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## **MANAGEMENT PERCEPTIONS ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DISCIPLINARY MEASURES IN A PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT**

### **Abstract:**

Misconduct by public servants is on the rise and the South African government is losing millions of rand as a result of misconduct. Acts of misconduct such as absenteeism without permission, theft, fraud, the failure to carry out lawful instructions, and participation in unprotected strikes are some of the dominant acts of misconduct committed by public servants. At face value it appears that the disciplinary measures applied to deal with employee misconduct in government are effective. Evidence however suggest that in many cases public service organisations do not comply with the disciplinary codes for misconduct.

Against this background the aim of this research was to explore management perceptions on the effectiveness of disciplinary measures in a provincial government department. More specifically this research addressed three research questions:

- To what extent are disciplinary procedures effectively applied in the department?
- What are the consequences of non-compliance with disciplinary procedures in the department?
- What mechanisms can be used to improve disciplinary procedures in the department?

A qualitative approach was followed with data gathered by means of semi-structured interviews. The population in the study consisted of managers (N=6) who are responsible for managing discipline in their respective units. Theme analyses were used to analyse the data.

The findings showed that the participants had negative perceptions about the effective application of disciplinary procedures. Some of the participants felt that misconduct procedures were not custom made and could thus not effectively deal with misconduct in the Department. The unavailability of chairpersons, witnesses and employer representatives, are some of the factors that contributed to the long periods of time in which misconduct cases were dealt with. The findings reveal both individual and organisational outcomes of non-compliance with disciplinary processes procedures. All the participants were in agreement that non-compliance with misconduct procedures has a devastating impact on the reputation of the institution and employer brand. The participants also mentioned the impact of ineffective misconduct procedures on work related behaviours of employees. Finally most of the participants highlighted the importance of competent leadership in executing disciplinary procedures.

In conclusion, our findings propose the repositioning of government structures to minimize incidences of misconduct and counteract the adverse impact of misconduct on individuals and organisations.

**Keywords:**

Disciplinary actions; Government institutions; Misconduct,

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