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Employees' perception on knowledge sharing within the Limpopo provincial treasury

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Employees' perception on knowledge sharing within the Limpopo Provincial Treasury

By

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A research report submitted to the faculty of commerce, law and management, university of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of master of management (in the field of public and development management).

Supervisor: Motswaledi T E

YEAR: 2015

DECLARATION

I **Richard Thilivhali Rambiyana** hereby declare that this research report is my own work submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Masters **of Management in Public Development and Management** at the University of Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted previously for any degree or examination in other university.

Signature: Date:

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Lastly, I thank my beautiful and understanding wife, Rachel Mokone Masete for allowing me to spend a lot of time away from her warmth in pursuit of the Master's degree.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to two groups of people: First my kids, Thabane, Ndivho and Ramaanda who are my life inspiration and source of happiness. Secondly, my great grandfather, the late Rambiyana who led and kept the Vhavenda people together against the Boers during 1898 until 1902 when Mphephu was exiled in Rhodeshia. Thinking of you makes me believe that anything is within reach for as long as one is committed.

ABSTRACT

Knowledge sharing is a critical component of knowledge management and a new phenomenon in the South African public sector. To introduce knowledge sharing in government, the Department of Public Service and Administration included it as one of the core management competencies for senior management service officials. There is a general perception that government employees are not keen to share what they know, as sharing empowers your colleague to compete with you for power and promotional opportunities.

The purpose of this research study was therefore to investigate the perception of staff members on knowledge sharing activities in Limpopo Provincial Treasury department. In particular, the study was aimed at answering the following questions about the department: (1) What is the perception of employees on knowledge sharing as a catalyst to achieve operational and service delivery objectives? (2) What is the readiness level of LPT employees to share their experiences and know-how for the benefit of the institution?

This was a qualitative research. The data was collected through the questionnaire distributed to employees grouped in two stratas, namely senior management and middle management services. Discussions were held, mostly with members of the dysfunctional knowledge management committee and other identified staff members. Relevant departmental documents were also reviewed as part of the research process.

The outcome of the study is that the state of employees' perception towards knowledge sharing is generally positive but in practice, there is little knowledge-sharing taking place due to unconducive organisational culture and lack of leadership to position knowledge management as a strategic focus of the department. The study recommends that LPT adopts knowledge management as a strategic focus and put plans in place to preserve institutional memory.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge sharing, Knowledge management, Perception, Limpopo Provincial Treasury

ABBREVIATIONS

CKO	Chief Knowledge Officer
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
EXCOM	Executive Committee
GITO	Government Information Technology Office
HOD	Head of Department
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IT	Information Technology
KM	Knowledge Management
LPA	Limpopo Provincial Administration
LPT	Limpopo Provincial Treasury
MMS	Middle Management Service
SMS	Senior Management Service
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
UNISA	University of South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 RESEARCH OVERVIEW

This first chapter of the research report outlines the background, focus and importance of the study. The definitions of key concepts used in the report are also highlighted. This is a qualitative research report conducted at Limpopo Provincial Treasury.

The aim of this research was to determine and qualitatively report the perception of Limpopo Provincial Treasury staff members towards knowledge sharing.

1.2 BRIEF DESCRITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The two key concepts that are at the centre of this study are knowledge sharing and perception. Perception being that which helps people understand and be aware of the world around them, their immediate work environment, and how it all affects their living conditions. It is a selective process where we interpret and give meaning to the external factors. In most cases, perception is not realistic nor the actual truth, however it has a major influence on someone's attitude and reaction to things (Bergh & Theron, 2004). Bergh and Theron further argue that perception can be nurtured and inherited through nature.

A person's immediate experience of any subject around him or herself determines the eventual perception. The reception you get when you join a new organization, similarly to the taste of the food in the restaurant provides foundation of the perception you will have about that organization. Perception is a process that gives rise to immediate experience and is crucial to the behavior of a human being (Morgan, King & Robinson, 1979). Therefore, the perception you will have towards a particular concept will determine the attitude you will

adopt when confronted with a challenge to participate in its implementation. A famous statement says: *"Your attitude not aptitude will determine your altitude."* explains the importance of nurturing positive perception which then becomes the foundation for positive attitudes useful in accomplishment of good results.

In simple terms, perception is loosely referred to as someone's individual opinion, which may or may not be informed by facts. The Oxforddictionary.com website defines perception as the way in which something is regarded, understood and interpreted by a particular individual.

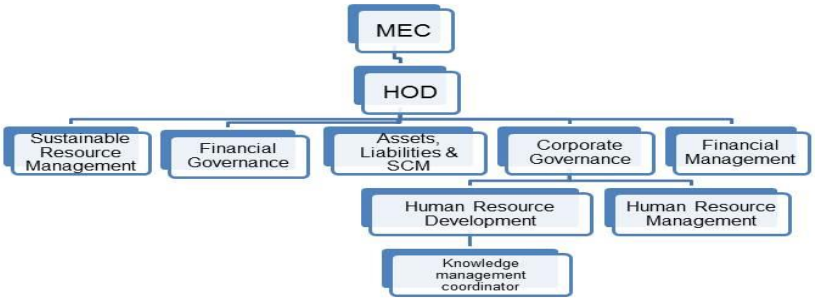
Knowledge sharing is a mix of behaviours and conduct that involve the exchange of information amongst people. It differs from information sharing, as it requires reciprocity. Information sharing is mainly one direction and unrequested, whilst knowledge sharing is about identifying who has the right knowledge, knowledge source and who will benefit from it, knowledge receiver (Connelly & Kellony, 2001). Knowledge sharing is an activity through which information, skills and expertise are exchanged among people within a particular community or organisation.

1.3 LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL TREASURY IN CONTEXT

According to the Public Finance Management Act no 29 of 1999 (PFMA), every province shall have a Provincial Treasury headed by the Member of the Executive Council. The Provincial Treasury is responsible for the overall financial matters of the provincial administration. The functions and powers of the Limpopo Provincial Treasury (LPT) in line with the PFMA provisions includes but not limited to the following: Preparations of the provincial administration budget; exercise control over the implementation of the provincial budget, promotion and enforcement of transparency in the spending of budget, revenue collection, assets management in departments and public entities, ensuring that fiscal policies do not materially and unreasonably prejudice national economic policies and monitoring of the implementation of national and provincial norms and standards.

At the time of the study, LPT was under administration in terms section 100 (1) (b) of the Constitution. Because of the administration, the above functions and powers were therefore the responsibility of the Minister of Finance. This intervention came into being because of the National Cabinet decision. In 2011, the Cabinet took a decision to put the province under administration because of the province's inability to manage funds in line with the PFMA prescripts. At the time the province had R2 billions deficit which could have caused public servants not to be paid their salaries. The province was technically bankrupt (Cabinet statement, Dec 2011). This was an indication that LPT did not exercise control over the spending of budget. There was no evidence to suggest that the state of the provincial finances at the time has any correlations with knowledge sharing in the department or entire provincial administration.

The following is the high-level organizational structure of LPT with specific focus on where the knowledge management function is currently coordinated.



(Source: Approved LPT organisational Structure, 2008)

Figure 1: LPT High-level Org Structure (Source: Approved organisational structure, 2008)

According to the approved Organisational Structure of LPT, the knowledge management function does not exist. However, the Human Resource

Development directorate made provisions for a resource to co-ordinate knowledge management related activities in the department. This is an indication that there is a will within LPT to embrace the culture of knowledge sharing amongst employees. There is further evidence to show that a submission was made to institutionlise the function of knowledge management with Human Resource Development directorate. However, at the time of the study the new organizational incorporating KM as a subunit within HRD was still under consideration.

Majority of LPT employees are knowledge workers as their job responsibilities depends on their know-how and ability to make use of the available information to achieve the objectives of the department. A small percentage of employees have manual or labour based job responsibilities, including cleaners and some administrative clerks.

1.4 KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

Knowledge management is still new to the South African public service sector. The lack of common KM approach and implementation model bears evidence. However (Cong and Pandya, 2003) argue that it is opportune for governments to start adopting this management practice in order to boost their efficacy. They further propose a need for a government tailor made KM strategy. The South African government has demonstrated a desire to practice it by introducing the concept as one of the core management competencies of senior officials. There are several challenges and opportunities which, when identified can be used to develop a common knowledge management framework.

In order to institutionalise knowledge sharing in government, DPSA through the SMS handbook made knowledge management (KM) a mandatory competency of all senior managers in South African public service. The DPSA further mandates all public service organisations to institutionalise knowledge sharing in their environment. Knowledge management is described as a process to obtain,

analyse and promote the generation and sharing of knowledge and learning, in order to enhance the collective knowledge of the organization. It involves amongst others to create mechanisms and structures for sharing of information in the organisation (DPSA, 2006).

Knowledge management, in particular the knowledge sharing activity is practised in most developed countries as a tool to enhance productivity and competiveness and the rewards are immeasurable for both public and private entities. South Africa as a developing economy can also derive significant rewards by institutionalising knowledge sharing within their public sector processes and systems of management. Good service delivery in most developed countries is attributed to knowledge management in public sector; and with service delivery challenges in South Africa the need for adoption of knowledge management cannot be over emphasized. People and their behaviours play a critical role in the success of knowledge management; without the support of people any KM initiatives are less likely to succeed (Mphahlele, 2010).

In an endeavour to inculcate the culture of information and knowledge sharing, in 2013, the Limpopo Provincial Administration through the Office the Premier developed a five year term Knowledge Management strategy 2013 -2018. During the development, it was found that there is no common understanding of what knowledge management is all about. Majority of departments were found to be at a low level of KM maturity (Office of the Premier, 2013).

1.5 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Staff turnover is a general challenge, particularly in the public sector. This turnover can be attributed to various factors, including the aging of baby boomers and poaching of public servants by private companies. This phenomenon has a negative consequence towards public service knowledge management, preservation of institutional memory and intellectual property. This problem is

prevalent at provincial and local government level where service delivery is the core business. For instance, every year several seasoned employees leave Limpopo Provincial Treasury (LPT) either for greener pastures or due to retirement. During the financial year 2013/4, LPT experienced a 10.7% turnover rate with a high number of them coming from highly skilled professionals, level 9 - 12. When employees resign, they leave with all electronic documents generated and tacit knowledge gained during their tenure.

Whilst people acknowledge that knowledge is power; there is a perception that in government people are not keen to share what they know because they believe the next person will then become more powerful (Gaffoor, 2008). There is therefore a need to determine the extent of this perception in government and address it through scientific measures as recommended by literature.

The Auditor General reports for the previous years (2011 – 2012) shows that there are pockets of excellence in government in terms of accountability, governance and financial management. These reports further indicate the importance of government entities to learn from each other and share best practices from existing packets of excellence. To that end, National Treasury together with provincial treasuries are expected to take a facilitative role in ensuring that knowledge sharing and learning across departments happen particularly when it comes to financial management and accountability best practices. This will require provincial treasuries to practice knowledge sharing and management in their own environment and be exemplary to other departments.

The continuous retirement and regular transfers, as well as secondments of public servants across government entities, necessitate the need to preserve institutional memory. The preserved knowledge becomes part of sources of information to empower the new recruits (Cong & Panya, 2003). According to LPT HR Plan (2013/4), fourteen percent (14%) of the workforce is due for retirement in the next five years. Nineteen percent (19%) qualify for an early retirement in the next five years. The latter group may potentially be ejected

automatically from the system by the effects of knowledge economy. This poses a risk of losing institutional memory and may challenge to start preserving and sharing knowledge in order to bridge the knowledge divide between potential retirees and new recruits.

