credibility and public trust are essential for good government and community involvement, and ethical leaders are likely to see higher levels of these attributes in their municipalities.

In handling ethical quandaries and crises, ethical leadership is equally essential. Leaders who are dedicated to ethical governance are better able to handle difficult circumstances with honor, making choices that respect the organization's moral principles even when things go tough. This component of moral leadership is especially crucial for communities, which frequently deal with issues and disputes that call for open, equitable, and moral solutions. In order to minimize harm and preserve public trust, ethical leaders set an example of transparency and accountability by addressing concerns in a proactive and constructive manner (Ciulla, 2005; Brown, Treviño, & Harrison, 2021).

Furthermore, maintaining ethical governance over time requires ethical leadership. It entails not just the original creation of moral guidelines and procedures but also their ongoing support and modification in response to evolving situations. In addition to being receptive to criticism and dedicated to continuous development, ethical executives keep a close eye on the moral atmosphere within their company. They are aware that maintaining the relevance and efficacy of ethical governance is a dynamic process that calls for ongoing focus and work. According to Brown and Treviño (2006) and Treviño, Brown, and Hartman (2003), ethical leaders make sure that the values of ethical governance are consistently incorporated into the organization's operations and culture through frequent training, communication, and involvement with staff and the community.

In summary, leadership plays a critical role in advancing and maintaining moral governance in local governments. In addition to internal dynamics and organizational culture, ethical leadership affects the municipality's connection with the community it serves. Leaders improve performance and public trust by setting an example of honesty and accountability that penetrates the entire organization through their behavior and decision-making. In order for towns to successfully fulfill their obligations to their residents and preserve the values of good governance, leaders' continued dedication to ethical governance is essential to its survival.

2.5 CONCEPTUALISATION OF ETHICS IN MUNICIPALITIES' GOVERNANCE

In municipalities, ethical governance is a dynamic framework that has practical implications for efficiency, public trust, and community well-being (OECD, 2024). It is not merely a theoretical concept. An atmosphere in the public sector that promotes high standards of behavior is supported by a functioning ethics infrastructure. Since local governments are the closest conduits between states and their constituents, upholding moral governance is especially important. A number of fundamental ethical values are included in the framework for comprehending ethics in municipal governance. These values function as both practices and principles that direct behavior and decision-making at the local government level.

2.5.1 Ethical Values

Adams (2019) state that ethics in a municipal setting involves multi-faceted concepts such as accountability, transparency, integrity, public trust, leadership, professionalism, and the rule of law. These are not merely buzzwords but essential ethical values that provide the foundation for good governance. Here's how they are contextualized within the framework of municipalities' governance:

Accountability: In the context of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality, accountability would mean transparent fiscal management, justified allocation of public resources, and responsive service delivery mechanisms. A breakdown in accountability could manifest as mismanagement of funds or failure to address citizens' grievances, affecting the municipality's performance (Fejzullahu & Batalli, 2019).

Transparency: Transparency would involve regularly publishing financial statements, openly discussing policy decisions, and engaging the public in decision-making processes. A lack of transparency could result in distrust among community members and could even encourage corruption within the municipality (Fejzullahu & Batalli, 2019).

Integrity: For Collins Chabane Local Municipality, maintaining integrity would involve ensuring fair employment practices, avoiding nepotism, and conducting transparent public procurement processes. An absence of integrity would manifest in the form of favouritism, corruption, and abuse of power (Pillay, 2016).

Public Trust: In municipalities like Collins Chabane Local Municipality, the local community's trust is integral for smooth governance. Breaches in ethical conduct, such as corruption or nepotism, can lead to a loss of public trust, hindering the municipality's ability to operate effectively (Maguire, 2022).

Leadership: Effective ethical leadership in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality would entail leading by example, promoting an ethical culture within the administration, and making morally sound decisions. Poor leadership would weaken the ethical fabric

of the organization, leading to issues such as corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accountability (Maguire, 2022).

Professionalism: In this context, professionalism is not just about the individual qualifications of the municipal staff but also about the work culture. This involves everything from punctuality and efficient service delivery to respect for the rule of law and ethical conduct (Beh, 2017).

Rule of Law: In a municipality like Collins Chabane Local Municipality, the rule of law ensures that all administrative actions are legal, rational, and procedural fair. Violations could manifest as bypassing legal procedures for personal or political gain, affecting both the performance and credibility of the municipal system (Beh, 2017).

In conclusion, understanding and applying these ethical values in the specific context of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality provides a tailored framework for good governance. Each of these values interacts and overlaps to create a web of ethical considerations that are crucial for enhancing organizational performance and restoring public trust. By implementing these ethical values, municipalities can create an environment conducive to sustainable growth and public satisfaction.

2.6 COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

The capital of Estonia, the City of Tallinn, started a bold initiative to rethink its governance and ethical environment. Establishing a thorough ethical governance framework to improve accountability, transparency, and public involvement was a key component of this endeavor. The municipal administration of Tallinn established a specific code of conduct for public servants and officials after seeing the close connection between moral leadership and public confidence. This code outlined the standards for moral conduct, providing a yardstick by which choices and acts might be evaluated (Hansson & Vadi, 2020).

Complementing this was the introduction of regular ethics training programs designed to equip municipal employees with the necessary tools to navigate ethical dilemmas

and uphold the values specified in the code of conduct. These kinds of initiatives were essential in helping the municipal workers develop an ethical and honest culture. Furthermore, a major step toward institutionalizing ethical governance in Tallinn was taken with the creation of an independent ethics committee. This committee was tasked with monitoring adherence to moral principles and looking into claims of immoral behavior. The committee's function went beyond simple supervision; it was also a means of imposing moral behavior and a lighthouse of accountability. Its presence demonstrated the municipality's dedication to following moral standards and offered a practical means of resolving ethical issues and transgressions (Johanson & Koppel, 2021).

The outcomes of Tallinn's ethical governance initiatives were multifaceted, reflecting significant improvements in several key areas of municipal governance. Transparency was markedly enhanced, as evidenced by the proactive dissemination of information related to city council meetings, decision-making processes, and municipal finances. This openness facilitated greater public scrutiny and fostered an environment of trust, wherein citizens felt more connected to and confident in their municipal government (Karu & Randma-Liiv, 2020). Accountability mechanisms, bolstered by the ethics committee's work, ensured that public officials were held accountable for their actions, thereby reducing corruption and unethical behaviour.

For municipalities around the world, the lessons from Tallinn's experience are instructive. First and foremost, the cornerstones of a successful ethical governance framework are the development and use of a transparent code of conduct and frequent ethics training. These actions help municipal leaders and personnel comprehend ethical concepts, set clear expectations, and steer behavior (Hansson & Vadi, 2020). Second, accountability and compliance are guaranteed by the creation of an independent ethics committee. Such a body reinforces the seriousness with which ethical governance is considered by supervising adherence to ethical standards and offering a formal process for looking into and resolving ethical breaches (Johanson & Koppel, 2021).

Tallinn's strategy also emphasizes how crucial openness and public participation are to moral governance. The city has improved trust and collaboration by strengthening

the social compact between the government and its inhabitants by promoting public engagement and increasing the transparency of municipal operations. Last but not least, the accomplishments of Tallinn's ethical governance projects highlight how important leadership dedication is. Integrating moral values into the city's government and culture was made possible in large part by the enthusiastic involvement and support of municipal leaders (Karu & Randma-Liiv, 2020). To sum up, Tallinn's ethical governance project provides insightful information about the procedures and methods that can help create a framework for accountable, transparent, and moral municipal governance. The city's experiences highlight the critical role that transparent ethical standards, frequent training, impartial supervision, and public involvement play in cultivating an honest and trustworthy culture inside local government. These teachings are widely relevant and offer other communities looking to improve their ethical governance procedures a road map.

One notable example of a municipality that has made great efforts to include ethical governance into its operations is the City of Vancouver in Canada. Integrating sustainability and ethical considerations into every facet of municipal administration, from planning and development to service delivery and community participation, was at the heart of Vancouver's approach. Vancouver created a comprehensive sustainability framework that included stringent ethical requirements for both elected officials and city staff, acknowledging the crucial role that ethical governance plays in accomplishing long-term sustainability goals. According to the City of Vancouver (2019), this strategy was designed to make sure that all city activities were carried out in a way that was not just effective and efficient but also morally and environmentally responsible.

Vancouver made significant investments in ethics and sustainability-focused training programs to uphold these moral standards. The purpose of these seminars was to educate city officials and employees on the value of moral decision-making in accomplishing the city's sustainability goals. The town also set up a special Ethics Commission to monitor adherence to moral standards and deal with infractions. As an impartial agency for looking into complaints and making sure that moral principles were followed, the commission was essential to preserving accountability and openness in the city's activities (Vancouver Ethics Commission, 2020).

Initiatives for ethical government in Vancouver had important results. Public participation and trust in the city significantly increased as a result of residents realizing the municipality's dedication to moral and sustainable governance. More community participation in municipal decision-making processes was made possible by this heightened trust, which resulted in the creation of inclusive and well-informed policies. Vancouver is regarded as one of the greenest cities in the world, and its emphasis on sustainability and moral governance has also resulted in significant improvements in environmental stewardship. Because ethical standards streamlined decision-making and reduced waste, the success of Vancouver's programs also translated into increased operational efficacy and efficiency (Sustainable Vancouver, 2021).

There are many lessons to be learnt from Vancouver's experience, and other municipalities looking to integrate ethical governance into their operations might benefit greatly from these lessons. First off, the efficiency and sustainability of city operations can be greatly increased by incorporating ethical considerations into every facet of municipal governance. This strategy necessitates a thorough structure that specifies moral standards and expectations for all city employees and representatives. Second, it is impossible to exaggerate the value of education and training. To guarantee that all staff members and officials comprehend the significance of ethical governance and are prepared to make choices that support the city's sustainability and ethical objectives, regular training programs are crucial. Thirdly, in order to ensure accountability and transparency, an independent ethics commission or other oversight agency must be established. In addition to discouraging unethical behavior, such a committee offers a way to resolve any problems that may come up, preserving public confidence in municipal operations. Finally, the example of Vancouver highlights the importance of openness and public involvement in developing a climate of confidence and collaboration between the city and its residents.

All things considered, Vancouver's efforts in sustainability and ethical governance provide an engaging case study of how ethical principles may revolutionize municipal operations. The city's achievement shows how moral leadership can boost public confidence, increase operational effectiveness, and produce noteworthy sustainability results. These teachings are generally relevant and can be used as a manual by local

governments all around the world who want to establish or improve their ethical governance procedures.

2.7 ROLE OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

One crucial leadership approach that boosts worker productivity in businesses is ethical leadership. Sustainability and the accomplishment of organizational goals are the outcomes of ethical leadership's seamless promotion of organizational principles (Rida and Ayesha 2018). The ethical aspect of management leadership is emphasized by ethical governance. It speaks to the principles, moral character, and moral conduct of the leader in the workplace, as well as how they interact with workers, organizations, and society at large (Strydom, 2021).

According to Malesela (2004), National Development Plan, 2030 identifies the following as critical elements of good governance: accountability, transparency, independence, fairness, responsibility and discipline as follows:

Discipline: This means a commitment by the organization's senior management to standards of correct and proper behaviour.

Transparency: This is where an outsider can meaningfully analyse the actions and performance of the organization.

Accountability: this is where communities' rights to receive information relating to the stewardship of the organization's assets and performance are addressed.

Responsibility: This is where all the consequences of the organization's behaviours and actions in relation to the commitment for improvements are accepted.

Fairness: This is in terms of the acknowledgement of respect for and balances between the rights and interests of the various stakeholders of the organization.

Social responsibility: This is where the organization demonstrates the commitment to ethical standards and its appreciation of the social, environment and economic impact of its activities on the society in which it functions.

The researcher aims to enlighten Collins Chabane Local Municipality employees on the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance. Studies has proven that when ethical governance is practised in organizations, the organization flourishes and achieves their objectives in an effective manner. Thus, Collins Chabane employees need to be aware of the role of ethical governance in their work for them to perform their duties with integrity.

2.8 CAUSES OF ETHICAL TRANSGRESSION

The integrity and ethical behavior of the whole public sector present numerous issues for the South African government. Public faith in the public sector, particularly at the local government level, has been eroded by numerous instances of unethical behavior and dishonesty. It was discovered that mayors, council members, and other authorities lacked integrity and ethical behavior (Mafunisa, 2016). The ability to uphold and encourage a high standard of ethics in line with Section 195 of the Republic of 1996 Constitution does not bode well for the people of this nation.

- *Corruption*

Another kind of unethical behavior that is linked to ethical quandaries, especially at a higher level, is corruption. Corruption in municipalities is frequently reported on a daily basis in local radio stations and newspapers. Corruption is increasingly seen as a danger to our fledgling democracy (South African Government Association, 2024). As a result, corruption is now acknowledged as one of the biggest problems facing the South African government, with various repercussions for the provision of public services. Another kind of unethical behavior that is linked to ethical quandaries, especially at a higher level, is corruption. Corruption in municipalities is frequently reported on a daily basis in local radio stations and newspapers. Corruption is increasingly seen as a danger to our fledgling democracy (South African Government Association, 2024). As a result, corruption is now acknowledged as one of the biggest

problems facing the South African government, with various repercussions for the provision of public services.

- *Nepotism*

Nepotism is the practice of assigning friends and family to jobs for whom outside candidates may be more competent, according to the Business Dictionary. Almost all governmental and private organizations in our nation view nepotism as an issue. If you are not a member of a particular party, if you do not know influential people, or if you are not related to the employer, you will typically not be hired. According to a study conducted by the Institute of Criminology and Criminal Justice, nepotism is frequently referred to as modern-day corruption in Kosovo. In the majority of states, the law against corruption in the Penal Code serves as the legal basis for punishments against this issue (Iqbal & Ahmad, 2020).

According to Özler (quoted in Sadozai, Zaman, Marri, and Ramay, 2012), nepotism occurs when someone is hired or promoted based only on their family, regardless of their qualifications, education, or other attributes. Because nepotism places unqualified individuals in positions for which they are not qualified and leads to subpar performance, it is detrimental to everyone. Nepotism is detrimental to the performance of organizations, according to research in anthropology, economics, and political science. Nepotism undermines the interpersonal bonds that support organizational success and provide a compassionate and bearable work environment. Nepotism is an unethical practice that only serves the interests of the family members, claim Iqbal and Ahmad (2006). Consequently, nepotism disrupts human resources procedures and lowers employee morale.

