

i. DECLARATION

I, Tsheko Frans Machaka, declare that the research paper hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the Master's degree in Public Administration has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university. I also declare that it is my own design and execution and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Signed:

Date:

ii. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all, I would like to thank the Almighty for having given me life and imbued me with the abilities that made this research work a success.

I would also like to acknowledge, most gratefully, the support shown by my two sons, Motlatjo and Karabo, and their sister, Alice, during the trying times of my studies.

I want to thank my friends too for the interest they have taken in this research work and their invaluable help in collecting material. I must make a special mentioning of Lucky Maboea and Mr. M.W. Mogashoa who, by their unfailing enthusiasm and efficiency have lightened my work immensely.

I am very grateful indeed to Dr. M.H. Kanyane, my supervisor, who read, checked and commented on the whole of the final draft.

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30 JUNE 2006

iii. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethical issues arise from our interaction with other people, especially at the point where there is potential or actual conflict of interests. In many cases, what is right for one person might not be right for other people. And, in some cases, doing the right thing might involve placing the greater good ahead of specific benefits that might accrue to oneself. Ethical choices, therefore, involve a trade-off or compromise between the interests and rights of different parties.

Newspapers inform the public about events in government and the broader society. In doing so, they act within the bounds of legislation and ethical codes of conduct that are inherent in the South African society. In Limpopo Province, the newspapers are more often at loggerhead with the Department of Education when reporting on educational matters. The department claims that reporters do not report fairly and accurately about the activities of officials. Reporters flatly deny these allegations. Who then, of the two institutions, act ethically when executing its social mandate?

Flowing from the question posed in the above paragraph, the problem of the ethical conduct of newspaper reporters in reporting on educational matters in the Department of Education in the Limpopo Province arises. Newspaper reporters have to adhere to and act in accordance with ethical codes of conduct, either institutional or societal. In making ethical choices about what is right, newspapers are faced with dilemmas. An ethical dilemma arises in a situation whereby it is difficult to tell right from wrong because all the alternatives may have potentially negative consequences. But, irrespective of the dilemmas that reporters face, reporters must report ethically, fairly and accurately.

The Department of Education in the Limpopo Province sometimes questions the validity of the criteria that newspapers use in the evaluation and publication of information. The question frequently asked is, "How can newspapers fight for

honesty and integrity when they themselves are less than honest in getting a story?" The department is, therefore, concerned about newspaper reporters who slant news and discredit the department when reporting on educational matters. To the department, this is unethical reporting.