It is therefore crucial for LPT to determine and ensure that their employees across all levels embrace knowledge sharing in their work place in order to preserve institutional memory. Managers need to embrace knowledge sharing for other staff members to recognise its importance in their own development and that of the institution. For LPT to develop into a learning institution, taking stock of how employees perceive knowledge sharing as a critical business process for organizational efficiency and service delivery is essential. This is to ensure that the right mechanisms that are appropriate for the environment are applied to address the negative perception and nurture positive perception where it exists. There is currently limited literature on what perceptions government and in particular, LPT employees have about the implementation of knowledge sharing activities.

1.6 THE PURPOSE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this research study was to investigate the perception of the staff members on knowledge sharing activities in LPT. Raphesu (2010) concludes that there are no formal knowledge sharing and management processes in place at LPT. Whilst It is unknown whether the absence of knowledge sharing and management practices contributed to the existing Section (100) (1) (b) intervention, there was a case of sharing of knowledge between the Administrators responsible for intervention and other officials, in order to ensure continuity. The perception of employees towards knowledge sharing has an impact on the efficacy of knowledge sharing and sustainability of intervention initiatives.

The study was inspired by (Wong and Aspinwal, 2005) who argued that the perception of employees influence the success of knowledge sharing and management in organizations. Accordingly, perception of employees can be used to predict the success or failure of organizational knowledge sharing initiatives. Where employees believe that knowledge management is a catalyst for organizational efficiency, there are better prospects for knowledge sharing initiatives.

A study of knowledge sharing perception is necessary in government entities to determine whether there are prospects for it to succeed or not. The findings exposed some insight on how employees at LPT perceive the importance of knowledge sharing. It further establishes whether there is a need to change that perception or not. The implementation of knowledge sharing activities in LPT will then contribute towards the culture of knowledge sharing in the provincial government since LPT is responsible for providing assistance and guidelines in terms of financial governance, accountability and management in an endeavor to achieve a clean audit in all government departments.

Existing literatures reveals there is still resistance amongst employees to share what they know with colleagues. There is definitely a need to develop knowledge management strategy for government departments. However, the assessment of public servants' perception of KM must precede the development and implementation of the strategy to ensure that the plans are not misdirected. The recent AG report recommended that for provincial departments to achieve their 2014 clean audits, they have to start sharing best practices amongst each other. In light of this, the centrality of Limpopo Provincial Treasury and the role it plays in ensuring good governance in the province, it is therefore rationale to conclude that there is necessity for LPT to start looking at the implementation of knowledge sharing techniques within and outside the department. It is therefore in this context that the study on knowledge sharing perception was conducted in LPT. The same study is necessary in all departments in government.

The existence of the intervention in treasury posed a continuity challenge for LPT. This challenge requires those who are left in charge to take over from administrators, not to reinvent the wheel, but to continue where intervention team would have left after the hand-over. For this to happen, a knowledge sharing between administrators and staff members becomes paramount. In this context, the study of this nature and its findings becomes significant

The people-perception of knowledge sharing, their perception of how their colleagues perceive it, organizational culture and capacity are good predictors of the success or failure of knowledge sharing initiatives in an organisation. This includes the level of trust between employees (Connelly & Kellony, 2001). The perception of the LPT employees as it relates to these factors were analysed during this study.

In general management, it is common knowledge that an organization that has good leadership is likely to succeed in the implementation of management processes. Existing literature on the subject of knowledge management confirms that there is a correlation between management support and the success of knowledge management initiatives. Knowledge management is regarded as a management issue. The study of people and their perception on the implementation of KM is necessary to predict the likelihood of the KM success or failure. In short, the perception of people is crucial to the success of knowledge sharing and management in any organizations, public sector institutions included (April & Izadi, 2004).

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study attempts to answer the following questions about LPT and its employees.

1.7.1 What is the perception of employees on knowledge sharing as a catalyst to achieving operational and service delivery objectives?

1.7.2 What is the readiness level of LPT employees to share their experiences and know-how for the benefit of the institution?

1.8 RESEARCH REPORT OUTLINE

This chapter captured the overview of knowledge sharing and management, background of Limpopo Provincial Treasury and the focus as well as the importance of the study. **Chapter 2** outlines a detailed account of literature consulted during the course of the research. The chapter further communicates the researcher's argument and opinion in relation to the literature review. **Chapter 3** outlines the process, procedure and techniques followed to conduct the research. **Chapter 4** captures the findings and outcome of the questionnaire and discussions held with research respondents. It further documents the researcher's argument and opinion based on the analysis and interpretation of the data and information obtained during the study. **Chapter 5** concludes the study of the perception of LPT employees on Knowledge sharing and management in the department. This is the summary of the study. It will also outline recommendations in terms of what can be done to build a positive knowledge-sharing environment in LPT.

1.9 CONCLUSION

The current turn-over rate and the fourteen percent of employees which is due to retire in the next five years poses a challenge to the department to put knowledge sharing and management in practice in order to preserve institutional memory and intellectual property. There is a need to bridge the knowledge gap between potential retirees and new recruits in order to build a Limpopo Provincial Treasury, which is able to learn from its experience and previous lessons. The absence of knowledge management policies in government and the fact that it is a new phenomenon increases the extent of the challenge.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a detailed account of literature consulted during the course of the research. The chapter further communicates the researcher's argument and opinion in relation to the literature review.

2.2 THE EFFECTS OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN CONTEMPORARY ECONOMY

This study refers to knowledge economy as the contemporary economy where production and delivery of service depends on how knowledge workers make use of their information and knowledge as well as utilisation of technology to stay ahead of their competitors and closer to their customers. In the context of the definition, this chapter provides literature on the role that information and communications technology (ICT) play particularly in knowledge-sharing and knowledge economy in general.

Knowledge management is a key factor in driving the success of modern enterprises and sharing of knowledge is the central element in the whole process. To stay in business, organisations need to innovate by developing new products and delivering services at a high speed and low cost, and deliver them quickly to customers. Knowledge sharing between individuals increases organizational performance, capacity and innovation as well as competitive advantage (Jian & Wang, 2013). The need to innovate demands the use of technology and knowledge workers. However, according to Kefela (2010), knowledge workers challenge is that they are difficult to retain. Their prone to leaving justifies the need for organisations to preserve their knowledge base, encouraging them to share their know-how. Kefela further argues that you need to be a knowledge worker yourself to manage an employee in a knowledge-based economy.

The advent of knowledge economy has made it significant for governments to start managing its knowledge and intellectual property. Knowledge economy has brought challenges for conventional public sector that operated without competition. These days, public sector institutions, government departments included, compete with their private sector counterparts. In other words, the recipients of service delivery have choice of where to get the service (Cong & Pandya, 2003). In order to remain relevant public sector institutions are forced to manage their important asset, knowledge. The challenge is that the public sector is full of managers who are not knowledge workers. As a result, they experience difficulties in managing new employees who are technologists, knowledge workers, innovators and risk takers (Kefela, 2010).

The other crucial feature of the knowledge economy is that workers are no longer hard working, but are instead 'smart workers'. Smart workers or knowledge workers as they are referred to, spend time planning and talking to each other. Davenpoort & Prusak (1998) explained it succinctly that through conversations, employees discover their knowledge and share it with colleagues. In the process, they create a new organisational knowledge that is then used to solve business problems. As a result, employees who come from industrial age may be a threat to knowledge sharing initiatives, for they believe in working not talking.

According to Wong (2005) who identified management support as the most critical success factor for the implementation of KM, the success of knowledge management strategy largely depends on the support of managers and require advocacy from the level of Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO). This view is supported by the Limpopo Provincial Administration KM strategy which recommends that: *"To emphasize the important role of KRIM in the LPA, a new position of Chief Knowledge Officer (CKO) should be created at a fairly senior level in the PGITO in the Office of the Premier to coordinate and oversee all Knowledge, Records and Information Management and Library functions in the LPA in general".* In KM, leaders play an advocacy role. Leaders must demonstrate their desire to share their own knowledge with their peers and

others in the organisations. Wong argues that the perception and attitude of managers towards knowledge sharing is likely to influence subordinates and spread across the institution. Accordingly, managers are responsible for the creation of necessary conditions and the environment conducive for knowledge sharing. For instance, the loss of employees contributes towards knowledge loss; to counter this you need a combination of knowledge sharing mechanisms embedded within organisational processes and managers who are ready to share for survival in the knowledge economy.

The role of management is to provide the lower staff with clear objectives of KM, showing its direct benefits and articulate the role of each in the process. Unlike other management disciplines, KM requires continuous involvement of managers in order for all involved to firmly believe in it. Where knowledge-sharing initiatives are driven from the top, their objectives are likely to be achieved. It is important for a manager to be in charge of KM, in fact, if the management takes KM seriously, the rest of officials will follow automatically (Singh, 2008). Singh further argues that management support will determine the level of resources and time allocated to ensure that KM objectives are met. People are likely to be given time to discuss and share ideas amongst themselves. The role of managers is also to resolve confusion and conflicts that may arise in the process of knowledge sharing amongst employees. Singh (2008) concluded that leaders are at the centre of making sure that KM becomes a catalyst for organizational efficiency and competitive advantage.

According to Garvin, Edmonson and Gino (2008), the advent of technologies, abundance of customer choices and effects of globalization increased the scope of leaders in organisations. It is no longer enough for leaders to clearly communicate just their vision, pay high salaries and invest in training and development; leaders need to ensure that organizations learn and optimally utilise their knowledge. They must have an ability to use what they know to their advantage. The knowledge of the organization makes it distinctive and unique from its competitors. This was simply explained by Misra, Hariharan and Khaneja

(2003) that *"…just as human beings, realizing the full worth of knowledge, constantly garner, retain, and update their knowledge so as to apply it to future problems, an organization also needs to constantly garner, retain, update, and apply its knowledge in all its endeavours. However, while in humans, the constant nurturing of knowledge is more or less an unconscious activity; an organization must make a concerted effort toward nurturing this organizational treasure. This is true of any kind of organization, be it government or private, small or large".*

Organisations must build IT infrastructure and systems conducive to the sharing of information and knowledge; and ensure that employees stay motivated to share their tacit knowledge. The success of KM depends of the relationship and trust between leaders, middle managers and the rest of employees (Alrawi and Alrawi, 2011). However, IT systems are not solutions but an enabler to knowledge sharing; they can only assist in connecting people to each other and making information accessible. The onus remains with the people to share and re-use the knowledge as well as process put in place to facilitate knowledge sharing (Cong and Pandya, 2003). This view is supported by Cabrera & Cabrera (2007) who agrees that ICT plays a major role in facilitating knowledge sharing in organisations but often technologies introduced to facilitate knowledge sharing fails because other human factors which are important were not adequately considered. Syed-Ikhsan & Rowland (2004) on the other hand argue that consideration should be given to organizational context, culture and structure that facilitate knowledge sharing before implementing any technology.

Knowledge sharing and distribution through formal and informal processes is important for production and economic performance in the current knowledge economy. The centrality of knowledge in contemporary economy is influenced by the ever-changing and continuous development of ICT. Knowledge workers are prone to leave and difficult to retain. Therefore, to retain their intellectual capital, organisations need to capture and preserve, as well as encourage them to share their knowledge during their stay (Kefela, 2010).

2.3 KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND MANAGEMENT IN GOVERNMENT

The literature consulted during the study to understand knowledge sharing and management in government context span across the past ten years, 2003 – 2013.

There is evidence to suggest that the implementation of knowledge sharing and management is moving slowly in the public sector. Knowledge management is still new in government. However, the adoption of knowledge management could increase efficiency whilst improving the pace of service delivery (Cong & Pandya, 2003). Government takes time to adopt new management practices. The same goes to knowledge management, which according to literature was first adopted by manufacturing organisations, is only starting to get recognition as important for service delivery (Taylor & Wright, 2004). This late adoption of new management practices by government happens for reasons such as policy continuity, security implications and to ensure that controls are in place. Also contributing to slow adoption of knowledge management in governments and public bodies is the inflexible organisational structure, fixed rules, regulations and processes (Ethekhwini municipality, 2010). The current state of knowledge management in South African government confirms these views. During the study, the researcher found that DPSA is in the process of reviewing the knowledge management strategy, which was never implemented. In essence, the South African government does not have a knowledge management strategy.