Unfortunately, not all family members and relatives have the qualifications to be hired for a specific career or role, according to Lakshminarasimhan (2011). Imagine the consequences for the company's discipline if a manager is denied authority over a subordinate just because she is related to an employer. Business owners face a chaotic environment as a result of nepotism, which permits rules to be broken. According to Farahmand's (2013) research, nepotism has an impact on an

organization's human resource quality since candidates are hired based more on their familial relationships than their qualifications.

In conclusion, we can say that nepotism is a form of discrimination on which members of the family or friends are hired not because of their talents or experience, but only because they are relatives to the owner or the executives of the enterprise. Nepotism is a common problem in almost all the organizations, and it affects the morale, the culture and overall, the performance of the organization. Nepotism is considered a form of corruption and actions must be taken to combat this phenomenon even the public say that is impossible to combat the nepotism.

- *Fraud*

Albrecht, Albrecht, Albrecht, and Zimbelman (2006) assert that deceit, confidence, and cunning are always a part of fraud. The term "fraud" is broad and includes any of the many strategies that human creativity might come up with to give one person an edge over another through deceptive claims. Since fraud encompasses unfair methods of deceiving someone else as well as surprise, deception, and cunning, it is impossible to define it with absolute certainty. It is only defined by the limits placed on human knavery. Fraud has a variety of effects on people, businesses, and consumers. Generally speaking, fraud reduces an organization's net income. In order to recoup these expenses, consumers and individuals must pay more for goods and services. For instance, insurance and health care fraud raises the premiums that people have to pay. In the end, fraud costs everyone in the economy individuals, customers, and businesses alike. Organizations are susceptible to several forms of fraud, including employee embezzlement. Employees steal firm assets in order to defraud their bosses in this kind of fraud. There are two types of embezzlement: direct and indirect. Additionally, there is management fraud, which differs from other forms of fraud in both the character of the offenders and the deception technique used. Top management manipulating financial figures is the most prevalent form of dishonesty known as management fraud. Those that depend on financial statements, such as lenders and stockholders, are usually the targets of management fraud.

Supply Chain Management (SCM) is essential for lowering a supply chain's total management costs and increasing the efficiency of supply chain capital activities. The efficiency of supply chain financial services can be significantly increased in recent years by creating more specialized risk pricing models and carrying out more stringent investment decision-making procedures, thanks to the deep integration of supply chain and the Internet, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, and Blockchain, among other technologies. However, the SCM data has grown significantly due to the quick development of new technologies, and new financial fraud patterns or behaviors are becoming more subtle and dispersed among more typical ones. The lack of enough capability to handle the big data volumes and mitigate the financial frauds may lead to huge losses in supply chains. The complicity of supplying chains network allows fraudsters to commit fraud beyond the scope of internal controls. Detecting fraud by analyzing the large amount of data is a complicated task for detecting or auditing agencies (Zhou, Sun, Fu, Fan, Jiang, Hu, & Li, 2020).

- *Kickbacks*

Academic and practical research has focused on the connection between ethical governance and organizational performance, and the results highlight the significant influence that ethical practices have on an organization's efficacy, efficiency, and service delivery, especially in the public sector. According to a groundbreaking study by O'Kelly (2021), better organizational performance is positively correlated with the adoption of ethical governance frameworks. According to the study, towns that followed moral governance principles saw improvements in operational effectiveness, as evidenced by less resource waste and more efficient procedures. Similarly, Smith and Riley (2019) conducted an extensive review of municipal governance practices and concluded that those with strong ethical governance mechanisms in place reported higher levels of effectiveness, particularly in terms of achieving strategic objectives and responding to community needs.

Another topic that has attracted a lot of interest is how ethical governance affects the provision of services. Municipalities with ethical governance practices were more likely to deliver services that meet or beyond public expectations, according to Johnson and Svara's (2020) investigation of the impact of ethical leadership and ethical culture on

the caliber of public services. According to their findings, a service-oriented culture in municipalities where the needs and welfare of the community are given priority is facilitated by ethical governance. To support this, Bauhr and Grimes (2021) investigated the connection between service delivery outcomes and transparency, which is a crucial aspect of ethical governance. In South Africa, most municipalities are reported on mass media for tender fraud that mainly occurs at the level of Supply Chain Management (Morning Live Actual News dated 23 January 2025). It was on public knowledge that one of the senior politicians was engaged in tender fraud. In this manner, it was discovered that transparency not only fosters trust and accountability but also enhances the quality-of-service delivery by making municipal operations more visible and subject to public scrutiny, which in turn pressures municipalities to maintain high standards of performance.

Additionally, there is empirical data supporting the role that ethical governance plays in improving organizational efficiency. According to Thompson and Riccucci's (2020) analysis of the practical effects of ethical governance in several municipalities, those with strong ethical frameworks were more effective at allocating and managing their resources. The ethical requirement to use resources wisely and for the benefit of the public, reducing instances of corruption and poor management that might result in resource waste, is the source of this efficiency. Additionally, Haque and Pathrannarakul (2020) underscored the significance of accountability mechanisms within the ethical governance paradigm, noting that they play a critical role in ensuring that municipal operations are conducted effectively, with a clear focus on achieving desired outcomes and addressing community needs.

Ethical practices have an impact on municipal governance's performance, which goes beyond operational measurements to include the wider effects on community development and well-being. According to research by Johnson and Svara (2020), moral governance practices increase the effectiveness of municipal governance overall by encouraging justice, accountability, and openness, which in turn leads to a more equitable allocation of resources and services. In order to promote social cohesiveness and sustainable community development, this equitable allocation is crucial. Additionally, Smith and Riley (2019) emphasized how ethical governance

approaches, such inclusive and responsive government and participatory decision-making, empower communities and improve the efficiency of municipal operations.

- *Wasteful Expenditure*

The majority of South African municipalities do not adhere to financial standards as specified in the Municipal Financial Management Act, according to the Auditor-General Tsakani Maluleke's Consolidated General Report on Local Government Audit results for the 2021–22 fiscal year. Unauthorized, irregular, unproductive, and wasteful (UIFW) spending by the municipalities has been exposed. Only 38 out of 257 municipalities received clean audits, indicating that the UIFW is a persistent problem in municipalities. Inadequate skills and capacity, governance flaws, and a lack of responsibility and consequence management are the three primary areas that comprise the underlying causes of UIFW expenditure (Auditor General Report, 2021/2022).

Regretfully, the Auditor General Report (202/2023) still lists frequent unnecessary expenses that the city has incurred. According to the January 24, 2025, Morning Live Actual News television news, a few municipal mayors came forward to request help in the service delivery area. For local and district municipalities, fraud and wasteful spending are two more problems. local managers, mayors, and the local council's failure to provide an accounting demonstrates that the issue of inadequate financial management will continue to exist. The consulting charge is the cause of the other atypical expense. R1.3 billion was reportedly spent on consulting services. The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) however disputes that the use of consultants, when municipalities have accountants is another grey area of syphoning municipal funds.

The second issue is that Section 32(2)(b) of the MFMA requires that the Council Committee look into irregular or wasteful spending and either suggest that the responsible parties reimburse the expenditure or write it off as irrevocable. To the detriment of providing high-quality services, the irrecoverable expense lacks consequence management (Auditor General Report, 2023/2024). The conversations stated above demonstrate how profoundly immoral behavior can obstruct civic progress.

2.9 THE CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS

Schedule 2 of the MSA contains the Code of Conduct for Municipal Officials. For the municipal official, the codes define and benchmark what is proper and incorrect. The code's main purpose is to regulate the conduct of municipal authorities, who are entrusted with the welfare of numerous inhabitants. Ethics codes are essential to the municipality's efficient administration. To name a few duties, municipal leaders commission infrastructure, control economic activity, provide inhabitants with needed services, and negotiate with other nations. This emphasizes the need of knowing how to use codes of ethics to control municipal authorities (Bauhr, 2017).

Municipalities are required by section 67 of the Systems Act to create and implement policies and processes that guarantee equitable, effective, efficient, and transparent personnel management. Integrity, transparency, accountability, serving the public interest, and avoiding conflicts of interest are among the ethical standards and expected behaviors that all municipal employees must adhere to, as outlined in a code of conduct. Other principles include handling gifts appropriately, disclosing personal benefits, and treating all citizens equally while performing their duties; in other words, they must always act in the best interests of the municipality and its citizens (MSA, 2000).

According to Makalela and Moloto (2023), the public expects aspects of good governance include high-quality services, equitable treatment of all people, accountability, transparency, involvement, and prompt action to combat corruption. This suggests that the lack of a Code of Ethics will undermine public confidence. People typically have less faith in the government's capacity to address their issues. As individuals are more likely to take part in and take ownership of the process of any program the municipality tries to launch, this has a detrimental effect on the planning and execution of the program. When citizens perceive that egregious maladministration is demonstrated through corruption, fraud, bribery, kickbacks, and unnecessary spending, they become less confident in the government's capacity to address their issues.

People in South Africa, for instance, generally believe that municipalities are performing poorly, especially when it comes to providing high-quality services. According to a review of the literature (Masiya, Davids & Mangayi, 2019; Nkomo, 2017 &), the majority of protests were ascribed to the unethical behavior of municipal officials, including nepotism, corruption, a lack of openness and transparency, a lack of accountability, and unresponsiveness. The majority of people accused politicians and public servants of misusing tax dollars intended for service delivery for their own private gain. Voters' decisions were influenced by the public's diminished faith in local government. For instance, neither the opposition nor the reigning party was able to secure a two-thirds majority in the general elections held in 2024, which prevented a single party from forming a government.

Natulya (2024) claims that the ANC was compelled to create a coalition government with opposition parties after receiving 45.6% of the vote in the 2021 local government elections. Furthermore, according to media sources, a survey conducted prior to general elections revealed that the public was unhappy with the majority of local governance because of ethical code violations. The Government of National Unity (GNU) was established as a result of the election results, which President Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa regarded as a "wake-up call" that the people had demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the government's subpar performance at the municipal, provincial, and national levels.

The Municipal Systems Act of 2000's Schedule 2(1)(b) prohibits municipal officials from asking for, accepting, or soliciting bribes or gifts for their own benefit. This is one ethical conundrum that municipal administrators face in the majority of South African municipalities. In this way, the Code of Conduct helps to reinforce a person's moral principles. For instance, municipal officials are deterred by the Code of Conduct. Additionally, following the Code of Conduct reduces corruption, promotes an honest culture, and strengthens moral principles in society. In addition to carrying out their responsibilities with diligence, honesty, and transparency, municipal officials must also communicate with the public in an open, equitable, and unbiased manner. They have to follow the legal guidelines set forth by the Municipal Council. This implies that all municipal authorities must behave in the best interests of the municipality and refrain from compromising the integrity of the organization. For instance, kickbacks, fraud,

and bribery are frequently reported by the media as the most frequent ethical conundrums that South African municipal authorities deal with. In order to behave impartially and treat everyone equally, including other staff members, without favoritism or bias, the Code of Conduct mandates that municipal officials refrain from soliciting or requesting bribes in exchange for favors (MSA, 2000).

According to Masinya (2024), corruption is currently considered to be one of the biggest problems facing the South African government, with far-reaching effects on the provision of public services. A few dishonest officials profit from the diversion of funds intended to aid the impoverished. Corruption erodes social fairness and democracy, which exacerbates poverty, fuels organized crime, and stymies initiatives to promote human security. In this way, moral standards in the public sector continue to be crucial for enhancing the performance and integrity of the government.

2.10 CODE OF ETHICS

One of the main tools used in the public sector to intentionally encourage good behavior and weed out bad administrative behavior in the provision of public services is an ethical code. According to Richard (1979), ethics is simply defined as what is acceptable or unacceptable, right and wrong, and entwined with people's value systems. There is no clear winner in the universalism vs. particularism argument over moral behavior. However, the universally recognized behavior standards lead to formation of a code of ethics which directs the interactions of the society's members. The codes prescribe and benchmark for what is wrong and right for the public sector employees. The essence of the code is to guide the behaviour of the public servants who are trusted to serve many of their fellow citizens. Codes of ethics are central to effective governance in the public service. Public servants deliver essential services to citizens, commission infrastructure, regulate economic activity and engage in diplomacy with foreign countries – to mention just a few tasks. This puts a premium on understanding how to manage the public servants through codes of ethics (Bauhr, 2017). Maladministration practices in the public sector are vented out by the ethos entrenched in the constitutions and public service codes. According to Gildenhuis (1991) poor, dishonest management of public affairs and corruption (immoral acts) are among the most important manifestations of unethical conduct.

The taxonomy of governance benchmarks to attain efficiency and effectiveness includes codes of ethics in the context of public governance. According to De Bruijn and Dicke (2006), codes are the most significant declarations of civic expectations. Ethics control the interactions between the principals (people) and agents (bureaucrats) in public governance discourses. As the codes ingrain the self-policing culture among public workers, the public service ethos makes it more difficult to provide citizens with high-quality services (Ake, 1993). When applied to public servants, the codes of ethics become the gold standard for professionalism in the public sector. The codes consistently increase administrative effectiveness and advance the ideas of good governance (Nkyabonaki, 2008). Furthermore, codes of ethics are one of the instruments used to advance public integrity in the public sector. Therefore, since 2000, codes of conduct for civil servants have become more prevalent in African public government. This resulted from late 1990s generic revisions. However, it is crucial to foresee the fundamental point that standards of behavior are meaningless if they are not supported by robust internal promotion systems. Such a foundation requires a purposeful and proactive approach and takes time to develop.

Thompson (2018) asserts that a commitment to promoting a public ethics of accountability through sociopolitical measures meant to eliminate the leniency mechanisms that tolerate corruption is a way to put a stop to the subpar administrative inefficiencies. This tactic might necessitate, for example, combating the incentive system (which supports, for instance, the practice of bribery to expedite administrative procedures), which may obscure the immorality of corruption in cases where certain instances of the phenomenon occur without any immediate and tangible negative effects but are instead seen as a means of addressing social injustices and inefficiencies.