According to Cong & Pandya (2003), the public sector needs to develop leaders who can encourage the culture of sharing, act as role model for knowledge sharing and have ability to champion the implementation of knowledge management initiatives. This way KM will be embraced by employees at lower level as prerequisite to succeed or add value to the institutions. Conversely,

negative perception and inability to champion the KM cause by top management might be to the detriment of KM success.

Similar to strategic planning and management, KM is aimed at enhancing long-term organisational capacity and performance of public sector institutions. If organisations are not sure of the current KM perception of their employees, they are more likely to start with wrong initiatives and run a risk of wasting resources without achieving their objectives. Public sector around the globe is starting to embrace KM as a value-add management practice, but at the same time there is a certain level of scepticism by some, who perceive it as a buzzword which will pass with time (April & Izadi, 2004).

Knowledge sharing is vital within and between public service organizations considering the commonalities and the need to speed up service delivery without reinventing the wheel. Garvin, Edmonson and Gino (2008) argued that knowledge is at the centre of government services, so it is important for government departments to manage and learn from their own knowledge. The mobility of public servants within and outside government departments increases the knowledge market. This mobility contributes towards knowledge demand which in turn increases its value. Mphahlele (2010) stated that government in its nature is a knowledge institution.

In South African public sector, the appointment of Knowledge Managers at a low-middle management positions seem to have relegated KM, which led to its failure. The appointment of knowledge managers at a level of Chief Directors and Deputy Director General would make KM to find expression in executive discussions and decision-making structures where middle managers' participation is limited. The silo mentality and lack knowledge champions also contributed to the failure of KM (Mphahlele, 2010). According to the DPSA guidelines, the function of knowledge management is assigned to Government Information Technology Officers (GITOs) or Chief Information Officers, who are appointed at the level of director upwards depending on the size of the department.

The current challenge in public sector is not to recruit and retain skills only, but to preserve the knowledge that exists within the system. It has become very difficult for public sector to preserve knowledge and the system is threatened by retirement of skilled and old personnel. Phaladi (2011) found that those who possess knowledge and expertise lack motivation to share and transfer knowledge to their colleagues. Their perception is that the junior staff will leave the organization with the knowledge obtained. Phaladi further notes that lack of KM strategies and leadership commitment might be the root cause of the lack of motivation. This may certainly hinder the proper implementation of knowledge management systems in the workplace.

Misra, Hariharan & Khaneja (2003) who have a long professional relationship with the government of India argues that the informed citizenry we find across the globe puts pressure on governments to manage knowledge. According to them, well-informed citizen demands not only service delivery but also ask questions related to the norms, standards and policy of government. For government to interact with such citizens it needs to have knowledge workers who understand fully the business of government. Contemporary, public servants are knowledge workers. They further cite that mobility of public servants creates knowledge drain and knowledge demand. Through their experience they developed, an e-knowledge management framework for government organisations based on four pillars i.e. people, processes, technology and management.

Literature shows that there is no other known knowledge management framework available, which was designed specifically for government. Existing framework and studies, which are private sector based, also put emphasis on the four pillars recommended by Misra, Hariharan & Khaneja (2003) which indicates that implementation of knowledge management in private sector should not be different from public sector implementations.

2.4 THE EFFECT OF PERCEPTION IN KNOLWEDGE SHARING

It is necessary to understand the perception of employees towards knowledge sharing. From that understanding, it can be seen if there are prospects for a successful knowledge sharing initiatives. According to Hidayanto, Hapsari, Alfina and Sucahyo (2013) the perceptions of employees can directly influence the success and failure of knowledge sharing in an organisation. They further argued that perception of employees with regards to the state of knowledge sharing, benefits available, motivation and hindering factors are more likely to encourage or motivate them to share their know how with fellow colleagues. Potgieter, Dube and Rensliegh (2013) concurs that in organisations where KM strategies or activities already exist, the perception that employees have already adopted towards those plans may motivate or discourage their creativeness and innovativeness. Lehner and Haas (2010) support the above sentiment in that the success of knowledge sharing is strongly dependent on the subjective perception of individuals.

The perceived support by management and other colleagues plays an important role in creating conducive environment for people to share what they know. Where there is an indication that managers are willing to share their own knowledge, employees are more likely to volunteer theirs as well. The culture of open communication between senior officials and their subordinates is a foundation for knowledge sharing (Connelly and Kelloway, 2001). However, individuals may refrain from sharing their know-how, influenced by the perception that this will potentially reduce the power that one have over others because of their knowledge. It is therefore important for organisations to address this perception at an early stage or prior to the implementation of their knowledge management strategies. Senior managers' positive perception of what knowledge sharing can do in building an organisation and solving its challenges plays a major role in building an organisational culture conducive to knowledge sharing (Wang and None, 2010).

Alrawi & Alrawi (2011) who investigated perception of managers in United Arab Emirates concluded that the people's perception may be a barrier to the success and positive performance of knowledge management. Positive perception of leadership can be an enabler for knowledge management processes. Their research further reveals that people's beliefs are a major factor that could encourage the practice of knowledge management. They also suggest that the trust based relationship between people in different levels in the organisation is the foundation for collaboration and knowledge sharing which lead to productivity and performance.

Where a perception is created that employees can work in teams to accomplish a task, it helps to create trust which is a positive condition for knowledge sharing (Wang and Noe, 2010). This shows the importance of knowledge sharing awareness to instill a positive culture and build positive perceptions prior to the implementation of the knowledge sharing. Perception plays an important role in knowledge sharing because this practice cannot be enforced instead it is a voluntary process.

2.5 THE CATALYST AND INHIBITORS OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING

Whilst individuals may refrain from sharing their expertise, influenced by the perception that this will potentially reduce the power that one have over others because of their knowledge, this attitude can be addressed through a number of factors. Naturally, people want to know what is in for them if they share. They want to know what they will benefit in return of sharing their knowledge. To this end, knowledge sharing catalysts and other factors that may encourage them to share need to be identified. Amaya (2013) argues that knowledge sharing is not easy to realize because people share voluntarily, which makes it important to understand what motivates them to volunteer their know-how. The sections below describes some of the elements which affects negatively and positively the success of knowledge sharing

Loss of power and Personal recognition

According to Wang and Noe (2010), employees may feel that they are useful resources and their expert knowledge is recognised if conditions are created for them to share with someone of higher status such as their supervisor instead of sub-ordinates or co-workers. Due to fear of losing power through sharing knowledge with peers, employees are likely to hold on to their knowledge if the sharing platform is shared by everyone, such as online collaboration tool. Wang and Noe further argue that employees are more likely to share when they see that others are sharing. What most people do not realize is that, sharing your knowledge with a large audience especially those who are from the same industry or unit is an opportunity to receive personal recognition. According to Amaya (2013), this personal recognition may be good for individual recognition, career advancement, professional reputation, social status and emotional benefits.

Trust

Trust is central to knowledge sharing and communication in general. Naturally, people communicate and share their personal views with those they trust. In a working environment where the level of trust is limited, strong catalysts are required to cultivate a knowledge-sharing environment. Organisations where emphasis is put on competition, knowledge sharing turns to suffer. These views are shared by Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi and Mohammed (2007) who argue that interpersonal trust and trust between employees are critical success factors for building a good culture which will easily influence information and knowledge sharing. According to them team members need “existence of trust in order to respond openly and share their knowledge”.

The introduction ICT systems and support by management will not translate into successful knowledge sharing initiatives without visible trust in an organisation. Listing “*Trust”* as one of the organisational values is not enough. Everyone must

be seen to be trustworthy. Where top managers are trustworthy, trust is more likely to infiltrate down to all level of organisation and become part of the organisational culture (Davenpoort & Prusak, 1998).

Social interaction, ICT infrastructure, willingness to learn

In addition to trust, the other critical success factors for knowledge sharing are willingness to learn, sociable environment, good ICT infrastructure and systems, recognition, promotion and innovative culture amongst others. Any of these must be seen as a predictor for successful knowledge sharing in an organisation (Taylor & Wright, 2004). For an organisational culture to drive knowledge sharing it must possess the above-mentioned factors (Potgieter, Dube & Rensleigh, 2013). An organisation with a culture characterised by social interaction of employees regardless of the position and status, knowledge sharing is more likely to take place without any enforcement (Connelly & Kelloway, 2001).

Performance Management, Development and Reward System

Organisations that have adopted a performance management and development system (PMDS) which put more emphasis on individual performance and rewards indirectly inhibit knowledge sharing. Whereas, those that have team work base PMDS are more likely to bear the fruits of knowledge sharing. Teamwork encourages innovation, builds trust and encourages communication amongst employees. All these are catalysts for success knowledge sharing (Wang and None, 2010). They further reported that several other studies found that job satisfaction is positive factor that may foster knowledge sharing. More importantly, trust or the lack of it between colleagues may have a direct relation with knowledge sharing.

According to Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi and Mohammed (2007), organisations need strong motivational factors in order to influence employees to share knowledge. Not all employees are ready to share unless there is something to gain during the

process, in fact majority see sharing as a loss of their personal power. A reward system for those who share their knowledge is catalyst for knowledge sharing. Moreover, such rewards must focus on team rather than individual performance.

Organisational structure and culture

A conventional organisation structure consists of layers of boxes that are influenced by the position and level of responsibility. Usually, on top of those structures there are few positions filled by top managers, followed by supervisors and then the low-level staff members. This flow is also used as a protocol to send and communicate information in an organisation. Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi and Mohammed (2007) argued that these types of structures are an obstacle for information flow and communication, as a result makes it difficult for knowledge sharing to succeed. It takes time for communication to filter from the top to bottom, as it has to pass through various layers. In fact, knowledge sharing will prosper in structures that are project and team based which support quick communication and easy flow of information. A survey conducted by Wong (2005) supports that organisational structure is important element to consider for a successful knowledge sharing as it defines the organisational culture, values, behaviours and social customs.

Communication

Communication has the same effect that social interaction has on knowledge sharing. Cabrera & Cabrera (2007) argued that, the chances of sharing are multiplied when employees spend time together because interaction means communication. The more people spent time together communicating, the more they understand each other's language. In turn, information and knowledge is shared easily. Connelly & Kelloway (2003) concluded that lack of communication in an organisation is an indication that knowledge sharing does not exist and converse is the case.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The knowledge economy is mainly driven by the use of ICT in business and society in general. The social media has taken over the communication industry as the primary tool to share information in real time. Organisations have adopted ICT as the driver of their business. ICT is used to facilitate communication, information and knowledge sharing using technologies such as mail, social networks, collaboration tools, and online repositories, chat rooms to share information with internal staff members and the outside stakeholders as well as the global society. Whilst knowledge sharing and management was inspired by ICT, its success mainly depends on people (Taylor & Wright, 2004).

Motivation

Motivation is a critical success factor for sharing of information and knowledge (Amaya, 2013). In other words, people need to be motivated for them to share their experience for the benefit of others and the organisation. The absence of motivation will negatively affect the success of knowledge sharing initiatives. It is therefore important for organisation to identify those things that bring the best out of the employees and motivate them. Personal benefit, recognition and promotion amongst others are some of the factors that will motivate people to share.

Some of the factors mentioned by Taylor & Wright (2004) as inhibitors of knowledge share are culture, which is not conducive, lack of support from management, and lack of awareness of what knowledge management entails. Amaya (2013) added limited time allocation and poor leadership as some of the barriers of knowledge sharing.

2.6 CONCLUSION

The above literature review shows the importance of perception in life and work place. Whilst there is evidence that government is gradually adopting knowledge management, it seems there are limited KM successes recorded in developing countries. It is therefore crucial for the public sector to formally adopt KM as a standard management practice and develop public sector employees who embrace the knowledge sharing. The need to instill the culture of knowledge sharing to the existing employees cannot be over-emphasised. Employees' perception on the implementation of knowledge sharing activities is what will determine the success of KM in public sector and provide baseline information for future KM frameworks of government.

The above literature studied suggests that knowledge sharing is a subjective and people driven phenomenon which relies on how people see the need for it and whether they have something to benefit or not. In other words, the success of knowledge sharing is dependent on the perception and attitude of the sharers and receivers towards it. Hence, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perception of LPT employees on knowledge sharing. The idea is to understand the attitude of employees towards knowledge sharing and their perception on the organisational environment as it relates to knowledge sharing. Alrawi & Alrawi (2011) who investigated perception of managers in United Arab Emirates concluded that the people's perception may be a barrier to the success and positive performance of knowledge management. However, conversely, a positive perception towards knowledge sharing may catalyse knowledge sharing in an organisation. When employees understand and believe that knowledge sharing will enhance productivity they are more likely to share their know-how.

Considering the above literature studied, the main inhibitors of knowledge sharing are people related. Researchers seem to have consensus when it comes to critical success factors for knowledge sharing. The critical success factors for knowledge sharing can be summarised as follows without following any particular

order: Trust, Social interaction, Communication, organisational structure, ICT, PMDS, rewards system, recognition and organisational culture. There is no literature found during the study, which has an opposite view when it comes to these factors. It is therefore logical to conclude that, where there is a co-relation between these factors and knowledge sharing.

The above literature studied will form the basis of answering the following key research question: What is the perception of employees on knowledge sharing as a catalyst to achieve operational and service delivery objectives? The following chapter outlines the research methodology used to answer the research questions using the above literature as the foundation and context of the study.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the process, procedure and techniques followed to conduct the research. These include the research technique, data collection, sampling and data analysis methods. The data collection and analysis technique used to produce adequate data and information useful in determining the perception of LPT employees on knowledge sharing as a catalyst to achieve operational and service delivery objectives.

The literature reviewed so far suggests that there is limited research done about knowledge sharing and management in the public sector particularly in South Africa. To contribute towards KM in public sector literature, this research was conducted at Limpopo Provincial Treasury, which is a government department, where a perception of employees was studied using qualitative research methodology. The researcher chose qualitative methodology to ensure that a comprehensive understanding is obtained from research participants in order to come up with informed findings which cover the perspectives of respondents. This research determines and reports the LPT employees' perceptions of knowledge sharing activities and their readiness to share their experience and their know-how with fellow colleagues for the benefit of the department.

3.1 RESEARCH STRATEGY

A research strategy is simply an orientation to the study and a road map in which the research is conducted; this include how data is to be collected, analysed and reported in a way that addresses the research question. It is important to select the best strategy to address the question. The research strategy can either be quantitative, qualitative or mix-methods in nature (Bryman, 2012).

In brief, quantitative strategy emphasizes collection, analysis and interpretation of data and results in the form of numbers and measurement while the focus of qualitative is mainly in words and interpretation. Quantitative research unlike qualitative is deductive in nature; it is aimed at testing theory or coming up with the reality rather than develop new theory (Bryman, 2012). Both these strategies have inherent advantages (strengths) and disadvantages (weaknesses).

This study uses the qualitative research method in trying to understand what currently exist in Limpopo Provincial Treasury in terms of the perception of employees on knowledge sharing initiatives. Qualitative research is a strategy which usually emphasizes written and spoken words by respondents or from available data sources rather than quantifiable collection and analysis of data. It is not unlikely for quantifiable data to form part of the qualitative research, as others have suggested (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research is sometimes referred to as field research. This is because it is the appropriate method to learn about something by watching, listening or experience whilst giving a researcher an opportunity to participate in the process. This approach however is naturally easy but intensive, as it requires the researcher to get involved at various stages of the process in order to validate the data (Rubin and Babbie, 1997).

During the study, various techniques of collecting, analysing and interpretation of data were used with more emphasis on qualitative based ones. The qualitative approach to this research allowed the researcher to extract the relevant data useful for him to understand the environment, interpret available data and develop informed opinion and conclusions. To ensure credibility of the process and readability as well as clear presentation of the findings, quantitative data was also used during the study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Since, this is a qualitative study, the researcher paid great focus on comments as a source of information and less on percentage responses, to analyse and interpret the perception of LPT employees towards knowledge sharing. The discussion held with the extended Knowledge Management Committee members was also used to generate information. The product of discussion was used to interpret the perception of employees and to further obtain clarity and detail background on some of the comments made on the questionnaire.

Bryman (2012) refers to research design as the guide on how the data will be collected and analysed. In his book, understanding social research, Mouton (1998) argues that research design is an itinerary of a research. It shows what and where the researcher will go through in a pursuit to reach the destination. It is the set of self-defined rules and guidelines set for the research. According to Mouton, it is equivalent to a roadmap.

There are various research designs that a researcher can use in his study, such experimental, cross-sectional survey, longitudinal survey, case study or comparative study (Bryman, 2012). For the purpose of this research, the case study approach was chosen as the best to answer the research question.

A case study is associated with research conducted at a specific location, organization or group. The results of the case study do not represent the general picture and therefore not automatically applicable to the next group. In most cases, the researcher who uses case study is found to be a member of the group or location under study (Bryman, 2012). In this research, the researcher chose Limpopo Provincial Treasury where he is currently employed and a member of the research population. A case study is different from survey; survey uses a sample whilst case study would focus on a specific target. In this case, the target group is all LPT employees.

Case study research studies in detail an organization in a unique situation. In a case study, the researcher is interested in understanding the organization's existing environment more than the people within the organization. Usually, case study suggests future directions and strategies in that organisation (Salkind, 2006). In this study, the researcher hopes that the findings will suggest and sets direction for future KM preparation and initiatives.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

Research method is a process of collecting data for research. It is the practical way the researcher applies to a particular research to achieve a particular objective. The researcher must choose a research method applicable to the research objective and questions (UNISA, 2010). In this research, a structured questionnaire was used as primary data source to gather information from LPT staff members. Formal and Informal discussions were held with extended members of the dysfunctional departmental knowledge management committee. Bryman (2012) refers to structured questionnaire as self-administered or self-completion questionnaire. For the purpose of this research it is called structured self-administered questionnaire.

The structured self-administered questionnaire circulated to employees had space after every question for respondents to substantiate their responses. A space was also provided at the end of the questionnaire for employees to add any other relevant information related to the knowledge sharing in the department. In line with Bryman (2012), this method was used as it provides the researcher with opportunity to better understand the responses and ask clarity where it is required. The information gathered during the questionnaire responses was used as the basis for discussion with members of the knowledge management steering committee. A period of two weeks was given to respondents to complete the questionnaire without any due pressure from the researcher.

Nkatini (2005) argues that structured self-administered questionnaire is effective when they are simple to understand, short in words, unambiguous and when there are pre-existing response choices to be made. The researcher developed a simple questionnaire to which respondents were able to answer within few minutes of receiving it. Majority of those who responded quickly are middle managers compared to senior managers, but overall and eventually the response rate of senior managers surpassed that of middle managers. During the study, no potential respondents contacted the researcher to get clarity, which is an indication that the questionnaire was simple and easy to complete.

Bryman (2012) supports unstructured interviews because the respondents have no limits in providing the answer, at the same time the researcher is available to provide guidelines and maps in line with the objective of the research. The unstructured interviews were in the form of discussion between the researcher and knowledge management steering committee members as well as other identified employees.

3.4 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The researcher studied the responses from the questionnaires to understand the perception of employees. This information was used to inform the discussion held with knowledge management steering committee. The results of both data collection questionnaire and the discussions held were then analysed, interpreted and reported to describe the perception of LPT employees towards knowledge sharing and recommendations made to address the gaps and nurture positive perception.

The researcher requested and obtained a formal approval from the Head of Department to conduct the study.

3.5 SAMPLING

Sampling is a process of selecting specific members who are a fair representation of population group. In most research, the population is too big to

collect data from each one of the subjects, hence the need for sampling. Salkind (2006) succinctly put it that, if it is impossible to reach every member of the target population, the only choice is to use a sample. In other words, where the target population in total can be reached, sample might not be necessary. In this research, LPT is the case study and its employees are the target group. This means that the target group was reachable. However, sampling was done to limit the number of possible respondents and the limited time to complete the study.

3.5.1 POPULATION.

Salkind (2006) define population as the potential respondents to whom the results will be generalized. The total number of employees at LPT constitutes the size of target population in this research. At the time of this research, the staff complement of LPT was approximately 400. The staff is catergorised in terms of the level of their positions in the organizational structure. This research focused mainly on senior management and middle management personnel. Out of 400, senior management staff is 45 and middle management personnel is 141, which makes the actual total population of this research to be 186.

3.5.2 SAMPLING FRAME AND SAMPLING METHOD.

Sampling Frame

The sample frame is the actual element where the population and the sample is drawn from (Mouton, 1998). Sampling is done to ensure that a sample is fair representation of the target population. In this research, the email distribution list for all SMS and MMS staff was used as the sampling frame. The researcher sent the questionnaire to individual respondents through email system. An individual message was used to ensure that participants are unable to see who else is participating in the study to avoid potential collusion.

Sampling Method

In this research, a stratified random sampling method was used. Stratified sampling is a technique in which the researcher divides the whole target

population into different subgroups and then selects the research subjects proportionally from the subgroups. Stratified random is used where it is easy to identify and allocate sub-groups of the population and to ensure that each group has chance to be part of the study. Stratified sampling is also known as the quota sampling if there is no random selection in the strata. In using a stratified sampling a researcher, draw a sample of a group, which proportionally represents all the subgroups (Unisa, 2010 & Bryman, 2012). In the context of this research the subgroups are SMS and MMS.

The target population of this research is comprised of two subgroups, namely senior management and middle management employees. These subgroups are divided as follows:

Sub-group	**Total number**	**Sampling at 20%**
Senior Management	45	10
MMS	141	28

Table 1: Research population & sample

The 20% sample fraction was used for this study. This research therefore chose 20% of each subgroup to ensure that they are all proportionally represented. Meaning, the sampling was comprised of ten (10) officials from senior management and twenty eight (28) from the MMS strata. The total sampling size of the study was therefore thirty eight (38). The number of those sampled was drawn from the first officials listed from their respective email distribution list. This way all subgroups had proportional representation. This sampling method was chosen because of its ability to ensure that data is obtained from officials in different level of organization and it reduces biasedness towards a specific stratum.

The response rate was satisfactory. The total response rate was 26, which constitutes 68% of the sampling size. There was a 100% response rate from sampled senior managers and 57% from the middle managers strata. The attention of the readers of this research is drawn to the fact that this is a qualitative study that did not necessarily focus on the number but on the content and quality of responses received. Hence, the need to have discussions with knowledge management steering committee members to further obtain clarity on some critical information gathered.

DATA

The quality of research mainly depends on the quality of data used. The analysis will be conducted using primary data collected from respondents (Nkatini, 2005). This research used primary data collected from respondents using the structured self-administered questionnaire together with secondary data gathered during the unstructured interviews with knowledge management steering committee members. The two sets of data collected complemented each other very well. In addition, the researcher read several resources available in the department and province to understand the state of knowledge management. The researcher also contacted the department of public service and administration to find out the progress made concerning knowledge management in government. The Limpopo Provincial Knowledge Management strategy document was also useful in terms of collecting data and information.

3.5.3 PRIMARY DATA: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT.

The primary data research instrument of this research was structured questionnaire. The unstructured questionnaire was used during discussions with knowledge management steering committees. The primary questionnaire had closed questions aimed at measuring the employees' perception towards knowledge management, firstly employees' perception of KM and secondly their readiness to support new knowledge sharing initiatives. The questionnaire had short and simple questions or statements to make it easier and time efficient for

respondents to complete it. The responses were based on a 5 point Likert-type scale, i.e. strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.