This might be made possible by the generality of public administration procedures, which might lessen the necessity of depending on the favors of a dishonest official, for instance, in order to get documents in a timely manner. In developing nations like Tanzania, the moral decay issue is more pressing. The Prevention of Corruption Ordinance was one of the main pieces of legislation Tanzania acquired upon independence to stop public servant misbehavior and misuse of authority. The size of the civil service was tiny. Due to the nationalization of the private industries, public

service had grown significantly by the late 1960s. Professionalism and integrity started to gradually deteriorate.

The trust that the country placed in them was betrayed by many public servants. They began to use their positions for private or personal financial gain, which led to the growth of corruption. In 1971 the government abolished and replaced the Prevention of Corruption Ordinance with the Prevention of Corruption Act. The latter improved the provisions of the repealed law and made it a criminal for the public servants to be found with property considered to have been corruptly learned. Offenders' sentences were also improved (Hossea, 2003). The inadequate accountability, unethical administrative behaviour and corrupt practices have become so pervasive, and even institutionalized norms of behaviour in the public sector, to the extent that one may conveniently speak of a crisis of ethics in Tanzanian public service (Nkyabonaki, 2019)

In conclusion, code of ethics is an essential tool to fight unethical behaviour such as corruption and nepotism. If code of ethics is properly put in practice municipalities will be able to function very well and achieve their set objectives. Following the code of ethics effectively will ensure an enhancement in municipal performances which will results in communities getting satisfactory services.

2.11 SUMMARY

This chapter highlights the conceptual framework underpinning this study. The literature review showcase how important ethical behaviour of municipal officials is in terms of enhancing organizational performance. Theories and legislation that informs ethics in municipalities were identified and discussed. The principles of good governance were presented in alignment with ethical behaviour of the municipal officials. For municipalities to achieve their goals and objectives, political office bearers and public officials must be willing to learn to be honest, courageous, and generous, as these traits make a good person. These traits will make it easier for municipal workers to be transparent and accountable as Aristotle virtual states that you become a virtuous person over time with practice and effort.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter's goal is to give a thorough explanation of the research paradigm, design, methodology, study region, population, and sample techniques used. Details about the research methods the researcher employed to carry out the study are given in this part. A key element of the study was the research methodology, which described the sequential procedures used to examine the phenomena. The approach, methods, and resources used to collect, examine, and evaluate the data were described in detail in the methodology section. The researcher made sure the study was transparent and reproducible by outlining the techniques in detail, which made it possible for others to comprehend and maybe duplicate the research process.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Brooke, Katheleen and Gina (2021) research paradigm is a theoretical framework comprised of a set of beliefs and values, which guides how research is conducted, and knowledge conceptualized within scientific communities. Furthermore, Vibba and Christine (2019) state that in social research, the term “paradigm” is used to refer to the philosophical assumptions or to the basic set of beliefs that guide the actions and define the worldview of the researcher. The researcher applied a pragmatism research paradigm to this study. Brooke, *et al.*, (2021) states that Pragmatism as a paradigm is based upon the premise of utilizing the best methods to investigate real-world problems, allowing for the use of multiple sources of data and knowledge to answer research questions. Pragmatism provides an action-oriented framework for research, wherein the researcher aimed to address practical issues arising directly from communities using the most appropriate methods for answering the research questions.

3.2.1 Rationale for Adopting Pragmatism Paradigm

The researcher adopted the pragmatism paradigm due to its nature of allowing mixed methods. Creswell (2019) argues that the pragmatism paradigm is not concerned with the search for broadly applicable laws and rules, but rather with the aim of making deep descriptive analyses and bringing interpretative understandings of social phenomena to the fore. This fitted in with the focus of this study as the purpose of the study was to explore ethics influence on municipal performance.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design is defined as a plan that provides the underlying structure to integrate all elements of a quantitative study so that the results are credible, free from bias, and maximally generalizable (Dannels, 2018). Furthermore Bryman (2016) state that a research design is a plan or blueprint of how one intends conducting research. The researcher applied a descriptive research design to this study. Descriptive research design is ideal in this study as it aligned with the pragmatism paradigm which was applied.

Siedleki (2020) state that the purpose of descriptive studies is to describe individuals, events, or conditions by studying them as they are in nature. The researcher does not manipulate any of the variables but rather only describes the sample or variable. According Babbie (2016), descriptive research design involves observing and documenting behaviours, attitudes, or conditions as they naturally occur.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODS

According to Cresswell and Cresswell (2017), a research method can be defined as the systematic procedure a researcher uses to gather, analyse, and interpret information relevant to a research question. For research methods, this study has used mixed research methods. Mixed research methods in this study have helped to answer the research questions that cannot be answered by quantitative or qualitative methods

alone and provided a greater collection of tools to meet the aims and objectives of this study.

3.3.1 Mixed Methods

According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), mixed research methodologies are a research methodology that integrates both quantitative and qualitative data gathering and analysis procedures. The mixed methodologies used in this study are meant to complement one another. Furthermore, qualitative research methods are helpful in examining subjective and complex experiences, attitudes, and behaviors that are impossible to measure, according to Creswell and Creswell (2019). Qualitative research can provide rich and detailed insights into the research question or problem that can help develop hypotheses or theories for further investigation. However, qualitative research is often criticized for its subjective nature, limited sample size, and lack of generalizability to larger populations.

When a researcher wants to know how or why something happens instead of what or how many, they usually employ qualitative research. To fully comprehend a phenomenon, it entails gathering and examining non-numerical data, including observations, interviews, and documents (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). It is operationalized as a type of research that analyzes these numbers using statistics and conducts the investigation in an unbiased and objective manner. The selection of participants and data collection methods, such as questionnaires, were necessary for quantitative analysis. Studies using the quantitative research method were able to analyze the data using numerical values.

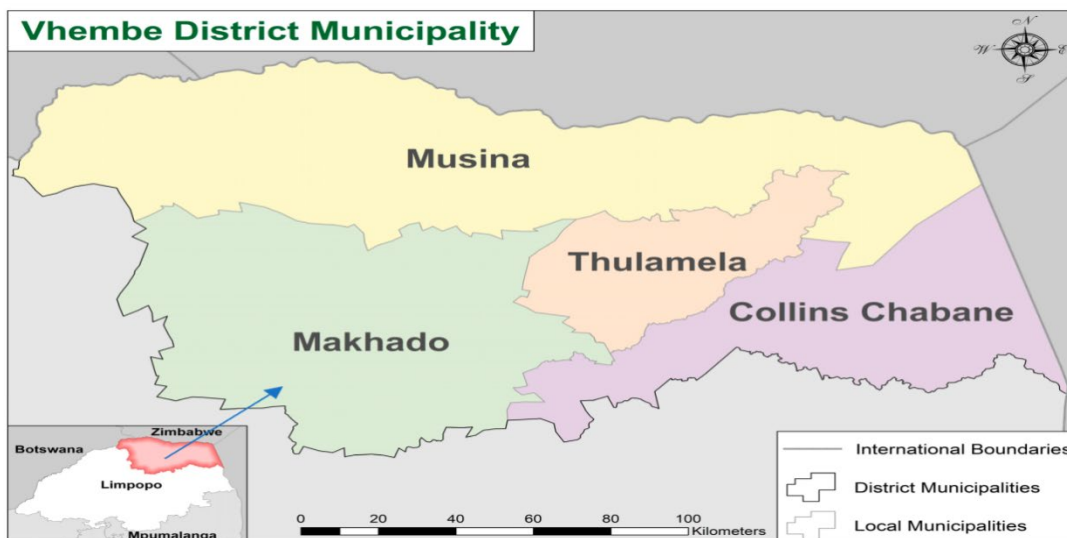
3.3.1.1 Reasons for using the Mixed Methods

The Mixed Methods Research was relevant for this study as it allowed and guided mixed methods researchers to use a variety of approaches to answer research questions that cannot be addressed using a singular method.

3.4 STUDY AREA

The Collins Chabane Local Municipality is a Category B municipality situated within the Vhembe District in the far north of the Limpopo Province. The Municipality shares the borders with Musina in the north, Thulamela in the north-east, the Mopani District in the far south, Louis Trichardt in the west. It is one of the four municipalities in the district, making up 20% of its geographic area. It was established through the amalgamation of portions of the Thulamela and Makhado Local Municipalities in August 2016. It has an area of 5003 km² (Collins Chabane Local Municipality Annual Report, 2022:15).

Figure 3:1 Map showing the Collins Chabane Local Municipality



Source: Geographic Information System, 2022

3.5 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

Brynard and Hanekom (2017) indicate that the research population refers to all the objects, topics, events, phenomena, or activities that the researcher wants to research to generate new knowledge. Welman, Kruger, and Mitchell (2022) also refer to the population as the study object, which may consist of individuals, groups, organizations, human products and events, or the conditions to which they are exposed. The population of the study was comprised by all the municipal employees

of Collins Chabane Local Municipality such as ward councillors, ward committee members, front line workers, human resource workers and municipal executives such as municipal managers and mayors.

According to the Statistics South Africa (2022) Census Survey Report on the Collins Chabane Local Municipality, showed that the area has a population of 244 217 inhabitants. There is a combination of urban, semi-urban and rural wards. The municipality is demarcated into 30 wards and has 60 councillors. One ward of the 30 wards can be considered as an urban ward, one as a semi-urban ward and the remaining 28 wards can be classified as rural. The municipality is demarcated into 30 wards and has 60 councillors. The 10 traditional authority areas comprise 91 villages. The Malamulele Town is the largest and most densely populated centre, featuring the most employment opportunities, as well as the best shopping and recreational facilities. The labour force consists of skilled, semi-skilled and a large percentage of unskilled people.

3.6 SAMPLING

According to Bryman (2022) sampling is regarded as a small portion of the total set of objects, events, or people from which a representative selection is drawn.

3.6.1 Sampling Methods

The researcher has used non-probability sampling to conduct the study, and purposeful sampling was be applied. The researcher has used non-probability sampling since it allowed one to collect data from individuals who are knowledgeable about the subject at hand.

Shukla (2023) states that non-probability sampling selection does not have any scientific base, so it increases the chances of selecting biased sample. Such sample does not represent all characteristics of entire population in most of the cases. All units do not have certain or fixed probability to be selected in sample in this method. Purposive sampling is used to judge the opinion of an expert with the selection of cases with a specific purpose in mind. Therefore, it would make sense to use

purposive sampling to obtain co-operation from the municipal officials, as they are experts in their specific focus areas. Stated differently, these officials are able to express their opinions on municipal performance and ethics in a certain way (Hanekom, Rowland & Bain, 2022). Purposive sampling has the following unique characteristics: it can be applied when the population is big or when fewer people are needed for the sample; This technique can be applied if probability sampling is not feasible or feasible; This sample technique can be applied if research needs to be finished faster for whatever reason. Last but not least, the researcher can employ this sample selection technique if he believes that a particular segment of the population accurately reflects it based on prior research or experience (Shukla, 2023).

3.6.2 Sampling Size

For this study, the sample survey consisted of ten (10) ward councillors, ten (10) front line workers, ten (10) human resource workers and ten (10) municipal executives of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Thus, a total of forty (40) participants were targeted. A simple random sampling was used to obtain the data from the ward committee members (ward councillors). Bryman (2022) explain that simple random sampling is done when each element of the population has the same chance of being included during the first and subsequent draw. A simple random sampling allowed the researcher to include an acceptable number of people in the study, considering the population of Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection, according to Creswell and Creswell (2017), is the act of obtaining and assessing information on variables of interest in a predetermined, methodical manner that makes it possible to respond to research questions, test hypotheses, and assess results. Data collection, according to Ackerman, Schmid, Rudolph, Seamans, Susukida, Mojtabai, and Stuart (2019), is the process of gathering information in order to solve the study problem. The study's results and a thorough analysis of them were presented in this chapter.

For this study, the data of this study was collected at the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. The researcher has used interview and questionnaire to collect data. Municipal employees were interviewed and given questionnaires; the researcher has therefore used the finding to provide a detailed analysis. The researcher has collected and presented their data in the form of tables. Data was analyzed and interpreted based on the views of the participants.

3.7.1 Interview (Semi-Structured Interview)

According to Abayomi (2017) an interview is a data collection method in which a researcher engages in direct conversation with a participant or respondent to gather information about their experiences, beliefs, opinions or behaviours. In this manner, the semi-structured interview is an important data gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the subject. A semi-structured interview was used with open-ended questions. The open-ended questions interview was used as it is in alignment with the qualitative research method applied to the study.

Therefore, this study has adopted the open-ended interviews in data collection method as it assisted the researcher to understand participants experiences and perceptions about the phenomenon. The research has interviewed municipal officials of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. These interviews were conducted telephonically and face to face. The researcher first made appointment with the participants before conducting the interviews.

3.7.2 Questionnaire

According to Kuphanga (2024), a questionnaire is essentially an organized set of questions given to interviewees together with explicit guidelines outlining the format and selection standards. According to Bhandari (2023), a questionnaire is a set of inquiries or items intended to elicit information from respondents regarding their beliefs, experiences, or viewpoints. All responders are given the same set of precise, specific, and pre-planned questions in structured questionnaires. In accordance with the quantitative research approach used in the study, the researcher employed structured questionnaires to carry out the investigation.

Data for this study was gathered from Collins Chabane Local Municipality municipal officials using a closed-ended questionnaire. Respondents cannot answer in their own words or share their own thoughts, feelings, or perceptions regarding the occurrence when asked closed-ended questions. The responders were only permitted to check the response they believed to be accurate on a template that the researcher had provided. Participants were given questionnaires by the researcher, who gave them three days to respond in writing. After gathering the surveys, the researcher examined the information supplied.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Data analysis is simply the process of converting the gathered data to meaningful information. Different techniques such as modelling to reach trends, relationships, and therefore conclusions to address the decision-making process are employed in this process (Hamed, 2020). This crucial step follows the collection of data and aims to extract meaningful insights that answer research questions or fulfil research objectives. To analyse data, this study has used both statistical analysis and thematic analysis.

3.9.1 Statistical Analysis

The researcher used statistical analysis in order to examine quantitative data, which was obtained from questionnaires. Statistical analysis is a sort of quantitative data analysis that is used to describe or present data in a quantitative, easily comprehensible manner, according to James and Simister (2020). Stated differently, this method of analysis aids researchers in providing an illustration and summary of an observation (Ameer, 2021). Furthermore, the researcher selected this statistical method since it aided in the development of a justification related to quantification.