In line with Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi and Mohammed (2007), the questionnaire were designed “to asses knowledge sharing according to respondents opinions and perceptions” regarding various several factors such as their organisational culture, readiness and capacity to manage knowledge sharing. The Likert scale was used to determine the extent of agreement or disagreement to the question or statement. Finally, respondents were encouraged and provided with enough space to express their general opinion about knowledge sharing in LPT after each question and at the end of the questionnaire.

3.6 CONCLUSION

Qualitative research methodology was relevant to this study because the researcher was able to critically seek and analyse respondents’ inputs and perspectives concerning knowledge sharing in Limpopo Provincial Treasury. The qualitative study was perfect for this study, as it requires fewer resources.

The nature of questionnaire used provided respondents with opportunity to provide their general opinions without restricting themselves to questions that increase the depth of the information and data received.

CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS, DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter captures the findings and outcome of the questionnaire and discussions held with research respondents. It further documents the researcher's argument and opinion based on the analysis and interpretation of the data and information obtained during the study.

4.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section records and communicates the research findings as they are from the questionnaire or interview discussions.

The current state of KM in South African government

During the study it was found the restructuring process at DPSA led to the removal knowledge management directorate from the structure. The Knowledge Management framework quoted in various literatures was not available on the DPSA website. The researcher could not get a signed copy of the framework from the internet. After several telephone calls to the DPSA, the researcher was informed that the framework is under review.

The state of KM in LPT

During the study the researcher found that the approved LPT organisational structure does not have provision for the knowledge management unit. The knowledge sharing and management activities are done on a volunteering basis by a resource from Human Resource Development directorate. The department has a dysfunctional knowledge management steering committee. The researcher

could not obtain any evidence of what the committee has achieved since its inception. There is however a proposal to submitted to the departmental structure review committee to introduce KM as a sub-directorate under Human Resource Directorate. According to the KM coordinator, KM steering committee meetings were scheduled but members did not show commitment. Members of the committee contested this view during the discussions.

The results of the questionnaire

A total of twenty six (26) employees responded to the questionnaire with the requested time frame. In particular, ten (10) employees from SMS level and sixteen (16) from MMS category responded.

SMS	10
MMS	16

Table 2: Summary of respondents

Below is the detailed account of all responses received from the respondents listed per question or statement and employee categories. It further captures the verbatim comments made by respondents after each question and at the end of the questionnaire.

Question 1: Implementation of Knowledge sharing techniques would enhance organizational efficiency in LPT.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS		x		xx	xxxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					

This is critical since it will assist in building the memory of the institution and to improve a creating baseline of what the department is all about. Organizations that are always ahead of others are those that get their workforce to share knowledge and experiences. The Japanese have a “rendezvous” for their early gathering to share their experiences and knowledge every morning before they start their daily work. Knowledge sharing has three faces: creation, distribution and application

Though knowledge sharing is not the only ingredient for organizational efficiency, I **agree** that it will contribute positively. There is knowledge that cannot be found from the pages of a book but can only be found from other people’s experiences. On the other hand the organization is receiving more and more of young and fresh from school (Generation Z) who has knowledge which the older generation does not have. The merging of the two will contribute to the organizational efficiency

Any organization becomes effective due to the richness of the knowledge that its most important resources (human) posses.

MMS				x	xxxxxxxxxxxxx

Create work manuals, use job card system, list mistakes and how to fix them, finally, create a manual, and Q&A per job.

It can indeed add value and enhance organizational efficiency if it is to be taken very seriously by both the employer and the employees. However, employees should first conduct workshops on the importance of the sharing techniques for better understanding and ownership.

I strongly agree because lack of information or knowledge impacts on the productivity and efficiency of most if not all activities undertaken by employees.

Knowledge sharing is important for creating a new knowledge in order to achieve competitive advantage and of the increasing turnover of staff. People do not keep the same job for life any more. When someone leaves an organization their knowledge walks out of the door with them. Some people object to sharing as they feel that others will steal their ideas and reap the rewards rightly theirs and also feel that their jobs might be threatened if they then share all that they know with a colleague, no longer making them the ones with all the knowledge and understanding.

Only when the knowledge is shared with everyone, not the selected few.

It will enable employees to share information, knowledge, skills/expertise and experience in the department. I strongly agree because lack of information or knowledge affects the productivity and efficiency of most if not all activities undertaken by employees.

Knowledge sharing techniques will help the organization for quick and easy communication between colleagues about work related issues.

It will assist in knowing what other directorate are up to and to improve networking between LPT employees.

Question 2: Institutionalisation of Knowledge sharing in LPT will be a waste of resources.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS	xxxxxxxxx		x		
Comments by Respondents					
I totally disagree since the department is losing information due to lack of instutitionalisation of information. Instituionalisation will enable the people to share their knowledge and debunk selfishness to selflessness. Cost benefit analysis should be conducted. On face value, one is led to believe that the organisation is wasting a lot of resources re-inventing the wheel because there is no platform to share knowledge.					
MMS	xxxxxx	xxxxxxxx			xx
Comments by Respondents					
A learning organization is not something that comes in its own, that needs to be instilled into the people. We need to mentor and be mentored. Appoint a mentor per group of employees in areas concerned. It will not be a waste of resources though LPT is a finance driven institutions where skill and knowledge is abundantly available on the market for continuity purpose. The know how technique is very important and institutionalizing knowledge could be the main process to facilitate knowledge sharing. Everybody in the organisation should not at least the basics of what others are doing in the organisation. I strongly disagree, knowledge sharing will help the department to be more productive and produce better services to their customers. Disagree, as knowledge sharing can be done without use of resources e.g. Mouth to mouth. It is not a waste because there will be a software that will be designed for sharing knowledge, therefore more paper work will be reduced. Innovation is needed. It can lead to a better solution on some LPT weaknesses.					

Question 3: There is a need to formalise Knowledge sharing in LPT.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS		x		x	xxxxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
Formalizing knowledge sharing will assist employees in realizing the process to follow when contributing in knowledge sharing. It is the opposite of the question above. If knowledge sharing has to have an impact in the organization, it must be formalized. It must be embedded in our daily activities otherwise, it will not happen.					
MMS		x	x	xxxx	xxxxxxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
There has to be some sense of having fun, I believe that if the whole process is formalized all the way, people may start to view it as boring. There is a need to formalize it – so that every employee can be aware of it and the importance of it in any organization. It is formalized, but not as I expected. I do agree that there is indeed a need to formalize knowledge sharing in LPT perhaps the first major step could be to establish a stand-alone Directorate responsible for Knowledge Management. I agree for employees to be aware of knowledge sharing in their department. I strongly agree because knowledge is essential to the department and there should be a way in which knowledge can be circulated and on a regular basis. It is crucial to formalize knowledge sharing so that all staff member in the department can have knowledge or more information about it. As times changes, things get to change. It must be formalized.					

Question 4: Knowledge management must be part of all departmental Executive Committee meeting agenda.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS			xx	xx	xxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
This will assist in capturing administrative decision that are being taken by the department. Not all. It should be on the agenda where organizational performance is reviewed either at directorate, chief directorate, branch or departmental level.					
MMS	x		xx	xxxxxx	xxxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
It should start with them and be cascaded down to lower levels. Executives should also understand the meaning of it and what value will it add to the organization. Quarterly, as a report, not really taking up time. Just to report that mentors are mentoring. It could work but the determining factor on whether knowledge would be shared or not could revolve around its official formalization supplemented by establishing a Directorate to support and ensure knowledge sharing. I agree even though some employees tend to resist sharing knowledge with the rest of the organisation. Not sure if it should be a strategic objective of the organization but rather it can be an operational objective. Yes, so that there can be a proper management of knowledge shared. That is where employee will be familiarized and gets deeply to understand the need for knowledge sharing.					

Question 5: There is a need to have a knowledge management directorate in LPT.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS		xx	xxxx	x	xxx
Comments by Respondents					
The level of the unit will be determined by the strategic focus the organization places on knowledge management. It could form part of information management unit; the custodian of electronic and paper information. We already have 3 relevant directorates falling under 1 branch within LPT which I believe are being under-utilized where we can choose one as the main driver and incorporate Knowledge Sharing as 1 of its key functions or sub-directorate. We have Transformation Services, Human Resource Development and Communication Services. Knowledge is power and its management is key in change management (can be transitional, succession, growth and diversity, etc.) as well as human capital development to enhance productivity and continuity. Communication (which under normal circumstances include IT and systems) is there as a vehicle and achieving of information. DPSA has already given a directive for the establishment of such a Unit. Either a directorate or sub-directorate, but it is important for the department to have a dedicated unit for knowledge management.					
MMS		xxxx	xx	x	xxx	xxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
We really need focused people and specialist on this area. A co-coordinator to run with it will be fine. Nope! We can do it in our areas of interest, as appointed mentor per group. Yes, I believe that until this function is official formalized by establishing a Directorate, knowledge sharing will only be done and coordinated in piece meal. A Directorate could ensure that there is dedicated staff to coordinate the process and all LPT Staff members will understand the process much better and comply as such. Not really, as knowledge sharing happens within a particular directorate meaning HR and SCM for instance might not share knowledge between the directorates but employees within a certain directorate can/must share knowledge amongst each other. I agree, the directorate will be able to manage and ensure that sharing knowledge is performed. Yes so that all information in the department can be managed well.					

Question 6: Knowledge sharing must be part of individual performance assessment.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS			xxxx	xx	xxxx
Comments by Respondents					
No comment. In the best Institutions bonuses are granted based on what you have shared with you colleagues in relation to organizational performance and development. I think it was covered in the previous performance agreements (Balanced Score Card) for SMS under Learning and Innovation because we were able to report on how we shared knowledge in different platforms, staff meetings, presentations, forums and management meetings. I agree. However, the emphasis/weighting should differ according to the level of expertise is expected from the individual. Measurable targets should be in place and each person should have a clear understanding on what is expected from her/him.					
MMS	xx	xx	xxxxxxx	xxx	xx
Comments by Respondents					
We rather treat it as additional; the directorate is the one that should have this as their KRA. Some individuals may not be open to share their knowledge so it would not be good to force them to put it on their performance – I personally believe it's a matter of choice. Yes, if appointed as mentor. I am neutral in this matter because knowledge sharing is further encouraged by the receiver and what the receiver do with the knowledge accumulated. For example, I cannot always impart knowledge that is not being used most efficiently thus, I will give-up. Some other people are just not ready to accumulate knowledge and making this as part of the PMS will discourage many people. If the Directorate is to be established, then it must establish processes for systematic knowledge sharing by LPT staff not to be subjected to the PMS. I agree. Individuals must ensure that knowledge sharing in the organisation becomes a success. I strong agree because it will force employees to share knowledge amongst each other. It will help in order for each staff member to can take part in the growth of the department and bring different suggestion to help innovation in the department. Directorates have more than one individuals working on same duty, it must be not be part of individual performance assessment.					

Question 7: Sharing of information and knowledge will increase the productivity of LPT employees.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS			xx	xx	xxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
It is true since transfer of tacit knowledge can benefit other employees which will lead in department to improve its productivity. When knowledgeable people connect with other knowledge connect, new ideas emerge. Use of information shared may increase productivity.					
MMS			xxx	xxx	xxxxxxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
It will strongly depend on the attitude of people towards the information they receive, but on the other hand if you get a positive response productivity will definitely heighten. (Neutral) As employees will know and understand the importance of information sharing. Not really that much. We do mentor, it is what the mentored person do with the information that is the problem. The mentored person most of the time believes that there should also be another way. That's reality. You go there, and the mentored person. Indeed did it her/his way. Sharing is very good but how about the receiver, is he/she receiving the knowledge and using it most efficiently? I think there is variety of factors in LPT including the fact that some employees are not skilled enough to accumulate and use shared knowledge to the best of their abilities. If basic matters can be addressed first such as establishing Knowledge Management Directorate and improve skills of LPT staff, then knowledge sharing can improve productivity of LPT staff. Employees will share their insights and experience which will allow faster and effective work environment. I strongly agree as most work activities require certain knowledge and information in order for those activities to be done and in a correct manner. Yes, because different ideas can help to bring innovation in the department.					

Question 8: LPT organizational culture is conducive to knowledge sharing.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS	xx	xx	xx	xx	xx
Comments by Respondents					
Yes, the reason being that whether the culture is good or bad, this will assist employees to introspect themselves, know their behavior and improve bad practices. When one writes a comment on any matter colleagues delete without reading or simply give a bad comment or ridicule the author. We are still working in silos, performance management encourages individualisim and competitive behavior instead of team work, etc.					
MMS	xxx	xxxx	xxxxxx	xx	x
Comments by Respondents					
The problem with Government institutions is that you still have a number of old people, who may no longer be interested to learn, for youngsters yes it does work. I'm not certain about that. No, No! Mostly specific individuals are asked to mentor someone, and trust remains an issue. Will turn to someone else again for an opinion. Also, the forum is not active. I don't think the culture is very conducive for knowledge sharing yet. There are many basic things that still need to be taken care of before we could get to this. I think LPT staff are still working in silos and do not believe in sharing knowledge due to variety of factors such as benefiting and giving an advantage to your opponent in case of contestation to a similar post amongst others. Knowledge sharing process still has a long way to go. I agree because culture is a term that encompasses value, attitude and behaviors of the organisation. Yes in some cases e.g. work posts are shared amongst employees but knowledge regarding day-to-day work activities are not shared and on a regular basis. No because there is no systems that are designed to share knowledge currently.					

Question 9: LPT have the capacity to manage knowledge sharing initiatives.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS	x	x	xxxx	xx	xx
Comments by Respondents					
I think the capacity is there but is not enough. The unit needs capacity in terms of human resource, budget and systems to manage information. The Treasury has the capable staff to handle this issue. What is lacking horribly is support. I have not seen Knowledge Management strategy in the department. The strategy will give the information we require to determine whether the organisation has the capacity to manage knowledge sharing. I do not know. From mere observation, we do not have capacity.					
MMS	xx	xxxxx	xxxx	xx	xx
Comments by Respondents					
One MMS did not respond. The fact that we don't even have this section on the structure, we cannot even be talking of capacity, it just does not exist. I think LPT doesn't have the capacity to manage knowledge sharing initiatives yet. Yes, HRD is still applicable, and has the capacity to perform on it quarterly, and report by running the forum. Right now I do not think LPT has capacity to manage knowledge sharing initiatives as I am employed by LPT but do not see significant knowledge sharing initiatives. Perhaps if the process can be centralized at a Directorate level for better coordination by establishing a dedicated unit to deal with this matter. However, I do see potential in managing the process should coordinated effort and measures be put in place to improve the current initiatives/processes. I agree because LPT employees are willing to learn and share knowledge. I strongly agree, as knowledge sharing can be done using the existing I.T infrastructure within the department.					

Question 10: LPT members are willing to share knowledge with their colleagues.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS	x	x	xxxxx	x	xx
Comments by Respondents					
Yes. (This comment is interestingly linked to a neutral selection) Officials do not respond to emails from colleagues. It is not easy to tell. There are pockets of willingness but it cannot be said that there is general willingness. A change management process will be able to give a conclusive answer to this question.					
MMS	x	xxxxx	xxxxxx	xx	xx
Comments by Respondents					
The fact that I'm not fully clued up on what other sections are doing it tells me that enough is not done to share critical information. Some of LPT staff does that but most of the staff doesn't – I think they still need to understand it's importance. Some. Others are secretive, only they know why! I do believe that with better understanding on what knowledge sharing is, LPT staff might be at a better position to share but right now I think LPT staff are reluctant to share knowledge mainly because they understand this process in their own way i.e. loss of ownership to your knowledge. Workshops, information sharing sessions and symposiums must be organized to educate and inform LPT staff about the importance of sharing knowledge. Yes, a selective few might be willing to share knowledge but not the department as a whole. Yes, because currently they are using email communication to share knowledge. No, It can be seen in meetings where reports are presented, individuals who works on the same duty disagrees which show no communication between individuals.					

Question 11: You are ready to share your know-how with your colleagues.

Respondent	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SMS				xxx	xxxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
Yes.					
MMS			x	xxx	xxxxxxxxxxx
Comments by Respondents					
I am more than ready to do that, I feel that people should not be making phone calls to ask how basic things should be done. I can share my knowledge with LPT staff anytime – I'm ready. Have been and always will be. Depends on what they do with the information, I might not be sharing next time since she/he wasted it the first time. I am 95% ready to share my know-how though what goes around must come around i.e. I must also benefit from what other people knows not imparting skills and knowledge to others while they cannot see the importance of sharing with me what they know. This is the reason I propose that this process should be formalized i.e. by establishing a Directorate/Unit to centrally deal with Knowledge Management in LPT. In this way, LPT staff will start realizing the importance of sharing and start engaging in knowledge sharing activities. I am ready because it will help other employees to use my experience and knowledge to solve departmental problems. Yes, I want to be part of this knowledge sharing initiative. Yes, because I want to see all staff to gaining knowledge that can help to make the department productive. Yes, more than ready.					

4.3 INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH RESULTS

Question 1: Implementation of knowledge sharing techniques would enhance organisational efficiency in LPT.

There is only one respondent who does not believe that implementing knowledge sharing techniques will improve organizational efficiency in LPT. The rest of the employees concurs with Cong & Pandya (2003) that knowledge sharing improves "organisational performance through increased efficiency, productivity, quality and innovation". This is evident by their elaborative comments used to substantiate their responses. Based on the comments made it is rational to conclude that respondents are aware of what knowledge management is all about contrary to LPA knowledge management strategy which notes that majority of public servants in Limpopo do not have adequate awareness of knowledge management.

Question 2: Institutionalisation of knowledge sharing in LPT will be a waste of resources.

Most of the respondents believe that institutionalization of knowledge sharing will not be a waste of resources, with the exception of the two MMS respondents who have a different view but they did not substantiate their choice. There is view that department is already wasting resources by not having knowledge sharing mechanisms which lead to re-inventing wheels and lack innovation.

Question 3: There is a need to formalise knowledge sharing in LPT.

All SMS except one believe strongly that there is a need to formalise knowledge sharing in the department and all but two MMS agrees with them. The inclusion of knowledge sharing as a standing item of the Executive Committee meeting can be attributed to this outcome. The SMS respondent, who disagreed with the

statement 3, did not make any comment, which makes it difficult for the researcher to confirm that he/she understood the question, or not. Since, this is a qualitative study, the researcher made use of comments to analyse and interpret the perception of employees rather than numbers. Generally, LPT employees believe it is necessary to formalise knowledge sharing in the department, although there is a respondent who believes that formalising knowledge sharing might make it a boring practice.

Question 4: Knowledge management must be part of all departmental executive committee agenda.

All SMS respondents believe that knowledge management must be part of the EXCOM meeting agenda except one who was not sure. There are few comments to justify respondents' selection, which is an indication of lack of knowledge and words to describe how this will affect organizational performance. The MMS agrees with their SMS counterparts but there seems to be a feeling that it is not necessary to have knowledge sharing as the agenda item in all meetings but in selected few for instance on quarterly basis. According to respondents, knowledge management agenda item during meetings will instill the culture and awareness of knowledge sharing amongst executives and that way it will cascade down.

Question 5: There is a need to have a knowledge management directorate in LPT.

In total 6 out 26 respondents do not think there is a need for a knowledge management directorate. Another 6 respondents are not sure if there is a need or not. This may be attributed to lack of awareness of the concept. It therefore means only 54% of the respondents believe there is a need for a knowledge management directorate. However, the level of the unit will be determined by the strategic focus placed on knowledge management by department.

Question 6: Knowledge sharing must be part of the individual performance management assessment.

Majority of respondents both SMS and MMS are not sure whether KM must be part of individual performance assessment. Those who agree with the statement perceive that the arrangement will force people to share. This is contrary to popular argument from the literature that states that knowledge sharing comes willingly, voluntarily and is influenced by environment. You cannot force someone to share, but create an environment that influences him or her to share.

Question 7: Sharing of information and knowledge will increase the productivity of LPT employees.

Only two SMS respondents were not sure whether knowledge sharing will increase productivity. The rest of SMS respondents agree that it will increase productivity. Of the two were not sure, one agrees with Cong & Pandya (2003) that individual productivity and motivation rate increases if the receiver utilizes the knowledge shared. This is evidence that SMS officials in LPT have a positive perception towards knowledge sharing. The MMS respondents concurs that sharing of information and knowledge increases productivity and capacity to innovate. No MMS disagree with the statement, which is a sign of a positive perception towards knowledge sharing.

Question 8: LPT organisational culture is conducive to knowledge sharing.

The SMS officials' view on whether the culture of LPT is conducive to knowledge sharing is distributed evenly across all the options. There are those who strongly agree, others who strongly disagree as well as those who are not sure. This could be an indication that there is a culture of individualism and silos as quoted in one of the comments that *"We still work in silos and performance management*

system encourages individualism….". There is a need to create conducive environment, which encourages people to work as a team. The introduction of a knowledge sharing based performance and reward system may work towards building a culture, which is conducive to knowledge sharing. Only three (3) respondents out of 16 agree that LPT culture is conducive to knowledge sharing. An overwhelming 81% of MMS respondents are either not sure or disagree with the statement.

Question 9: LPT have capacity to manage knowledge sharing initiatives.

More than half of the SMS respondents are not convinced that LPT have the capacity to manage knowledge sharing capacity. The few who believe there is capacity expressed that there is no support, meaning they agree that knowledge sharing is everyone's responsibility. The MMS responses support that of SMS group, in that 73% of MMS think that LPT does not have capacity to manage knowledge sharing initiatives. Those who agreed with the statement either did not give reasons or their comments did not convince the researcher that their choice is informed; with an exception of one respondent who think IT infrastructure wise the department has capacity.

Question 10: LPT staff members are willing to share knowledge with their colleagues.

Only 30% of SMS respondents believe that LPT staff members are willing to share their knowledge and 25% of MMS share the same sentiment. Most responses show that the unwillingness to share the knowledge is demonstrated in meetings where officials from the same directorate do not have the same understanding. The fact that officials are not aware of the individual and organizational benefits of knowledge sharing is also attributed to this unwillingness to share knowledge.

Question 11: You are ready to share your know-how with your colleagues.

SMS respondents were economical when it comes to expressing themselves to substantiate their responses. All SMS respondents indicated readiness to share their knowledge. All MMS respondents except one who is neutral are willing to share their knowledge with colleagues. In Summary, respondents in this study have shown an interest in sharing their know-how with colleagues. These same people do not believe that generally staff members are ready to share. Those who indicated that they are already sharing their knowledge argue that they are not convinced that their knowledge is utilised.

Question 12: General Comments

Below are some of the general comments made by respondents as the final remarks of the questionnaire.

"In order to build institutional memory, it is vital that knowledge sharing be improved in the department".

"The department has been put under administration because of its inability to use the knowledge of its human resource. Even now, the Treasury cannot with confidence locate its knowledge officers, which one could term knowledge incubators. It is important to know where one could tap to get important or crucial information that can enable to unlock the solutions to some of the serious delivery problems".

"Knowledge sharing will bring in diversity towards provision of support since officials will share their experience and knowledge according to different field of studies including research management".