3.9.2 Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis was employed by the researcher to analyse qualitative data, and this was the data conducted through interviews. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research method that researchers use to systematically organize and analyse complex data sets. It is a search for themes that can capture the narratives available in the account of data sets (Dawadi, 2020). According to Nowell, Norris, White and Moules (2017), rigorous thematic analysis approach can produce insightful and trustworthy findings.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Babbie and Mouton (2022), ethics is typically associated with morality and dealing with issues that are both right and wrong. Bryman (2022) points out that the collection of data and various methods of manipulating data to ensure the desired outcomes are subject to ethical considerations.

3.10.1 Permission to conduct the study

Permission was obtained from the University of Venda's Ethical Committee to conduct the study. A request letter was be sent to Collins Chabane Local Municipality to get permission for the survey. Collins Chabane Local Municipality granted the researcher permission to collect data of this study.

3.10.2 Informed consent

"The researcher's efforts to inform research respondents of the possible consequences, risks, and benefits of the study before engaging them into the study, including that at any point, they can choose to discontinue with the study and no explanation will be sought from them," is how Bryman (2022) defines informed consent. Participants in this study were given the University of Venda universal informed consent form in order to obtain their consent.

3.10.3 Voluntary participation

One crucial ethical concept that guarantees people have the freedom to decide whether to engage in research projects without being forced or influenced is voluntary participation. Because it prevents people from being compelled or forced to participate in research against their will or without their informed agreement, this principle is crucial. The right to refuse to participate in research without fear of repercussions or injury is known as voluntary participation.

To help individuals decide whether to join, the researcher in this study has given participants clear and accurate information about the study's goals, methods, risks, and rewards (Strydom, 2022). Before enrolling participants in the study, the researcher got their informed consent to guarantee that their voluntary involvement was maintained. When participants provide their consent voluntarily and without pressure, it indicates that they have been given all the information they need to make an informed decision regarding their involvement.

3.10.4 Protection from harm

This study adhered to the concept of no damage. "The researcher must ensure that no harm will come to the participants in any way as a result of their decision to participate in a study," emphasizes Strydom (2024). Since starting the current study, the researcher has worked to craft questions that safeguard participants' emotional and mental health and steer clear of trauma and "or abuse."

3.10.5 Right to privacy

The secrecy principle was upheld. Schi and Tao (2022) went into great detail about the principle of confidentiality. According to their discussion, the relativity of confidentiality is a significant issue. The statement pertains to "the fact that although the personal names of the respondents may not be published, their combined contributions to the study form the larger part of the findings of a study without implicating them in any way." Participants have been informed by the researcher about

how confidentiality would be managed in the study, as well as their options to withdraw from it or seek clarification if they feel uncomfortable.

3.11 SUMMARY

This chapter explained the research methodology applied in this study wherein the researcher used mixed method for data collection. Pragmatism paradigm was adopted in this study due to its nature of allowing the research methodology that the researcher applied. This chapter applied the descriptive research which blended well with the pragmatism paradigm applied. This chapter provided the study area which was the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. The population of the study were employees of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. The researcher used non-probability sampling and purposive sampling methods. The researcher also provided reasons for choosing and using these sampling methods. The sampling size of this study was also provided for in this chapter. This chapter further indicated the data collection methods that were applied which were the interviews and questionnaires. The researcher used closed ended questions for the questionnaire and open-ended questions for interviews. This chapter provided the data analysis applied which was both the statistical analysis and the thematic analysis. Finally, the chapter provided the ethical considerations for conducting research namely, Permission to conduct the study, informed consent, voluntary participation, protection from harm and right to privacy.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the understanding and opinions of the participants on the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance: A case study of Collins Chabane Local Municipality. The data regarding the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance was collected through both the quantitative and qualitative methods. The researcher used questionnaires to collect quantitative data and interviews to collect qualitative data. The responses to the data collected through questionnaires are presented in a graphical tabular form, followed by a brief explanation of the findings. Also, the responses to data collected through interviews are presented in a narrative form and are followed by a brief interpretation of the findings.

4.2. PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRE

This section presents, interprets and analyses the data that is collected through questionnaires. It consists of two sections namely, A and B. Section A presents the biographical details of the participants, and section B presents the data that was developed from questionnaires distributed to and collected from the participants by the researcher. The sampling of this study was 30 participants and 100% response was attained. The researcher used graphical tabular format, frequencies and percentages to present the data followed by a brief interpretation of the findings.

4.2.1 SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF PARTICIPANTS

Table 4.1 Gender of participant

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Male	17	56.6%
2	Female	13	43.4%
	Total	30	100%

Table 4.1 above shows the participants biographical data in terms of gender. From the 30 participants who took part in this study, 17 (56.6%) were male and only 13 (43.4%) were females. This shows that most participants were males and less were females. The researcher concludes that majority of municipal employees are males.

Table 4.2 Age of participants

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Less than 21 years	0	0%
2	22-30 years	8	26.6%
3	31-40 years	12	40%
4	41-50 years	6	20%
5	51 years and above	4	13.3%
	Total	30	100%

Table 4.2 presents the age of the participants. As shown by the Table, there were no participants aged less than 21 years old. Eight (8) (26.6) participants were aged between 22-30 years; 12 (40%) participants were aged between 31-40 years; the Table further shows that 6 participants were aged between 41-50 years and lastly 4 (13.3%) participants were aged 51 years and above. The researcher concludes that many of the participants were aged between 31-40 years which is 12 (40%) of our participants. Based on data presented, the researcher concludes that majority of Collins Chabane employees are aged between 31-40 years of aged.

Table 4.3 Position of participants

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Municipal Manager	1	3.3%
2	Front line worker	15	50%
3	Admin Clerk	5	16.6%
4	Ward Councillor	4	13.3%
5	Human Resource Staff	3	10%
6	Other Municipal Officials	5	16.6%
	Total	30	100%

Table 4.3 above shows the positions of the participants who took part in this study. The data collected through questionnaires shows that 1 (3.3%) participant was a municipal manager; 15 (40%) participants were front line workers; 5 (16.6%) participants were admin clerks; 4 (13.3%) participants were ward councillors; 3 (10%) participants were human resource staff members; and 5 participants were other municipal officials. The researcher concludes from the findings presented in the above table that most of the participants were front-line workers, comprising 15 (50%) of our participants. The researcher concludes that most participants in this study were frontline workers.

Table 4.4 Educational Qualifications of the Participants

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Below grade 12	3	10%
2	Grade 12	10	33.3%
3	Diploma 8	8	26.6%
4	Bachelor's degree	6	20%
5	Postgraduate qualification	3	10%
	Total	30	100%

Table 4.4 presents the qualification of the participants in this study. The table show that 3 (10%) participants in this study have qualifications below grade 12 (Matric); 10 (33.3%) participants in this study have grade 12 certificates; while 8 (26.6%) participants in this study have diplomas; 6 (20%) participants in this study have

bachelor's degrees and the remaining 3 (10%) participants have post graduate qualifications. Therefore, a conclusion can be made that most of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality officials have grade 12 and a diploma as their highest level of education. The researcher concludes on the above data that most study participants only have grade 12 as their highest level of education.

4.2.2 SECTION B: THE ROLE OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

In this section, data collected through questionnaires is presented, analyzed and interpreted in a tabular format. This sub-section will be divided into five themes which are to examine the state of ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality; to determine the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality; Causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality; to analyse the effect of ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality and Mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance.

4.2.2.1 To examine the state of ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality

The sub section below will examine ethical governance through a tabular format and a brief analysis.

Table 4.5: There is Transparency with the municipality.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	5	13.3%
2	Agree	10	33.3%
3	Not sure	8	23.3%
4	Disagree	6	20%
5	Strongly disagree	1	10%
	Total	30	100%

The data presented in the above Table shows that 5 (13.3%) participants strongly agreed that there is transparency within the municipality. Majority 10 (33.3%) of the participants agreed that there is transparency with the municipality and only 1 (10%) person strongly disagreed that there is transparency with the municipality. The data tell us that while some participants see transparency within municipal practices, a significant number either question its existence or are unsure, signaling a need for clearer communication and transparent operations to build trust.

Table 4.6: Principle of Accountability is applied with the municipality.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	3	10%
2	Agree	8	26.6%
3	Not sure	6	20%
4	Disagree	10	33.3%
5	Strongly disagree	3	10%
	Total	30	100%

The Table above show that majority of the participants disagree that the principle of accountability is applied within the municipality. Only 3 (10%) participants strongly agreed that the principle of accountability is applied within the municipality. About 8 (26.6%) participants agreed that the principle of accountability is applied within the municipality and 6 (20%) participants were not sure with only 3 (10%) participants strongly disagreeing that the principle of accountability is applied within the municipality. This suggests that the municipality struggles to hold officials responsible for their actions. About 6 (20%) unsure further reflects a lack of clarity about accountability measures, showing this as a critical area for improvement.

Table 4.7: There is Fairness within the municipality

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	4	13.3%
2	Agree	16	53.3%
3	Not sure	7	23.3%
4	Disagree	3	10%

5	Strongly disagree	0	0%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table shows that 4 (13.3%) participants strongly agree that there is fairness within the municipality. The majority of the participants have agreed that there is fairness within the municipality. The researcher concludes, based on the data presented, that there are inconsistencies in how fairness is applied or perceived within the municipality, as the data shows that only 5 (50%) of participants agree that there is fairness within the municipality.

Table 4.8: Rule of Law is applied to all municipal officials.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	10	33.3%
2	Agree	11	36.6%
3	Not sure	7	23.3%
4	Disagree	2	6.6%
5	Strongly disagree	0	0%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table shows 10 (33.3%) participants strongly agree that the rule of law is applied to all municipal officials. 11 (36.6%) participants agree that the rule of law is applied to all municipal officials with only 2 (6.6%) participants disagreeing. Based on the data provided above. The researcher concludes that the rule of law is applied to all municipal officials and suggest for improved training or visibility of how rules are implemented.

Table 4.9: Municipal officials perform their tasks with Integrity.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	10	33.3%
2	Agree	15	50%
3	Not sure	2	6.6%
4	Disagree	2	6.6%
5	Strongly disagree	1	3.3%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table shows that 10 participants of this study have strongly agreed that municipal officials perform their tasks with integrity. The majority of the participants agreed that municipal officials perform their tasks with integrity. 2 (6.6%) participants were not sure, 2 (6.6%) participants disagreed that municipal officials perform their tasks with integrity, and only a minimum of 1 (3.3%) participant strongly disagreed that municipal officials perform their tasks with integrity. Based on the results a researcher suggests that continued emphasis on ethical behaviour is essential to sustain this positive perception.

4.2.2.2 To determine the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

This sub-section will determine the role of ethical governance in enhancing organization performance through a tabular format and a brief analysis.

Table 4.10: Professionalism plays an important role in enhancing organization performance.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	13	43.3%
2	Agree	12	40%
3	Not sure	5	16.6%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly disagree	0	0%
	Total	30	100%

The above data indicates that 13 (43.3%) participants of the study strongly agree that professionalism plays an important role in enhancing organizational performance. About 12(40%) participants agreed that professionalism is important in enhancing organizational performance. The researcher concludes that the participants of the study agree that professionalism plays an important role in enhancing organizational performance.

Table 4.11: Accountability and transparency serve as effective means for reaching the goals of the municipality and ensuring high productivity.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	12	40%
2	Agree	10	33.3%
3	Not sure	6	20%
4	Disagree	1	3.3%
5	Strongly disagree	1	3.3%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table shows that majority of participants in this study strongly agree that accountability and transparency serve as effective means of reaching goals of the municipality and ensuring high productivity. 10 (33,3%) participants agree that accountability and transparency serve as an effective means for reaching goals of the municipality and ensuring high productivity. The researcher concludes based on the data presented that the participants of this study are of the view that accountability and transparency serve as an effective means for reaching goals of the municipality and ensuring high productivity.

Table 4.12: The public have trust in the administration of the municipality.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	10	33.3%
2	Agree	10	33.3%
3	Not sure	6	20%
4	Disagree	2	6.6%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The Table shows that 10 (33.3%) participants strongly agree that the public have trust in the administration of the municipality. Other 10 (33.3%) participants have agreed that the public have trust in the municipality with only 6 (20%) participants not sure. Only 2 (6,6%) participants have disagreed that the public have trust in the municipality and the other 2 (6.6%) participants have strongly disagreed that the public have trust

in the municipality. Based on data presented above, the researcher concludes that the public have trust in the administration of the municipality.

4.2.2.3 Causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality

This sub-section will explain the causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

Table 4.13: Corruption leads incompetent and under-qualified municipal officials to poor performance.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	8	26.6%
2	Agree	10	33.3%
3	Not sure	3	10%
4	Disagree	7	23.3%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table shows that 8 (26.6%) participants of the study strongly agree that corruption leads to incompetent and under-qualified municipal officials. Majority of the participants in this study have agreed that corruption leads to incompetent and under-qualified municipal officials with only 3 (10%) participants not sure which suggests lack of understanding or awareness on corruption's role. Disagree 7(23.3%) and strongly disagree 2 (6.6%) which indicate that while many view corruption as a major issue, others may see other factors as more impact.

Table 4.14. Nepotism

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	10	33.3%
2	Agree	11	36.6%
3	Not sure	4	13.3%
4	Disagree	3	10%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table shows that 10 (33.3%) participants of this study strongly agree that nepotism leads to incompetent and under-qualified municipal officials. The 4 (13.3%) unsure shows a need for clearer policies to prevent nepotism and raise awareness about its consequences. Majority of the participants have agreed that nepotism leads to incompetent and under-qualified municipal officials with a minimal of 2(6.6%) participants strongly disagreeing that nepotism leads to incompetent and under-qualified municipal officials. In conclusion, most of the participants of this study are of the view that nepotism is inappropriate as it leads to poor governance.

Table 4.15: Poor governance results in poor performance within the municipality

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	9	30%
2	Agree	12	40%
3	Not sure	4	13.3%
4	Disagree	3	10%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table present that 9(30%) participants of this study have strongly agree that poor governance result in poor performance within the municipality. Majority of the participants have agreed that poor governance results in poor performance within the municipality with only a minority of 2(6.6%) participants strongly disagreeing that poor governance results in poor performance. These results suggest some variation in how governance challenges are experienced or perceived.