“LPT has a serious need to share knowledge. I hope this study will trigger the need to put platforms in place for knowledge sharing including technology based”.

“It is critical to share knowledge since the real world is all about amassing knowledge to take our current level of understanding to the next level. This can be done through the creation of knowledge management systems and archives. However this depends on whether LPT employees are willing to share knowledge and the individual attitude plays a paramount role here”.

“Information sharing sessions both formal and informal should be initiated and implemented at intervals to harvest knowledge. There is a lot of knowledge in most of the employees that may be missed if not properly invited”.

“*In my own opinion there is nothing so far that one can learn the way LPT is so polluted. I might not be having the correct information, but where I stand I see a lot of cheating than having the correct direction”.*

“LPT like any other institution really need this, because when people are leaving the Department they leave with their knowledge and the only way to use their knowledge is through this type of service”.

“Let us encourage people to be qualified in what they are doing before they share knowledge. Knowledge is verifiable, justifiable and based on the state of affairs. You cannot claim it. It is different from money”.

“The process of Knowledge Management is something that needs to be handled well within the department as currently most of the staff are leaving the department with the knowledge that they have acquired over the years”.

“Knowledge is seen as a personal intellectual asset and so people do not want to give it away unless there are benefits in doing so. Don't expect people to share

their ideas and insights simply because it is the right thing to do. Appeal to something deeper. By linking with core values of the organization values, you make sharing knowledge consistent with peers' expectations and managers' considerations. Then, trust is another key element for knowledge sharing, as employees may not be willing to share their work-related knowledge if they believe that hoarding knowledge will assist in furthering their careers, or if they feel ill-treated at work."

". The best solution in my opinion, is that each job title should be having its own manual in each and every aspect of their work. There should be space for the incumbent to make notes into more detailed solutions to obstacles. Once in two years properly updated for the post, and is handed over from one incumbent to the next. This way, we will illuminate personality differences and scopes. The manual can always be adjusted, kept up to date, and be available 24/7. I grew up in government with such a manual. I could not get lost, and only requested for assistance when really, really needed".

"Knowledge sharing is not being taken seriously and as such is done on a piece meal, ad hoc or on an event basis which is not assisting the Department in imparting knowledge to those who don't know but need to know".

"Every year we need to have a session (3 days outing) where every directorates present the basics or summary of what they are responsible for. This should include new developments in those particular directorates".

"Knowledge sharing is an activity that will allow people, friends and organisations to share their experience, skills, knowledge and expertise. It will help LPT to improve and perform better. It will increase efficiency and promote innovation amongst employees. This is a good research; it must be implemented within the department".

“Knowledge sharing is not being taken seriously and as such is done on a piece meal, ad hoc or on an event basis which is not assisting the Department in imparting knowledge to those who don’t know but need to know”.

Since, this is a qualitative study, the researcher paid great focus on the above comments as a source of information and less on percentage responses, to analyse and interpret the perception of LPT employees towards knowledge sharing. The meeting held with the extended Knowledge Management Committee was also used to generate information that was used to interpret the perception of employees and to further obtain clarity and detail background on some of the comments made on the questionnaire.

There is positive perception amongst LPT employees towards knowledge sharing. Generally, LPT employees believe that knowledge sharing enhances productivity and organizational performance, and formalising knowledge sharing is necessary. However, the difference is in the implementation part of it.

4.4 RESEARCH ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis is concerned with breaking down complex pieces of data and information into presentable and understandable information. This information is simplified using data analysis techniques. Data collected was analysed to answer the research questions. The researcher makes a detailed analysis of responses comparing it with existing literatures. This chapter addresses in part the research problem and questions.

The data collected from questionnaire and interview discussion was analsyed and interpreted to produce the researcher’s view of the perception of employees; this was done qualitatively. Departmental documents were also read to understand the state of knowledge sharing and management in the department.

The first six questions in the questionnaire were developed to understand the employees' perception of KM as the necessary condition for service delivery. The overall perception of LPT employees is best summarised by Potgieter, Dube & Rensleigh (2013) that knowledge sharing and management is important to have in Limpopo Provincial Treasury in order improve the productivity of employees and the organisation's ability to innovate and improve service delivery. The commitment and positive perception of senior managers was demonstrated through a hundred percent response rate during the study. However, only 57% of MMS responded to the questionnaire. This could possible describe the perception of MMS towards knowledge sharing and management in general.

The second sets of questions were aimed at checking the extent of employees' readiness to support knowledge sharing activities in the department. According to the responses received, respondents in general are ready to participate in knowledge sharing initiatives. However, respondents are not convinced that LPT as a department is ready for knowledge sharing. This view is supported by the various negative comments submitted and their opinions of others. Interestingly, whilst respondents are ready to share, they do not believe the rest of the employees are also keen to share. It is an indication that the environment or organisational culture in LPT is not conducive to knowledge sharing.

LPT ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE IS CONDUCIVE TO KNOWLEDGE SHARING: This statement from the questionnaire was meant to check how employees perceive the environment around them as it relates to the culture of the organisation. The statement was made to be broad to allow respondents to comment on anything that contributes towards shaping the culture of LPT. Respondents made comments around a number of things such as silo mentality, team work, learning and reading, trust, communication etc. According to the research results, 81% of respondents are either not sure or disagree that the culture is conducive to knowledge sharing due to various reasons which are not necessarily related.

Organisational Culture: Trust

Literature has identified a number of organisational culture related factors which have an influence on knowledge sharing. The most dominant is trust between employees. According to Wang & Noe (2010), trust removes the negative effect of perceived loss of power. Teamwork based work help creates trust between employees and subsequently create a better condition for knowledge sharing. The current organisational structure and wok practice of LPT is not team-based. A respondent opined: *"We are still working in silos, performance management encourages individualisim and competitive behavior instead of team work."* As a result, it may work against knowledge sharing as it follows traditional method of hierarchy based on responsibilities. For knowledge sharing to take place, trust is an important prerequisite (Amaya, 2010), it must start from management (Davenpoort & Prusak, 198) and motivation to share knowledge increase when employees trust and identify with each other (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2007). Understanding between the knowledge holder and receiver is also vital (Amaya, 2010). Cong and Pandya (20013) agreed that the essence of sharing knowledge is centred on who is sharing knowledge in what format and whether the receiver will utilise it correctly or not. Sharing of knowledge derives value to organisation when knowledge is ultimately used. They further argued that knowledge sharing occurs effectively in an environment of trust. According to the responses received during the research, there is no trust culture in Provincial Treasury. One responded captured it short and simple: *"Trust remains an in issue in LPT".* Naturally, people associate, communicate and share personal views with those that they trust (Al-Alawi, Al-Marzzuoqi and Mohammed, 2007). Whilst majority respondents have shown interest in sharing their knowledge with their colleagues, they don't believe that their colleagues will do the same. Only 30% of respondents believe that LPT employees are willing to share their knowledge. This is an indication of mistrust between employees. What is however unclear from the responses and comments made is what informs the culture of mistrust in LPT. However, the (Al-Alawi, Al-Marzzuoqi and Mohammed, 2007) concluded that in most cases the

root cause of lack of trust is usually the weak social relationship between employees. It is difficult to trust the next person if you do not have a good relationship. One respondent opined that: *"This (mistrust) is caused by employees who are not honest to others.* Further details and elaboration of this statement would have assisted the researcher to understand the root cause of mistrust.

Organisational Culture: Communication, learning and reading

Literature confirms that there is a positive co-relation between communication and knowledge sharing. Communication improves knowledge sharing and knowledge sharing improves communication. Communication is boosted by the existence of social interaction amongst employees. It means social interaction is good for knowledge sharing (Al-Alawi, Al-Marzzuoqi and Mohammed, 2007). This is a reason for organisations to improve and make social interaction part of their organisational culture. However, this social interaction must take place within defines parameters as it may affect professionalism in the work environment especially when it comes to taking decisions that may harm the next person. In LPT, there is no indication of the existence of social interaction amongst employees. It would therefore be logical to conclude that communication will not be effective without social interactions.

Open communication promotes a culture conducive to knowledge sharing. As a result of culture of mistrust in LPT, there is no open communication which will stimulates new ideas and innovation and subsequently knowledge sharing may not effectively take place (Lin & Lee, 2005). Similar to most government departments, LPT has not adopted any corporate attire, except the nametags that are only worn by a selected few. Karl, Hall & Peluchetter (2013) argues that corporate attire influences open communication by removing position barriers and making everyone look simple and approachable.

Mphahlele (2008) concluded that the lack of learning, reading and exchanging of ideas is one amongst other factors that make the culture in most government

departments not conducive to knowledge sharing. An environment that supports learning is defined by (Garvin, Edmondson & Gino, 2008) as one which encourages people to speak up their mind and where everyone is comfortable about discussing problems and disagreements. Wherein, education and training is prioritised. During the discussions, it was found that at LPT training of employees is highly regarded and that there are more and more employees who have registered for academic education.

However, it seems the culture of reading and sharing ideas is not always encouraged as one respondent opined that: *"When one writes a comment on any matter colleagues delete without reading or simply give a bad comment or ridicule the author".* As part of the questionnaire, a concerned employee commented: *"Officials do not respond to emails from colleagues".* This is a sign of intolerance for other people's views and that they do not read; a barrier for knowledge sharing.

THERE IS A NEED TO HAVE A KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT DIRECTORATE IN LPT:

This questionnaire statement was meant to evaluate how LPT employees perceive the need to have a knowledge management unit in the department. The discussion around the unit was indirectly taken further during the discussions by asking participants this direct question: Is knowledge management a strategic focus of the LPT? The results of the questionnaire suggests that majority (54%) of respondents believe there is a need for a knowledge management directorate. The support for the creation of the KM unit mainly comes from the MMS category; only 40% of SMS agree that there is a need for a KM unit. However, according one respondent, the level of the unit can be determined by the strategic focus placed on knowledge management by department. This view became the basis for the follow-up question during the discussion. During the discussion, participants confirmed the need to have directorate or unit. Surprisingly, no one said knowledge management is a strategic focus in the department. It should be noted that literature suggests that knowledge sharing

should be informed by the strategic direction of the organisation; this way it would be easy for the organisation to identify knowledge focus areas that directly influence their business strategy.

LPT HAVE THE CAPACITY TO MANAGE KNOWLEDGE SHARING INITIATIVES

According to the results of the questionnaire, LPT does not have the capacity to manage the knowledge sharing and management. However, this perception from respondents seems to have considered capacity in terms of those who are currently spearheading the knowledge management initiatives in department, which is a one-person driven project without any endorsement from the organisational and institutional arrangement. The department has a knowledge management steering committee that was established two years ago; this committee has not been functional since then. It emerged during discussion that only one meeting was held since its formation.

According to participants during the discussions, this is an indication that the department does not have the capacity to manage knowledge sharing. Generally, there is a perception that the department does not have capacity to manage knowledge sharing initiatives. What could not be tested is whether there is untapped capacity somewhere in the department that can be used in managing departmental knowledge.

THE PERCEPTION ON THE CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN LPT

This statement sums up this research study. Whilst several other questions were asked, their intention indirectly was to determine the perception of employees towards knowledge sharing. According to both the questionnaire and the discussions, there is consensus between respondents and participants that generally, LPT employees are not willing to share their know-how but interestingly all except one respondent have indicated that they are more than

willing to share. These results could be an indication that those who responded are the only ones who have positive attitude towards knowledge sharing. Assuming it is the case, it is therefore rational to conclude that LPT SMS members have a positive perception towards knowledge sharing because of their overwhelming questionnaire response rate. The response rate of the MMS was a little over fifty percent (50%) which might be an indication that most of officials at supervisory and middle management level are not positive about knowledge sharing.

According to the desktop analysis done, majority of employees at MMS level are people who have been in government for a long time, old and experienced. According to some respondents knowledge sharing could be negatively affected in LPT because of old people who are no longer interested in learning and skeptical of sharing their knowledge due to the fear of losing their job to the younger generation. These are the same people who grew up in a pre-ICT era, however they remain critical to the success of knowledge sharing in LPT as they poses the repository, historic knowledge and experience about the department. So, there would not be any successful knowledge sharing without them.

In summary, considering the comments made on the questionnaire and during discussions, this study has revealed that there is an attitude related challenge. The author would argue that there is indeed an attitude by employees against others and this is across all levels. This relates to the element of trust discussed in the previous sections.

CURRENT STATE OF KNOWLEDGE SHARING

During the study, the researcher went through some the minutes of the executive committee meeting which held during the 2014/5 financial year. The minutes confirmed what was said during discussions that knowledge sharing is a standing agenda item of the meeting. This meeting is attended by the Head of the Department (HoD) together with his top senior management officials including

head of directorates such as GITO, Communications, Risk Management and Strategic Operations. According to the minutes, it is evident that this meeting does not use this item to share the know-how instead members share schedule of events and highlights of the meetings they have attended. This situation could be attributed to the fact that the executive committee is not an operational meeting where the discussion is about the nitty-gritties of the processes. The inclusion of knowledge sharing indicates a positive perception but there is a need to clearly conceptualise what this item should involve to ensure that the opportunity is used to share the know-how not data and information.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING BETWEEN ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF MEMBERS

During the discussion, a question was asked: Are there processes in place for LPT employees to learn from Section 100 Administrators? There was consensus amongst participants that there are no processes and interest to learn from each other. In the main, there is a denial from staff members to learn, as they believe that they already know what Administrators are doing. This denial manifests through no-attendance of trainings organised by Administrators to empower staff members.

DEPARTMENTAL KNOWLEDGE LEADERSHIP AND VISION

There is no formal indication that LPT recognises knowledge sharing and management as a strategic focus of the department. The current strategic plan of the department does not refer to knowledge sharing or management. As a result, the department does not have a clear knowledge vision or target to achieve. This explains why the current organisational structure is not having a provision for a knowledge management unit. The implementation of the provincial knowledge management could also be affected by the absence of knowledge sharing and management vision.

4.5 CONCLUSION

According to the analysis of above responses received, in general, LPT employees are ready to participate in knowledge sharing initiatives. However, respondents are not convinced that LPT as a department is ready for knowledge sharing. Whilst respondents are ready to share, they do not believe the rest of the employees are also keen to share. This means that employees do not trust each other, which is an indication that the organisational culture in LPT is not conducive to knowledge sharing.

Amongst others, the study reveals that senior management service officials do not believe it is necessary to have knowledge management at a directorate level. What the study could not test was whether the department has untapped capacity somewhere in the department to manage knowledge as a strategic resource. There is lack of trust-based relationship amongst LPT employees; and this is across all levels.

Lastly, an inclusion of knowledge sharing in EXCO agenda is indication of a positive perception but there is a need to clearly conceptualise what this item should put in practice to ensure that the opportunity is used to share the know-how not events or information.

CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the study of the perception of LPT employees on knowledge sharing and management in the department. It is the summary of the study. It will also outline recommendations in terms of what could be done to build a positive knowledge-sharing environment in LPT. The researcher uses this chapter to propose further research that may assist other researchers to understand the dynamics of knowledge sharing in LPT and knowledge management in public sector.

All care was taken to ensure that the accepted research methodology is followed during the study. There was no compromise made on the methodology.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The study reveals that there is generally a positive perception towards knowledge sharing amongst the employees of Limpopo Provincial Treasury. Taking into cognisance the responses from the questionnaire and discussions held, LPT employees believe that implementing knowledge sharing will increase departmental organisational efficiency and service delivery. Employees of LPT are positive about the institutionalization and formalization of knowledge sharing and management function in the department in order to give it a boost and direction.

While LPT employees are positive towards knowledge sharing, they do not think that making knowledge sharing compulsory to everyone through the PMDS would have a positive impact.

Generally, the results of this study show that the organisational culture of LPT as a department is not conducive to knowledge sharing. This means that knowledge sharing cannot be effectively implemented until the right culture is cultivated in the department. The challenges related to culture include trust amongst employees in the main, lack of communication and information sharing, knowledge leadership and organisational structure and processes.

Organisational Structure and processes

There is nothing in LPT that motivates experienced employees to share their know-how with new recruits and other employees who can benefit from it. To some extent, the PMDS encourages officials not to share because of its emphasis on individual performance bonus.

The knowledge management committee has been dysfunctional since its inception, and this can only be attributed to two things. First, the committee is dysfunctional because it is not part of the formal institutional arrangements; as a result, members do not prioritise it. Secondly, there is no formally appointed person or unit to drive knowledge sharing in the department. The LPT orgonanisational structure is hierarchical and bureaucratic in nature just like other government departments that make it difficult for knowledge sharing to take place effectively.

Knowledge sharing between LPT staff members and Section 100 (1) (b) Administrators

Davenpoort & Prusak (1998) observed that personal interaction and trust are related. Trust influences personal interaction; converse is also the case. Contrary to the above, during the study it was found that there is limited interaction between Section 100 (1) (b) Administrators and LPT staff members. This is

attributed to lack of trust between the two groups, who for the sake of LPT business are expected to work together. The collaboration and interaction is necessary because at the end of the intervention, it is expected of LPT staff members to continue where the Administrators have left and for this to take place knowledge sharing plays a critical role. The absence of knowledge sharing between Administrators and LPT staff members poses a risk to the business continuity post-intervention process.

In summary, the state of employees' perception towards knowledge sharing is generally positive but in practice, there is very little or no knowledge-sharing taking place as a result of unconducive organisational culture and lack of leadership to position knowledge management as a strategic focus of the department.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made to LPT for the department to improve and build a positive perception of employees towards knowledge sharing. These recommendations are not made in isolation but to strengthen the positive and address negative research findings identified in the previous chapter.

5.3.1 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AS A STRATEGIC FOCUS OF THE DEPARTMENT

The business of LPT demands the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge but Cong (2003) argued that it is not easy to implement knowledge sharing initiatives. During the study, it was found that LPT has not adopted knowledge management as a strategic focus area of business. As a result, there are no compelling reasons for knowledge sharing amongst employees.

To address this finding, LPT must develop KM strategies and plans aligned to the Provincial KM strategy. This would require the leadership and management to first adopt knowledge management as a strategic focus of the department. Thereafter, it would be compelling for management to ensure that resources are focused towards the knowledge sharing and everyone would see the impact of it

towards achievement of departmental objectives. This should include raising awareness on the importance of knowledge sharing and making officials aware that sharing knowledge is more powerful than hoarding it. As part of the awareness campaign, trainings and workshops are recommended. The target audience of these workshops must be staff members who are experienced and about to retire, in order to encourage them to share their know-how and experience before they leave. These workshops would assist in creating a positive perception of this group towards knowledge sharing.

5.3.2 KNOWLEDGE SHARING AS STANDING AGENDA ITEM IN ALL DIRECTORATES MEETINGS

The study found that knowledge sharing is a standing agenda item of the Executive Committee meeting. However, reviewed minutes revealed that information about events is shared instead of the know-how. To improve the knowledge sharing discussion a different approach is recommended where Knowledge sharing will be put in practice at all levels of the organisation, more especially at operational level. This will increase innovation and improve productivity. This report recommends that knowledge sharing agenda item be made compulsory from directorate level up to executive committee level. This could go a long way towards building awareness and creating conducive culture of knowledge sharing in the department. At all meetings, including EXCOM, specific areas must be identified where members will have to share with colleagues how to solve specific problems or be given an opportunity to present lessons learnt from various project and this be used as basis to implement the similar projects in future.

5.3.3 OFFLINE AND INFORMAL MEETINGS AS CATALYSTS FOR KNOWLEDGE SHARING

In line with Connelly & Kelloway (2001) who argued that an organisation with a culture characterised by social interaction of employees regardless of the position and status, knowledge sharing is more likely to take place without any enforcement, LPT must create an environment where employees are able to

have off-line discussions and informal meetings where participants are not appointed or nominated but volunteer to participate based on their interest of the subject of discussion. This could be in a form of community of practice, informal meetings, offline discussions where participants of those meetings identify a topic and invites people to deliberate on it without any formal mandate. These meetings can be held during office hours, lunch breaks or after hours depending on how the department has embraced their importance. In an endeavor to create conducive environment for knowledge sharing, other organisations are starting to freely provide resources (space, food etc.) for employees to utilise for social gatherings. According to Davenpoort and Prusak (1998), offline discussions encourage knowledge sharing. They further recommend that organisations must create locations and occasions for employees to interact informally. Informal conversation creates a platform for people from different units who rarely meet to have time for a meaningful and constructive conversation.

5.3.4 CAPTURING AND SHARING OF LESSONS LEARNT FOR EACH PROJECT

During the study, LPT was under administration in terms of Section 100 (1) (b). This situation presents an opportunity for LPT to put knowledge sharing into practice. To increase the use of past experiences, success and failures to solve the current challenges of LPT and avoid the re-invention of the wheel, employees must be encouraged to formally capture, share and communicate the lessons learned from each project. Before any project starts, a history of similar projects embarked on previously must be identified and lessons learned be studied as part of the planning stage. The Section 100 (1) (b) intervention must be taken as a project where all activities and decisions taken by Administrators are captured for future references. At the end of the intervention, an exit report must be developed, shared and communicated to all staff members. A continuous relationship between Section 100 (1) (b) Administrators and the department post the intervention is important, wherein the latter can be used as reference group in future in order to tap into their experience and knowledge.

5.4 FURTHER RESEARCH STUDIES

The following future research studies are recommended:

- Firstly, a study focusing on middle managers with over seven years' experience in LPT with the aim of investigating what will motivate them to share their experience and know-how with their subordinates or superiors who are less experienced. This recommendation is influenced by the fact that majority of LPT middle managers are about to exit the employment through retirement with potential of leaving with their wealth of knowledge.

- Secondly, it is recommended that by around 2018, a study be conducted to investigate the progress made by LPT in implementing the Limpopo Provincial Knowledge management strategy (2015-2018).

- Lastly, the researcher is of the opinion that a follow-up research to investigate the perception of employees towards knowledge sharing is imperative to validate the outcome of the current research. However, the future research must use different research methodology for triangulation purpose.

5.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Whilst the response rate of this research was good, the sample size was not big enough for the results to be taken with full confidence as a true picture of the whole department. Given time, a similar research in future with a bigger sample size could be necessary to validate the results of this study.

The researcher is a novice, but every care was taken to ensure that the correct methodology is used in this study.

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APPENDIX 1 (STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE)

Demographics information

Choose the branch where you are located?

Corporate	SRM	Financial Go	SCM, Assets	Internal Aud	MEC & HoD

Choose the level of your position

SMS	MMS

Please answer the questions below by ticking the box that best suits your opinion. Use the blank spaces to write your comments in relation to the question or to substantiate your chosen box

No	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1.	Implementation of Knowledge sharing techniques would enhance organizational efficiency in LPT.					
2.	Institutionalisation of Knowledge sharing in LPT will be a waste of resources.					
3.	There is a need to formalise Knowledge sharing in LPT.					
4.	Knowledge management must be part of all departmental Executive Committee meeting's agenda.					

5.	There is a need to have a knowledge management directorate in LPT					
6.	Knowledge sharing must be part of individual performance assessment.					
7.	Sharing of information and knowledge will increase the productivity of LPT employees.					
8.	LPT organizational culture is conducive to knowledge sharing.					
9.	LPT have the capacity to manage knowledge sharing initiatives.					
10.	LPT staff members are willing to share knowledge with their colleagues.					
11.	You are ready to share your know-how with your colleagues.					