Table 4.16: Weak oversight and monitoring

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	7	23.3%
2	Agree	12	40%
3	Not sure	5	16.6%
4	Disagree	4	13.3%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table shows that 7 (23.3%) participants strongly agree, 12 (40%) agree associate weak oversight with ethical lapses, underlining monitoring deficiencies as a structural problem while 4 (13.3%) and 2 (6.6%) on disagree and strongly disagree respectively which suggest that there is a need to clarify the actual enforcement monitoring protocols.

Table 4.17: Lack of professionalism

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	6	20%
2	Agree	12	40%
3	Not sure	5	16.6%
4	Disagree	5	16.6%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table indicate that 6 (20%) participants strongly agree, and 12(40%) participants agree which believe that professionalism deficits can lead to ethical transgressions, pointing to the need for better professional standards. However, 5(16.6%) disagree and \2 (6.6%) strongly disagrees) which indicate some participants may not see professionalism as an important factor, reflecting different experiences.

4.2.2.4 Effect of ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality

This sub section will present the effect of ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

Table 4.18: Lack of Transparency and accountability results in poor performance by municipal employees

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	9	30%
2	Agree	11	36.6%
3	Not sure	4	13.3%
4	Disagree	4	13.3%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table indicates that 9 (30%) participants strongly agree, and 11 (36.6%) participants agree. This suggest that majority of participants believe that a lack of transparency and accountability directly contributes to poor performance by municipal employees. While 9 (13.3%) of participants indicated that they unsure which means they lack sufficient information to assess the impact of transparency and accountability on employee performance. The remaining portion of participants 4 (13.3%) disagree and strongly disagree 2 (6.6%). The researcher suggest that minority of participants might feel that municipal employee performance is influenced by other factors or that transparency and accountability issues are not important.

Table 4.19: Unethical conducts result in poor governance.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	8	26.6%
2	Agree	11	36.6%
3	Not sure	3	10%
4	Disagree	6	20%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The Table above indicate that majority of participants 11 (36.6%) agree and 8 (26.6%) strongly agree which shows that participants believes that unethical behaviour significantly contributes to poor governance. About 3 (10%) of participants indicated that are Not Sure, suggesting the lack of clarity on the issue. Whereas 6 (20%) of participants disagree and 2 (6.6%) strongly Disagree. The results suggest most participants acknowledge the harmful effects of unethical behaviour on governance, a notable minority holds differing opinions or doubts about this connection.

Table 4.20: Lack of integrity by municipal officials leads to nepotism and corruption within the municipality.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	10	33.3%
2	Agree	9	30%
3	Not sure	5	16.6%
4	Disagree	4	13.3%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The Table above shows that 10 (33.3%) participants strongly agree and agree 9 (30%) of participants believes that "Lack of integrity by municipal officials leads to nepotism and corruption within the municipality." There was 5 (16.6%) of participants that indicated Not Sure, which highlights some uncertainty or lack of evidence to form a definitive opinion. Meanwhile, 6 (19.9%) of participants indicated agree and 2 (6.6%) strongly Disagree. The researcher suggests that there is a strong consensus on the

need for integrity to fight nepotism and corruption, but the minority disagreement which shows differing views on root causes or contributing factors.

4.2.2.5 Mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance.

This sub section will present mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance

Table 4.21: Act strictly to obtain unity and trust in upholding values and principles

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	11	36.6%
2	Agree	10	33.3%
3	Not sure	3	10%
4	Disagree	4	13.3%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The Table above indicates 11 (36.6%) participants strongly agree and 10 (33.3%) participants agree, which shows strong believe that strict actions are necessary to encourage unity and trust in upholding values and principles. While 3 (10%) of participants indicated Not Sure, which may reflect uncertainty about the impact of strict measures on these goals. Meanwhile, 4 (13.3%) participants disagree and 2 (6.6%) strongly disagree which oppose that strict actions are not the best approach. According to the results the researcher concludes that the strictness is an effective means of promoting unity and adherence to principles.

Table 4.22: Hold events to award those who behaved well and who fought corruption gallantly.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	10	33.3%
2	Agree	11	36.6%

3	Not sure	3	10%
4	Disagree	4	13.3%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table indicates that 10 (33.3%) of participants strongly agree and 11 (36.6 %) participants support recognition initiatives as a motivator for ethical behaviour, while 30% disagreement/uncertainty suggests the need to demonstrate the effectiveness of such programs.

Table 4.23: Deal quickly with all unethical cases; encourage teamwork and support.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	9	30%
2	Agree	12	40%
3	Not sure	4	13.3%
4	Disagree	3	10%
5	Strongly disagree	2	6.6%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table indicates that 9 (30%) of participants strongly agree and 12 (40%) participants this means that majority of participants believe that it is important to address unethical cases which encourage teamwork and support, while 4 (13.3%) participants indicated that they are not sure. A small number of participants indicated that that they disagree 3 (10%) and 2(6.6%) indicated that they strongly disagree. The researcher concludes that dealing with unethical cases encourages teamwork and support within the municipality.

Table 4.24: Encourage the sharing and exchange of ideas by all openly and frankly.

	Response	Frequencies	Percentage
1	Strongly agree	10	33.3%
2	Agree	10	33.3%
3	Not sure	4	13.3%
4	Disagree	5	16.6%
5	Strongly disagree	1	3.3%
	Total	30	100%

The above Table indicates that 10 (33.3%) of participants strongly agree and 10 (33.3%) participants agree with encourage the sharing and exchange of ideas by all openly and frankly, while 5 (16.16%) participants disagree and 1(3.3%) strongly disagree which suggest that only few participants who do not believe in sharing which might be because of various experiences.

4.3 DISCUSSION OF RESPONSES FROM QUANTITATIVE DATA

The data presented and analyzed in this chapter provide a critical understanding of the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance within Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Several significant patterns emerged from the responses, reflecting both strengths and challenges in the municipality's governance framework.

The results show that the elements of ethical governance, such as transparency, fairness, and integrity, are perceived positively by many participants, but there remain areas for significant improvement, especially concerning accountability and consistency in governance practices. Issues such as corruption, nepotism, and weak oversight were identified as barriers to effective governance, adversely affecting municipal performance.

The study highlights the vital role professionalism, transparency, and accountability play in achieving high organizational performance. Participants strongly associate ethical behaviour and adherence to governance principles with improved trust and

productivity. However, variations in perception underline the need for enhanced communication and enforcement of ethical standards to address uncertainties and build consensus. Mechanisms for creating an ethical culture, such as recognizing ethical conduct, fostering teamwork, and ensuring swift action against unethical practices, are broadly supported by participants. These measures are pivotal to mitigating challenges and fostering a more cohesive and principled organizational environment. In conclusion, the findings underscore the importance of ethical governance as a cornerstone for organizational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality. To achieve sustained improvement, it is essential to address identified governance shortcomings and reinforce mechanisms that promote ethical conduct across all levels of the organization. These efforts will build trust, enhance performance, and ultimately serve the municipality's objectives more effectively.

4.3 ANALYSIS COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEWS

This section presents the data collected through interviews. This was conducted to answer the research questions.

4.3.1 Question 1: In your opinion, how does ethical conduct influence the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?

Participant A:

Ethical conduct fosters the transparency and trust inside the Municipality by ethical behaviour. It guarantees accountability and establishes a norm for decision-making, both principles are instrumental in improving departmental performance.

Participant B:

There is a connection between excellent governance and ethical conduct. Transparency and adherence to regulations lead to more effective service delivery which enhances municipal performance.

Participant C:

Reducing inefficiencies is facilitated by ethical behaviour. It enables departments to run efficiently without being constantly disrupted by problems like bribery.

Participant D:

Fairness is ensured by ethical behaviour, which improves community collaboration and public trust, both of which improve performance.

Participant E:

Ethical conduct directly influences employee morale. When there's fairness and integrity, employees are more motivated, which enhances productivity.

Participant F:

Performance is based on ethical governance. It facilitates seamless operations and lessens community opposition.

Participant G:

All municipal operations are guaranteed to run smoothly and without delays brought on by corruption or poor management when ethical behaviour is practiced.

Participant H:

Upholding public trust and fulfilling the municipality's mandate are guaranteed by ethical governance.

Participant I:

Departmental interactions are improved by ethical behaviour, which promotes greater cooperation and increased output.

Participant J:

Transparency and efficiency, which are essential for effective municipal performance and good governance, are the results of ethical behaviour.

The responses from participants provide valuable insights into how ethical conduct influences the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Overall, the participants unanimously agree that ethical governance is crucial in enhancing transparency, trust, efficiency, and overall service delivery. Their perspectives highlight several interconnected factors that contribute to improved municipal performance.

Ethical behaviour fosters transparency and builds trust within the municipality and the community. Participants A, B, and J emphasize that transparency, coupled with adherence to regulations, enhances accountability and sets a standard for decision-making. This alignment with good governance practices allows for more effective

service delivery and ensures that operations are carried out with integrity. Transparency also helps maintain public trust, which is critical for municipal success.

Ethical governance directly impacts operational efficiency by reducing corruption and other inefficiencies. Participants C and G note that practices like bribery and mismanagement are major disruptions to smooth operations. When ethical behaviour is prioritized, these issues are minimized, allowing departments to function without unnecessary delays or disruptions. This results in a more streamlined and productive municipal environment.

Fairness and integrity strengthen relationships between the municipality and its stakeholders. According to Participants D and H, ethical conduct promotes fairness, which in turn fosters community collaboration and trust. This collaboration not only supports the municipality's mandate but also enhances public confidence in its leadership and decision-making processes.

Ethical conduct has a significant influence on employee morale and productivity. Participants E and I point out that fairness and integrity in governance motivate employees and encourage better cooperation within departments. When employees feel valued and work in a transparent and just environment, their productivity increases, contributing to overall organizational efficiency.

Ethical governance facilitates effective service delivery and mitigates community opposition. Participants B and F highlight that ethical practices are the foundation of excellent governance and service delivery. Adhering to ethical standards ensures that municipal operations run smoothly and that community concerns are addressed constructively, reducing potential conflicts.

The results indicate that ethical conduct is a cornerstone of municipal performance. The participants' responses reveal that ethical behaviour not only enhances transparency and trust but also creates an environment conducive to efficiency, fairness, and collaboration. The findings underscore the importance of integrating ethical principles into all levels of municipal operations. This ensures not only improved

service delivery but also strengthens relationships with employees, the community, and other stakeholders.

The results highlight the interconnectedness of ethical behaviour with key elements of governance, including accountability, operational efficiency, and employee morale. For the Collins Chabane Local Municipality, these insights suggest that investing in ethical training, clear accountability measures, and community engagement initiatives would reinforce trust and performance. Ultimately, the findings confirm that ethical governance is not just a moral imperative but also a practical necessity for effective municipal management.

4.3.2 Question 2: Can you provide an example of how ethical conduct has impacted your work in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?

Participant A:

For example, project implementation has accelerated because of the substantial decrease in corruption caused by the adoption of transparent procurement procedures.

Participant B:

For instance, we carefully followed the procurement criteria for a community project. The outcome was an open procedure that increased community trust.

Participant C:

My department has been able to prevent fraudulent acts and preserve accuracy in record-keeping by adhering to documentation procedures.

Participant D:

In one instance, a project was delayed because it did not adhere to ethical standards; nonetheless, the project proceeded well after we followed the proper protocol.

Participant E:

The frequency of complaints about promotions and job placements has decreased as a result of following fair recruiting standards.

Participant F:

I've witnessed how closely adhering to moral principles has improved services for my ward since we keep positive ties with the community.

Participant G:

To prevent any inconsistencies during audits, I always ensure that financial documents are accurate.

Participant H:

Upholding public trust and fulfilling the municipality's mandate are guaranteed by ethical governance.

Participant I:

In my department, ensuring equitable hiring procedures has improved staff cohesion and reduced conflict.

Participant J:

We have been able to finish projects without the typical delays brought on by financial mismanagement by maintaining transparency in budget allocations.

The responses to Question 2 provide concrete examples of how ethical conduct have positively impacted work within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. These examples reveal that ethical governance is vital in improving operational efficiency, enhancing community trust, and fostering a fair and transparent work environment. Several participants highlighted the role of transparency in enhancing project implementation and reducing corruption. Participant A notes that adopting transparent procurement procedures has significantly decreased corruption, allowing projects to progress more efficiently. Similarly, Participant J explains that maintaining transparency in budget allocations has eliminated delays commonly caused by financial mismanagement, enabling timely completion of projects. The emphasis on adherence to ethical standards in procurement processes is particularly noteworthy. Participant B describes how carefully following procurement criteria for a community project resulted in an open process that increased trust within the community. This underscores the importance of fairness and integrity in municipal operations, which are essential for building strong relationships with stakeholders.

Ethical practices have also enhanced accuracy and accountability in municipal operations. Participant C shares that strict adherence to documentation procedures has helped prevent fraudulent activities and ensured accurate record-keeping. Similarly, Participant G emphasizes the importance of maintaining accurate financial

records to prevent audit inconsistencies, reinforcing the municipality's credibility and accountability.

Fairness in recruitment and hiring processes is another significant theme. Participant E observes that the frequency of complaints regarding promotions and job placements has decreased due to adherence to fair recruiting standards. Participant I adds that equitable hiring practices have improved staff cohesion and reduced workplace conflicts, fostering a more harmonious and productive work environment. Community trust emerges as a key outcome of ethical conduct. Participant F highlights that by adhering to moral principles, services for the ward have improved, strengthening relationships with the community. Participant H reiterates the role of ethical governance in upholding public trust and fulfilling the municipality's mandate, reinforcing the link between ethical conduct and effective service delivery. Lastly, Participant D illustrates how adherence to proper protocols transformed a delayed project into a successful one. This example demonstrates that while ethical standards may initially slow processes due to procedural requirements, they ultimately lead to better outcomes and long-term benefits.

The examples provided by the participants reveal that ethical conduct is integral to fostering efficiency, transparency, and fairness in municipal operations. Adherence to ethical standards has improved project implementation, reduced corruption, enhanced record-keeping, and strengthened recruitment processes. Furthermore, these practices have contributed to building trust within the community and among municipal staff, creating an environment where collaboration and accountability thrive. These findings suggest that ethical governance is not only a theoretical ideal but a practical tool that positively impacts daily operations. By continuing to emphasize transparency, fairness, and accountability, the Collins Chabane Local Municipality can further enhance its service delivery, community relationships, and overall performance.

4.3.3 Question 3: How committed do you think employees of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality are to ethical behaviour?

Participant A:

Departments differ in their level of commitment. While some employees appear unconcerned, maybe because of a lack of accountability, others are highly dedicated.

Participant B:

I estimate that roughly 50% of the staff members are genuinely dedicated. People tend to break the rules, particularly when there isn't any obvious oversight.

Participant C:

Since ethical conduct has a direct impact on our day-to-day operations, many of us in clerical jobs are dedicated to it.

Participant D:

The majority of workers, in my opinion, desire to act morally, yet supervisors frequently put pressure on them to break rules.

Participant E:

Though some workers in other departments might not take ethical standards as seriously, HR has a good level of devotion.

Participant F:

Although there is a commitment, it could be more robust. There are still some employees who are impacted by outside political forces.

Participant G:

Moderate commitment is shown. Some people take shortcuts when it comes to acting morally, while others go above and beyond.

Participant H:

Although there is a trickle-down effect where lower employees occasionally fail to uphold the same standards, I believe senior management is dedicated.

Participant I:

Although some authorities are more concerned with their own interests than with acting morally, there is a reasonable amount of dedication.

Participant J:

There is a lack of dedication to moral behaviour. To inculcate these ideals, more training is required.

The analysis of participants' responses regarding employee commitment to ethical behaviour in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality reveals a mixed picture, with notable variations across departments and positions. While some employees are highly committed, others lack dedication, often influenced by weak accountability structures or external pressures.

A significant theme emerging from the responses is the inconsistency of organizational commitment levels. Participant A highlights that while certain employees are highly dedicated, others appear indifferent, likely due to insufficient accountability. Similarly, Participant "G" notes a moderate level of commitment, where some employees take shortcuts while others go beyond expectations. This variability underscores the need for a uniform approach to instilling ethical standards across all departments.

External and internal pressures also play a role in shaping ethical behaviour. Participant D observes that supervisors sometimes pressure employees to act unethically, even when the latter prefer to adhere to ethical principles. Additionally, Participant F points to the influence of external political forces, which can undermine employees' dedication to moral conduct. These factors indicate that ethical lapses are not solely individual failings but are often systemic, requiring broader organizational interventions.

Senior management's role in promoting ethical behaviour is highlighted by Participant H, who believes that leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to ethics. However, this commitment does not consistently filter down to lower-level employees, leading to a trickle-down effect where some fail to uphold the same standards. This gap between management and staff suggests leadership needs to engage and inspire ethical behaviour throughout the organization actively.

Oversight and accountability emerge as crucial factors in maintaining ethical standards. Participant B notes that employees are more likely to break rules in the absence of visible oversight. Similarly, Participant J emphasizes the need for more training to instil ethical values, suggesting that education and regular monitoring could improve commitment. Departments like HR, identified by Participant E as more

committed to ethical standards, serve as examples of how proper structures and accountability can enhance adherence to ethical behaviour.

The responses also reveal that employees in certain roles, such as clerical and operational positions, are more attuned to the impact of ethical behaviour on their daily tasks. Participant C observes that this direct connection to day-to-day operations drives greater dedication among clerical workers. This finding suggests that roles with immediate accountability are more likely to exhibit strong ethical commitment.

The findings indicate that while there is a general understanding of the importance of ethical behaviour, the commitment to these principles is inconsistent and influenced by various systemic challenges. Weak accountability structures, external political pressures, and insufficient training hinder the municipality's ability to foster uniform ethical adherence. Although senior management demonstrates commitment, the disconnect between leadership and lower-level employees limits the effectiveness of ethical governance.

These results suggest that the Collins Chabane Local Municipality must address both individual and systemic barriers to ethical behaviour. Implementing stronger oversight mechanisms, enhancing accountability, and providing regular ethics training can help bridge the gap between leadership and staff. Additionally, fostering a culture where ethical behaviour is actively reinforced and rewarded across all departments could significantly improve overall commitment to ethical governance. The municipality can build a more cohesive and morally grounded workforce by addressing these issues, ultimately enhancing its service delivery and public trust.

4.3.4 Question 4: What are the causes of ethical transgression by municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality?

Participant A:

Two of the main causes of ethical transgressions are nepotism and political interference.

Participant B:

Weak oversight and monitoring are mostly to blame. Officials take advantage when they are aware that there will be no consequences.

Participant C:

The primary reasons for ethical violations are corruption and partiality. Some public servants abuse their authority.

Participant D:

There is a lot of nepotism and corruption. Some authorities hire unqualified family members for positions.

Participant E:

One of the main causes of ethical transgressions is a lack of transparency in hiring and promotion practices.

Participant F:

An ethical environment could be promoted by promoting citizen scrutiny and reducing political influence in municipal operations.

Participant G:

Insufficient responsibility is the primary reason. Certain officials know they will not be held accountable for their deeds.

Participant H:

The primary problems are nepotism and corruption. These result from improperly applied ethical standards.

Participant I:

Nepotism is a serious problem. Some workers receive promotions based more on their relationships than their qualifications.

Participant J:

One of the main problems is corruption, particularly in the procurement process.

The responses to Question 4 reveal several causes of ethical transgressions by Municipal officials in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. These include systemic issues such as nepotism, corruption, political interference, weak oversight, and a lack of transparency and accountability. These factors undermine ethical governance and compromise the municipality's operational integrity and service delivery.

Nepotism is a recurring theme, identified by several participants as a major contributor to ethical violations. Participants A, D, H, and I point to the hiring and promoting unqualified individuals based on personal relationships rather than merit. This undermines the principle of fairness and creates inefficiencies in the municipality's

operations. Political interference exacerbates the problem, as noted by Participants A and F, with external influences often disrupting ethical decision-making processes and eroding the municipality's credibility.

Corruption also emerges as a critical issue. Participants C, D, H, and J highlight unethical practices such as bribery, abuse of authority, and irregularities in procurement processes. These actions not only violate ethical standards but also divert resources intended for essential services, further weakening public trust in the municipality. Corruption in procurement processes is particularly damaging, as it directly impacts the allocation and utilization of public funds.

Weak oversight and insufficient accountability are significant enablers of unethical behaviour. Participants B and G emphasize that municipal officials exploit the absence of robust monitoring mechanisms, knowing their actions are unlikely to face scrutiny or consequences. This culture of impunity fosters an environment where unethical practices become normalized, further entrenching systemic issues. Transparency issues, especially in hiring and promotion practices, also contribute to ethical transgressions. Participant E notes that opaque processes foster favouritism and bias, while Participant J highlights the impact of corruption in these areas. The lack of transparency creates employee dissatisfaction and undermines public confidence in the municipality's governance.

The absence of robust citizen scrutiny is identified as a contributing factor. Participant "F" suggests that encouraging greater public oversight could serve as a check on municipal officials and reduce unethical behaviour. Without active community engagement, unethical practices often go unchecked, further eroding trust between the municipality and its stakeholders.

The findings highlight deeply rooted systemic and cultural challenges that foster ethical transgressions within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Nepotism and political interference undermine merit-based systems, while corruption erodes the municipality's credibility and diverts resources from public services. Weak oversight and accountability mechanisms, coupled with a lack of transparency, enable unethical behaviour to thrive unchecked.

Addressing these issues requires comprehensive reforms. Strengthening oversight mechanisms and enforcing consequences for unethical actions can deter transgressions. Promoting transparency in hiring, promotion, and procurement processes can reduce favouritism and corruption. Minimizing political interference in municipal operations can create a fairer and more ethical environment. Additionally, enhancing citizen engagement and scrutiny can help hold officials accountable and rebuild trust.

The responses show that there is an urgent need for systemic reforms to address the root causes of ethical violations. By fostering a culture of integrity and accountability, the municipality can improve its performance, regain public trust, and ensure ethical governance in all operations.

4.3.5: What mechanisms can be put in place to create an ethical culture and environment in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?

Participant A:

Frequent workshops and training on ethical norms are crucial, as are clear penalties for unethical behaviour.

Participant B:

Strongly discouraging unethical behaviour would be achieved by establishing an impartial ethical oversight authority.

Participant C:

Encouraging reporting and improving whistle-blower protections would contribute to developing a more moral atmosphere.

Participant D:

It would be easier to eradicate unethical behaviour if hiring and promotion processes were more transparent.

Participant E:

Promoting an ethical culture would be greatly aided by introducing stricter screening procedures in the employment process.

Participant F:

An ethical environment could be promoted by promoting citizen scrutiny and reducing political influence in municipal operations.

Participant G:

The current state of affairs would be improved by implementing stricter accountability procedures and frequent ethics audits.

Participant H:

It would be beneficial to establish an impartial ethics committee to supervise company operations and staff behaviour.

Participant I:

The municipality's ethical standards would be raised by implementing a merit-based system with explicit rules for hiring and advancement.

Participant J:

Establishing a zero-tolerance policy for unethical behaviour along with regular ethical training and workshops would improve the culture.

The participants responses on these sections show that there is a range of mechanisms suggested to create an ethical culture and good working environment within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Participants have suggested regular training, transparent processes, systemic reforms, enhanced accountability measures and independent oversight to address ethical issues faced by the Municipality. One key recommendation is the implementation of regular workshops and training programs on ethical behaviour. Participants A and J stress the importance of educating staff on ethical norms to create a consistent understanding of expected conduct across the organization. These proactive measures are seen as essential for raising awareness and reinforcing the importance of ethical practices.

Another critical theme is the establishment of independent oversight mechanisms. Participants "B" and "H" suggest forming impartial bodies, such as ethics committees or authorities, to monitor and evaluate ethical behaviour in the municipality. Participant G recommends conducting frequent ethics audits and strengthening accountability measures to deter unethical practices and ensure adherence to ethical standards. These mechanisms aim to enhance transparency and provide a check against misconduct.

Whistle-blower protection is also identified as a vital mechanism for fostering an ethical environment. Participant "C" advocates for creating a safe and supportive system that encourages employees to report unethical behaviour without fear of retaliation. This

approach promotes transparency and ensures that misconduct can be effectively addressed. Transparency in hiring and promotion practices is another significant focus. Participant D emphasizes that making these processes more open and fairer can eliminate favouritism and nepotism, while Participant I suggests implementing a merit-based system with explicit rules for recruitment and advancement. These measures are expected to improve fairness, reduce corruption, and enhance trust within the organization.

Participant E highlights stricter screening during the recruitment process as a preventive measure to ensure that only candidates with strong ethical values are employed. By prioritizing ethical standards in hiring, the municipality can build a foundation of integrity among its workforces. Participants also underscore the importance of citizen involvement and reducing political interference. Participant “F” suggests that promoting citizen scrutiny of municipal operations can increase accountability, while reducing external political pressures can ensure that ethical decisions are not compromised. This community engagement approach fosters public trust and strengthens the municipality’s credibility.

Participant J recommends instituting a zero-tolerance policy for unethical behaviour. This would involve clear and enforceable penalties for violations, conveying that misconduct will not be tolerated. Combined with regular training and education, such a policy can reinforce a culture of integrity and deter unethical actions. The proposed mechanisms tell us that there is a need for a multifaceted approach to fostering an ethical culture in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Training and education are vital for building awareness, while independent oversight bodies and whistle-blower protections ensure accountability. Transparent and merit-based recruitment and promotion processes address favouritism and nepotism, while citizen involvement and reduced political interference enhance public trust. Implementing these measures collectively would establish a robust ethical foundation, improve organizational performance, and strengthen public confidence in the municipality’s governance.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter analyzed and discussed the findings of this study to achieve the aim and the objectives of this study. The aim of this study is to explore the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance and recommend strategies to improve ethical conduct in municipalities, with specific reference to Collins Chabane Local Municipality. In this chapter, the researcher presents the synthesized findings, discussion, and recommendations on the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study focuses on exploring ethical governance's role in enhancing organizational performance using Collins Chabane Local Municipality as a case study. Municipal managers are confronted with increasingly complex ethical dilemmas in establishing a service-oriented local government that preserves public trust. The researcher reviewed literature on the role the ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance. The study used mixed methods which are qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyse data. This study adopted non-probability sampling to conduct the study and purposeful sampling was applied. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data. Collected data was analyzed using statistical analysis and thematic analysis, tables were used to present participants responses and thematic analysis to interpret participants' responses from interviews. The objectives of the study were:

- To examine the state of ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.
- To determine the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

- To identify causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.
- To analyse the effect of ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality.
- To propose mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance.

5.3 MAJOR FUNDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this section, the researcher presents major findings of the study which focused on the specific objectives of the study

5.3.1 Major findings for examine the state of ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

The responses to surveys on municipal performance and ethical governance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality reveal differing opinions among respondents. Participant confidence in municipal operations is demonstrated by the 10 (33.3%) and 5 (13.3%) who strongly agreed that the municipality operates transparently. Nonetheless, the remaining 33.3% of respondents say they disagree or are simply undecided. This sparked questions about appropriate communication or ambiguous procedures, which could undermine institutional trust. On the principle of accountability, the results show the significant challenges. Most Participants disagreed 10 (33.3%) and strongly disagreed 3 (10%) that accountability is taken into consideration, whereas only 8 (26,6%) agree and 3 (10%) strongly agree that the principle is applied.

This shows that there a need for leadership to strengthen mechanisms and proper communication to demonstrate how officials are held responsible and accountable for their actions. The fairness within the Municipality is being applied with 66.6% combined of Participants which are agreeing and strongly agreeing that fairness is being applied and practiced. Also, there was 23.3% of participants who indicated that they were unsure, and 10% disagreed, which tells us that the principle of fairness is being applied but with inconsistencies in its application. With 69.9% of participants

agreeing or strongly agreeing with the norms of law and 83.3% agreeing with integrity among all municipal authorities, the Municipality's application of integrity and the rule of law appears to be a strong point. This indicates that while many respondents felt that the Municipality upholds integrity, there is still need for improvement in order to enhance the implementation of these procedures.

According to the results of the interviews, moral behavior improves operational efficiency, transparency, and trust, all of which have an impact on how the Collins Chabane Local Municipality operates. According to the participants, acting ethically encourages transparency and adherence to rules, both of which are essential for providing quality services and maintaining responsibility. These fundamental ideas serve as a benchmark for decision-making and foster public trust, both of which are necessary for efficient government operations. Additionally, ethical governance ensures efficient municipal operations, reduces inefficiencies like corruption and poor management, and fosters justice and honesty.

5.3.2 Major finding for determine the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality

The findings presented here show how crucial ethical governance is to improving organizational performance in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. The findings indicate that while no participant disagreed, the majority of participants 25, or 83.3% strongly agreed and agreed that professionalism is crucial to organizational success. Accountability and transparency were recognized as essential components for supporting municipal objectives and guaranteeing operational productivity.

More than 22 (73.3%) combined participants strongly agreed and agreed that those two principles are effective in driving the municipality toward achieving its objectives, even though 6 (20%) of participants indicated that they are unsure, which tells us that there is a need for proper communication on these values. The public's trust in the Municipality's administration was another area of focus, about 20 (66.6%) combined responses mentioned that they agreed and strongly agreed, whereas 4 (13.2%) disagreement (Strongly disagree and disagree). The 6 (20%) of participants indicated that there is a need to improve confidence and trust in Municipal operations. These

result shows the important ethical governance in the Municipality in enhancing public trust and corporate performance.

According to the participants in the interview segment, ethical behavior is essential to improving and managing every aspect of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality since it is a fundamental component that fosters justice, accountability, and transparency. One participant stated that while maintaining financial records and adhering to standards documents has helped to prevent fraud and ensure strong accountability during audits, transparent procurement processes are one of the factors that reduced corruption and improved the efficiency of project implementation. It also been said that the fair recruitment practices introduced have reduced criticisms about job placements and promotions in turn this leads to the improvement of staff structure and reduced unnecessary conflicts in the workplace environment.

5.2.3 Major finding for identify causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

This section presents the major funding of ethical transgressions between municipal officials in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. Corruption was identified as a key problem within the Municipality. The 8 (26.6%) of participants strongly agreeing and 10 (33.3%) agreeing that it leads to ineffectual and under-qualified officials. Furthermore, nepotism was indicated as another significant element, with 10 (33.3%) strongly agreeing and 11 (36.6%) agreeing that it leads to poor governance, while 4 (13.3%) of participants indicated that they were unsure, which highlights that there is a need for proper policies to mitigate its impact.

The researcher also assessed if there is a perception of poor governance. The 9 (30%) strongly agreeing and 12 (40%) agreeing with combined percentage of (70%) agreeing that there is poor municipal performance. Another factor was a weak oversight and monitoring were associated with ethical lapses, as (23.3%) strongly agreed and 12 (40%) agreed on this point, highlighting structural deficiencies. This shows that there is a lack of professionalism within the municipality, about 6 (20%) of participants indicated that they strongly agreeing and 12 (40%) agreeing that it leads to ethical misconduct, meanwhile (5) 16.6% disagreed, imitating diverse perspectives. These

results highlight the need for systemic reforms to address these issues and promote ethical behaviour within the municipality.

The results from the interviews regarding employee commitment to ethical behaviour in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality highlighted a mixed perception considered by inconsistency across divisions and positions. While some employees showed strong dedication to ethical principles, others show a lack of commitment influenced by weak accountability structures and external forces.

The results also shows that the external and internal pressures also significantly role in shaping ethical conduct of an organization. Supervisors sometimes exert pressure on employees to act unethically, even when those employees prefer to adhere to ethical principles. Additionally, external political influences often undermine employees' dedication to moral conduct. These systemic challenges suggest that ethical lapses are not solely the result of individual failings but rather stem from broader structural issues that must be addressed.

The role of senior management emerged as another critical factor. While leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to ethical behaviour, this commitment does not consistently filter down to lower-level employees. This "trickle-down" effect creates a gap where some staff members fail to uphold the same ethical standards as their leaders. This disconnect highlights the importance of leadership's role in actively promoting and reinforcing ethical values across all organizational levels.

Because their activities directly affect daily tasks, employees in occupations with immediate accountability, such clerical and operational positions, tend to be more dedicated to ethical behavior. This implies that workers who hold positions with quantifiable results are more likely to place a higher value on moral behavior. For instance, when it comes to service delivery, the Batho Pele principles are regarded as a declaration of intent. The researcher discovered during the interview that frontline employees prioritize customer service. A fair and efficient approach to customer service was attempted.

5.2.4 Major finding for the effect of ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

The results from ethical transgressions meaningfully impact the performance and governance, and integrity of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. A majority of participants 20 (66.6%) combined 11(36.6%) strongly agree, while 9 (30%) seems to believe that a lack of transparency and accountability leads to poor employee performance. The 19 (63.2%) combined agree and strongly agree that unethical behaviour continues to challenge Municipal governance. These highlighted the important role of ethical conduct in confirming effective municipal processes through instilling the ethical culture for the organization. However, minority of participants indicated uncertainty or disagreement, signifying unconventional views or insufficient awareness of the link between ethical behaviour and organizational outcomes. This shows that there is a need for enhanced communication and evidence-based interventions to bridge differing perspectives about the role of ethical conduct in fulfilling one's obligations.

The results also showed the integrity as a key element in combating nepotism and corruption. More than 63% of participants agree or strongly agree that a lack of integrity among municipal officials facilitates these unethical practices. While some Participants remain unsure or disagree, the overall unanimity shows that strengthening integrity and ethical standards is essential to addressing systemic challenges within the municipality. These findings indicate the importance of implementing process that will promote accountability and transparency, and adopting an ethical culture to enhance governance, public performance, and trust in the municipality.

According to the findings of interviews regarding ethical transgressions in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality, there is political involvement, nepotism, and corruption, along with inadequate oversight, a lack of accountability, and a lack of transparency. Additionally, participants disclosed that nepotism and corruption undermine operational integrity and fairness, especially in hiring, procurement, and promotion processes. Another element that impedes moral decision-making is political participation or meddling, and a culture of impunity fostered by inadequate oversight and accountability encourages unethical behavior. Employee and stakeholder

discontent and favoritism are encouraged by the opaqueness issues in administrative procedures. the lack of active community involvement and permitting unethical behavior to continue unchallenged. In order to restore confidence and advance moral government, addressing these issues calls for extensive reforms that include open procedures, more robust oversight systems, less political meddling, and active community engagement.

5.2.4 Major finding for to propose mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance.

The results from this section indicate the key mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. The findings from strict actions to uphold values and principles had strong support from participants, with 11 (36.6%) strongly agreeing and 10 (33.3%) agreeing, this shows a belief in their effectiveness for promoting unity and trust. Other aspects were the recognition initiatives, such as rewarding ethical behaviour and efforts against corruption, was indicated positively from responses, with 11 (36.6%) agreeing and 11(33.3%) strongly agreeing, indicating their potential as motivators. Addressing unethical cases promptly and enhancing teamwork and support was also highly regarded, with 12 (40%) agreeing and 9 (30%) strongly agreeing. Additionally, encouraging open and frank exchanges of ideas was supported by 66.6%, with 10 (33.3%) strongly agreeing and 10 (33.6%) of participants agreeing. This means that transparency and collaboration is important in setting standards of ethical behaviour. In other hand, while a minority expressed disagreement or uncertainty across these mechanisms, the overall findings suggest a strong consensus on their value in fostering an ethical and high-performing municipal culture.

The interview's outcome demonstrates the range of strategies put forth to create an ethical culture in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. It is stressed that frequent training sessions and workshops on ethical behavior are crucial for increasing awareness and reiterating appropriate behavior. Establishing independent oversight bodies, such as ethics committees or impartial authorities, alongside regular ethics audits, aims to enhance transparency, accountability, and adherence to ethical standards. Informer protections are identified as a critical measure to encourage

reporting misconduct in a safe and supportive environment, further promoting transparency and accountability.

With suggestions for being receptive to doing away with nepotism and favoritism and putting in place a merit-based system to increase equity, transparency in hiring and promotion procedures is emphasized as a major priority. It is advised that hiring practices be more stringent in order to guarantee that candidates have high ethical standards. It is believed that improving public confidence and accountability requires lowering political meddling and promoting citizen monitoring. Additionally, it is thought that creating an integrity-based culture requires a zero-tolerance policy for unethical activity, strong penalties, and ongoing training. When taken as a whole, these acts demonstrate the need for an all-encompassing plan to address ethical quandaries, improve governance, and restore public confidence in the municipality.

5.4 SYNTHESIS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the synthesis of the study on exploring the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance.

From the information analyzed in questionnaire results

- The findings indicate that there is an inconsistency in transparency and accountability within officials in the municipality.
- It has been indicated that fairness and adherence to the rule of law are acknowledged, but there is a need for proper policies and enforcement mechanisms.
- Professionalism is identified as a key element in fostering an organizational performance, with most participants indicating it with higher productivity and better decision-making.
- Transparency and accountability are regarded as the most effective tools for achieving municipal aims, objectives and enhancing trust among stakeholders.
- Nepotism and corruption are identified as major contributors to ethical violations, with participants linking these practices to inefficiencies and mistrust.
- Weak oversight and monitoring allow unethical behaviour to thrive, creating a culture of liberty among municipal officials.

- A lack of transparency in hiring and promotion processes enhances favouritism and bias, undermining morale and performance.
- Lack of integrity among officials including corruption, nepotism, and misuse of resources, directly affecting public trust.
- Recognizing and rewarding ethical behaviour is suggested as a key player in motivating for fostering a positive ethical culture.
- There is a need to address unethical cases promptly and encouraging teamwork are viewed as essential for improving organizational cohesion.

From the data collected through Interview:

- Ethical behaviour enhances transparency, trust, and accountability, positively fostering service delivery and operational efficiency.
- Fairness and integrity are indicated as crucial for enhancing collaboration between the municipality and the community.
- Transparent procurement processes and adherence to ethical standards have reduced corruption and enhanced community trust within the municipality
- Fair recruitment practices have minimized complaints and improved employee morale and cohesion.
- Ethical governance has facilitated more accurate record-keeping, reduced financial mismanagement, and improved audit outcomes.
- Political influences and a lack of training are identified as barriers to consistent ethical commitment.
- Nepotism, political involvement, and lack of oversight are major factors driving of ethical transgressions.
- Corruption especially in procurement and hiring processes, reduces trust and diverts resources away from essential services.
- It has been suggested that regular ethics training and workshops are recommended to raise awareness and build a culture of integrity.
- Instituting independent ethics committees and conducting frequent audits are suggested as crucial for monitoring and enforcing ethical behaviour.

Community member's engagement and transparency in operations are emphasized as essential for enhancing public trust and ensuring ethical governance.

5.5 RECOMMENDATION OF THE STUDY

5.5.1 Recommendation on the state of ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

This study recommends that to improve ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality, it is very important to develop and enforce comprehensive policies that support the principles of transparency and accountability. Transparency can be enhanced by publication detailed and accessible reports on municipal working environment, decision-making processes and financial management. These reports should be available to all employees and the community, to enhance an environment of trust and openness to everyone. Furthermore, creating avenues for stakeholder feedback, such as public consultations and suggestion boxes, can enhance inclusivity and ensure that governance practices align with community needs.

Regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be introduced to identify and address governance inconsistencies promptly. These mechanisms can include periodic audits, performance appraisals, and the use of key performance indicators to measure adherence to ethical standards. Fairness in municipal operations, particularly in service delivery, should be prioritized to build stakeholder confidence. Training programs focusing on the application of fairness and the rule of law should be conducted regularly for municipal officials to ensure consistency. Addressing these aspects collectively will create a foundation for ethical governance that promotes improved municipal performance.

5.5.2 Recommendation on the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

Ethical governance is regarded as a cornerstone of organizational performance, and its promotion within the municipality should start with embedding professionalism in all municipal activities. This can be achieved through targeted capacity-building programs that equip employees with the skills and knowledge to uphold professional standards. For instance, workshops on ethical decision-making, transparency, and accountability can empower employees to align their actions with organizational goals. These

initiatives can also enhance employee productivity and ensure that ethical principles guide all operations.

Furthermore, accountability and transparency must be actively promoted and enforced. Public trust can be strengthened by holding regular town hall meetings, having open and honest procurement procedures, and publishing the objectives and accomplishments of the municipality. By setting a good example, leaders can actively support ethical governance. By bridging the gap between policy and practice, ethical leadership can guarantee that moral principles are applied consistently throughout all departments. By bringing departmental and individual goals into line with ethical governance principles, the implementation of ethics-focused performance evaluation metrics can improve corporate performance even further.

5.5.3 Recommendation of causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

The root causes of ethical transgressions, such as corruption, nepotism, and weak accountability structures, must be addressed through systemic reforms. A merit-based recruitment and promotion process should be implemented to eliminate favouritism and ensure that all appointments are based on qualifications and competency. This can be supported by transparent hiring procedures, where job descriptions, selection criteria, and interview processes are made publicly available. A whistle-blowing policy that protects employees who report unethical behaviour can further deter corruption and encourage accountability.

In addition to structural changes, it is critical to address cultural factors that contribute to ethical transgressions. Regular ethics training sessions for all employees, including senior management, can raise awareness of ethical standards and equip employees with strategies to resist external and internal pressures to act unethically. Political interference should be minimized through clear boundaries that separate political and administrative functions. Establishing independent oversight bodies, such as ethics committees, can provide an impartial platform to address ethical violations and foster an environment of trust and compliance.

5.5.4 Recommendation on ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

Ethical transgressions negatively affect the performance and reputation of the municipality and addressing them requires a holistic approach. A zero-tolerance policy for unethical behaviour should be introduced, with clear and enforceable consequences for violations. This policy should be supported by a transparent and fair disciplinary process to ensure accountability at all levels of the organization. Recognizing and rewarding ethical behaviour through incentives such as awards, promotions, or public acknowledgments can motivate employees to continuously maintain high ethical standards.

Community involvement is another critical component in mitigating ethical transgressions. By engaging community members through regular meetings, surveys, and citizen oversight committees, the municipality can foster transparency and accountability. Additionally, investing in technology, such as automated financial management and procurement systems, can reduce opportunities for unethical practices. These systems can provide real-time monitoring and reporting capabilities, enhancing the municipality's ability to detect and address unethical behaviour effectively.

5.5.5 Recommendation on mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance.

The creation an ethical culture requires the municipality to adopt a multi-faceted and sustainable approach. Regular workshops and training sessions on ethics should be mandatory for all employees, with content tailored to address specific ethical challenges faced by the municipality. These training programs can be complemented by awareness campaigns, including posters, newsletters, and social media content, to reinforce ethical values continuously. Independent ethics committees should be established to monitor compliance and address ethical violations objectively, ensuring that no individual is above accountability.

Leadership should prioritize transparency in recruitment, promotion, and operational processes to foster trust and fairness in the Municipality. The merit-based systems

should be established to eliminate favoritism and nepotism, ensuring that all decisions are based on competence and performance. Open communication channels, such as anonymous hot-lines and suggestion boxes, should be made available to employees and the public to report unethical practices safely. Additionally, the municipality should adopt a zero-tolerance policy for unethical behavior, backed by enforceable penalties and continuous education initiatives. These mechanisms will create a foundation for an ethical culture that enhances municipal performance and restores public confidence.

The other mechanisms to strengthen ethical behaviour in Collins Chabane Local Municipality would be the implementation of consequence management. Consequence management should be put in place as it will minimize greed and personal interest of municipal employees. Municipal employees will be bound to act with integrity when they know that there is going to be consequences for unethical conducts.

5.6 RECOMMENDATION OF FUTURE STUDIES

This study suggests that future research on ethical governance and its impact on organizational performance should address the limitations identified in this study to provide more comprehensive understandings. Increasing the sample size number and mixing participants from different municipalities would improve the generalizability of the research findings and allow for a validated analysis of governance practices across different aspects being investigated. Further research should also explore the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as ethics training, and independent oversight bodies in fostering an ethical culture within municipalities. There is also a need to assess the community engagement in influencing the implementation and perception of ethical governance. By addressing these areas, future studies can contribute to a deeper understanding of ethical governance and its role in improving organizational performance and public trust.

Emerging trends and future directions in ethical governance research are shaping the landscape of municipal governance and organizational performance, reflecting broader societal shifts towards transparency, accountability, and inclusivity. As

municipalities navigate these changes, understanding and integrating these trends into their governance models is essential for enhancing ethical standards and improving service delivery.

One significant trend in ethical governance research is the growing emphasis on digital ethics and data governance. With the increasing digitization of municipal services and the proliferation of smart city technologies, questions around data privacy, security, and ethical use of technology have come to the forefront. Research in this area is expanding to address how municipalities can uphold ethical standards in the collection, storage, and use of data, ensuring that technological advancements contribute positively to community life without compromising individual rights or public trust (Martin, 2020). This trend underscores the need for municipalities to develop comprehensive digital ethics policies and governance frameworks that address these emerging challenges, ensuring that technological innovations are implemented responsibly and transparently.

Another trend is the integration of environmental ethics into municipal governance, reflecting increasing public concern about climate change and sustainability. Ethical governance research is increasingly focusing on how municipalities can adopt sustainable practices that not only meet current needs but also consider the long-term impacts on the environment and future generations (Rawls, 2019). This shift has implications for municipal governance and organizational performance, requiring municipalities to incorporate environmental considerations into decision-making processes, policy development, and service delivery. By doing so, municipalities can lead by example in promoting sustainability, enhancing their reputation and trust among citizens, and contributing to broader societal efforts to address environmental challenges.

The concept of social equity is also gaining prominence in ethical governance research, with a focus on how municipal policies and practices can address inequalities and promote fairness and inclusivity. This trend involves examining the distributional impacts of municipal services and ensuring that governance processes are accessible and responsive to all community members, particularly marginalized or vulnerable groups (Schlosberg, 2018; Young, 2019). For municipalities, integrating

social equity into ethical governance frameworks means reevaluating service delivery models, community engagement strategies, and policy priorities to ensure that they contribute to reducing inequalities and enhancing social cohesion.

Additionally, research is emphasizing the value of meaningful involvement with citizens in governance processes, demonstrating how the role of public participation in ethical governance is changing. The use of participatory technologies, such as social media and online platforms, to promote wider and more inclusive public engagement is indicated by emerging trends (Fung, 2015; Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2015). By utilizing these technologies, towns may improve organizational performance and public trust by increasing openness, accountability, and responsiveness. But it also brings up moral concerns regarding the digital gap and making sure that participation procedures are truly representative and inclusive.

In conclusion, emerging trends and future directions in ethical governance research, including digital ethics, environmental ethics, social equity, and public participation, have significant implications for municipal governance and organizational performance. These trends reflect a broader societal shift towards more accountable, transparent, and inclusive governance models. As municipalities adapt to these changes, integrating these considerations into their governance frameworks will be crucial for upholding ethical standards, enhancing public trust, and ensuring that municipal services meet the diverse needs of their communities.

5.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study has some limitations that have influenced its overall findings. The sample size of 40 was limited and may not give us diverse perspectives within the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. During data collection some of the participants were not willing to participate in the fear that they might be exposed because of their honest responses. The reliance on questionnaires and interviews might have introduced potential biases, such as social desirability bias. Qualitative data interpretation also carried the risk of personal based feelings. Moreover, the study primarily assessed perceptions rather than objective evidence. Limited time for an in-depth exploration of long-term results, and political forces influences were not broadly addressed. Overall,

these limitations indicate that there is a need for future studies with larger number of samples.

5.9 CONCLUSION

This study has illuminated the pivotal role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance within municipal operations, underscoring the complexity of implementing and sustaining ethical practices across diverse settings. Key findings reveal that ethical governance is foundational to building trust, accountability, and transparency, driving improvements in service delivery, and fostering a culture of integrity. Challenges such as resistance to change, resource constraints, regulatory complexities, and the pervasive risk of corruption underscore the need for a multifaceted approach that incorporates ethical leadership, comprehensive training, and robust oversight mechanisms.

In conclusion, the impact of ethical governance on organizational performance is multifaceted, influencing efficiency, effectiveness, and the quality-of-service delivery in municipal settings. The studies reviewed herein collectively affirm that ethical governance practices are not merely regulatory requirements but are instrumental in fostering operational excellence, enhancing public trust, and ensuring that municipalities can effectively meet the needs of their communities. As such, adopting and implementing ethical governance frameworks are imperative for municipalities aiming to improve their performance and contribute positively to the welfare and development of the communities they serve.

In the first chapter, the study presented the introduction, background, problem statement, aim of the study, study objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and the definition of operational concepts. The objectives of this study were to examine the state of ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality; to determine the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality; to identify causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality; to analyze the effect of ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality; and to propose

mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance. This study was conducted to benefit the Collins Chabane Municipality, communities that the municipality serve and its stakeholders.

Chapter two of this study discussed the literature review on exploring the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance. Chapter two discussed the theoretical framework between ethics and municipal performance, the legislative frameworks guiding ethical conduct in municipalities and the practical implications of ethical or unethical behavior on municipal performance.

On chapter three of this study, the researcher applied a research paradigm wherein the researcher chose pragmatism research paradigm. Mixed method research methodology was applied by the researcher to collect data. Two methods of collecting data were used which are interviews and questionnaires. For this study, two methods of data analysis were used which are statistical and thematic analysis. The ethical consideration that was followed when conducting this study highlighted the morality of the humankind.

Chapter four of this study discussed data findings, presentation, interpretations and analysis. The sampled population responses were discussed and provided an understanding of the nature of research findings on the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance. Data analysis indicates what has been seen, heard and read to use the data collected. The chapter focused on investigating the role of ethical governance by providing answers to the participants' perceptions and understanding of this study.

Chapter 5 is the final chapter of this study and presents the findings, recommendations, and conclusions. The major findings of this study, which arose from the research objectives, are also presented in this final chapter. The final chapter also presents the synthesis of this study, recommendations arising from the objectives of this study, recommendations for future researchers, and limitations of this study.

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Annexure A: LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

Dear [Participant],

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview/questionnaire for a research study on how ethics influence organizational performance using the case of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality. The study aims to assess employee awareness of ethical conduct, analyse employees' commitment to ethical behaviour, and propose mechanisms for creating an ethical culture and environment for enhanced organizational performance.

Your participation in this study is crucial to understanding the perspectives of employees of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality on ethical conduct and its influence on organizational performance. Your experience and insights will provide valuable information that will help inform policies and practices to promote ethical behaviour in the workplace.

The interview/questionnaire will take approximately 30-45 minutes and will be conducted at a time and location convenient for you. The interview will be audio-recorded with your permission, and all data collected will be kept confidential and anonymous. Only the research team will have access to the data, and it will be used solely for the purpose of this research study.

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

If you are interested in participating in this study or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [071 0391 116]. Your participation is greatly appreciated and will contribute to the advancement of knowledge in this important area.

Thank you for considering this invitation.

Sincerely,

Chabalala Rivalani Precious

Annexure B: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF COLLINS CHABANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

This study is about exploring the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance. Collins Chabane Local Municipality has been chosen as a case study for this research. I humbly request you to take part in this study by participating in providing responses to the questions posed in the subsequent sections of the interview schedule. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. Gender of participant

Male	1
Female	2
Other (Specify)	3

2. Age of participant

20-29 years	1
30-39 years	2
40-49 years	3
50 years and older	4

3. Position of participant

Municipal Manager	1
Front line worker	2
Admin Clerk	3
Ward Councilors	4
Human Resource Staff	5
Other municipal officials	6

4. Table 4.1: Educational Qualifications

Below Grade 12	1
Grade 12	2
Diploma	3
Bachelor's Degree	4
Postgraduate qualification	5

SECTION B: THE ROLE OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE**Interview questions:**

- In your opinion, how does ethical conduct influence the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?
- Can you provide an example of how ethical conduct has impacted your work in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?
- How committed do you think employees of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality are to ethical behaviour?
- What are causes of ethical transgression by municipal officials in Collins Chabane local Municipality
- What mechanisms do you think can be put in place to create an ethical culture and environment in the Collins Chabane Local Municipality?

Thank you for your time and participation

Annexure C: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF COLLINS CHABANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

This study is about exploring the role of ethical governance in enhancing organizational performance. Collins Chabane Local Municipality has been chosen as a case study for this research. I humbly request you to be part of the study by providing your perspective on the subject matter. Please respond to the questions provided below. Please fill by putting a cross (x) where you feel it is appropriate on the below statements:

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. Gender of participant

Male	1
Female	2
Other (Specify)	3

2. Age of participant

20-29 years	1
30-39 years	2
40-49 years	3
50 years and older	4

3. Position of participant

Municipal Manager	1
Front line worker	2
Admin Clerk	3
Ward Councilors	4
Human Resource Staff	5
Other municipal officials	6

4 Educational Qualifications

Below Grade 12	1
Grade 12	2
Diploma	3
Bachelor's Degree	4
Postgraduate qualification	5

SECTION B: THE ROLE OF ETHICAL GOVERNANCE IN ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

Item No.	To examine the state of ethical governance and municipal performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	There is Transparency with the municipality					
2.	Principle of Accountability is applied with the municipality					
3.	There is Fairness within the municipality					
4.	Rule of Law is applied to all municipal officials					
5.	Municipal officials perform their tasks with Integrity					

Item No.	To determine the role of ethical governance in enhancing organisational performance in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
6.	Professionalism plays an important role in enhancing organization performance.					
7.	Accountability and transparency serve as effective means for reaching the goals of the municipality and ensuring high productivity.					

8.	The public have trust in the administration of the municipality					
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Item No.	Causes of ethical transgression by the municipal officials in Collins Chabane Local Municipality.	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
9.	Corruption which leads incompetent and under-qualified municipal officials to poor performance					
10.	Nepotism					
11.	Poor governance results in poor performance with the municipality					
12.	weak oversight and monitoring					
13.	Lack of professionalism					

Item No.	To analyse the effect of ethical transgression on the performance of the Collins Chabane Local Municipality	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
14.	Lack of Transparency and accountability results in poor performance by municipal employees					
15.	Unethical conducts result in poor governance					
16.	Lack of integrity by municipal officials lead to nepotism and corruption with the municipality					

Item No.	mechanisms for creating an ethical culture to enhance municipal performance.	Strongly agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
17.	Act strictly to obtain unity and trust in upholding values and principles					
18.	Hold events to award those who behaved well and who fought corruption gallantly					
19.	Deal quickly with all the unethical cases; Encourage teamwork and support					
20.	Encourage the sharing and exchange of ideas by all openly and frankly					
21.	Encourage effective participation by all to own and legitimize ethical code of conduct					

“Thanking you for making time for my study”

Annexure E: ETHICS CERTIFICATE

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:

Ms RP Chabalala

STUDENT NO:

15007616

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring the role of ethical governance in enhancing organization performance: the case of Collins Chabane Local Municipality.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: FMCL/24/PDN/35/0810

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr TA Singo	UNIVEN, public and development administration	Supervisor
Prof MJ Mafunisa	UNIVEN, public and development administration	Co-supervisor
Ms RP Chabalala	UNIVEN, public and development administration	Investigator-Students

Type: Masters Research

Risk: Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment (Category 2)

Approval Period: October 2024 – October 2025

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project.
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviation from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project.
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - Withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately.
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions A if necessary

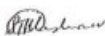
ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: October 2024

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof TS Mashau

Signature




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TELEPHONE: 0950 855000/0950 855000
"A quality driven, financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University".



Annexure F: EDITING CERTIFICATE

Black Angles Consultant

Registration Number: 2024/408975/07

Postal Address: P.O. Box 2884, Polokwane, 0700

Physical Address: 56 Platinum Street, Ladine, Polokwane, 0700

Email Address: Blackangles001@gmail.com

Contact: 0621574359

Date: 2025/02/21

To

Chabalala Rivalani Precious

Student Number: 15007616

Dear Mr/Mrs. Chabalala,

Re: Confirmation of Editing Services for Your Research Project

I hope this letter finds you well.

This letter serves as a formal confirmation that Black Angles Consultant has completed the editing of your research project titled **“Exploring the Role of Ethical Governance in Enhancing Organizational Performance: The Case of Collins Chabane Local Municipality.”** We have thoroughly reviewed and edited your work to ensure that it meets the highest academic standards. The editing process included a detailed check for grammar, spelling, punctuation, coherence, clarity, and overall flow of ideas.

We are confident that the edited version of your research project is now more polished and well-structured, improving both readability and academic rigor. If you require any further revisions or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Should you need additional support in the future or have any questions regarding the edited work, feel free to reach out to us via email at Blackangles001@gmail.com or by phone at 0621574359.

We wish you all the best in your academic endeavors and look forward to any future collaboration.

Sincerely,

Black Angles Consultant

Editor's
Signature


.....

Annexure G: TURNITIN REPORT

