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"THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE ON PERFORMANCE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE"

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management.

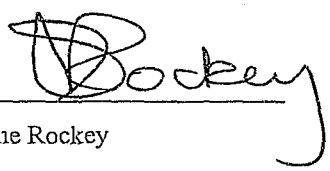
26 February 1999

Abstract

"The pressure on the public service to perform effectively and efficiently is becoming more important, both in terms of increased fiscal constraints and policy requirements. The purpose of this exploratory study was to show that the organisational culture that exists in the public service, operates as significant barrier to optimum performance

One of the main findings of the research indicates that a 'non-culture' of performance exists in the public service, namely a culture that neither actively encourages nor discourages performance. It was also established that the sub-cultures that exist in the public service may hinder performance as a result of a 'cycle of blame' and conflict that may exist between the subcultures."

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.



Samantha Jane Rockey

23 February, 1999

Acknowledgements

Thank you to:

My supervisor, Dr. Adele Thomas, for her direction and assistance throughout the research process;

The Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs for allowing me to use them as the research department;

Kirsten Harrison for her assistance in editing and proofreading this research report.

Without their assistance, this research would not have been possible.

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"THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE ON PERFORMANCE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE."

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Historically, the public administration in South Africa has been characterised by all the problems of a bureaucracy[1] and many of the features of an ineffective and inefficient organisation (Swilling & Woolridge, 1996). This is hardly surprising given the unique context in which government operated pre-1994. The apartheid government had, at its core, the intent to meet the objectives of apartheid as well as to operate as the largest employer of the "Afrikaners". In so doing the construct of the government followed both of these intentions. This led to the creation of an establishment, that supported these ideals to the detriment of the organisation itself and to the detriment of the public to which it purported to serve. By focusing on one specific client group and directing the bulk of resources to this one client group, the constructs of government ensured an ineffective and inefficient public service when the demands of government changed – the client base increased and diversified.

1 Weber's model of bureaucracy comprised of six major principle or components, each of which was designed to provide certain advantages. This bureaucratic model comprises a formal hierarchical structure; management by rules; organisation by functional specialty; an "up focused" or "in focused" mission; purposely impersonal; and employment based on technical qualifications. (Johnston, 1993).

In addition, the tenets of apartheid (namely separate development) ensured that services overlapped, administrations functioned as silos and the effective flow of information and communication was hindered. This is particularly apparent in the instances where a number of administrations have been collapsed into one umbrella administration such as the case of the Eastern Cape province[2]

The pre-1994 government, therefore, could be defined as an organisation whose core purpose was to support and forward the interests of apartheid while at the same time ensuring an organisational structure and environment where only the Afrikaner experienced any progression and development. The administration, inherited by the Government of National Unity in 1994, reflected this approach in terms of its structures, regulatory and financial frameworks, management attitudes, perceptions and values, productivity, processes and systems. The administration inherited in 1994 was problematic in terms of accessibility and quality, a demotivated and unrepresentative workforce, a complete lack of human resources development and training, a rule driven, input oriented organisation, weak administration and a lack of internal and external communication (Swilling & Wooldridge, 1996). Swilling & Wooldridge (1996, p2) note that "The public service cannot be considered as a monolithic entity. It is fragmented (along racial and ethnic lines), poorly coordinated and split by different learnings or pockets of resistance and commitment."

2 *Personal communication* with Mark Swilling, held in the Karos Hotel, Rustenburg, 24 July 1998.

In response to the organisational obstacles defined above, transformation post-April 1994 in government was initially seen as a challenge that was focused on reducing the size of the public service and restructuring it (both in terms of reconfiguration of the organisation and downsizing) and developing the appropriate regulatory and legal frameworks to ensure the meeting of the core objectives of the new government. This challenge has evolved in the context of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macro-economic framework. An emphasis on organisational design; information technology; human resource practices; management systems; and the restructuring of state assets must all be transformed appropriately. The organisational transformation and development process of the government is moving from an organisation building phase to a performance and efficiency improvement phase. This phase focuses the management and staff on improving performance of the organisation, enabling it to be more responsive and developmental in its provision of services to the public.

Two levels of transformation processes have taken place in government. The first is the macro transformation initiatives brought about by changes in the regulatory and legislative framework. Changes such as the new Labour Relations Act No 66 (Republic of South Africa, 1995a) and the introduction of white papers and bills such as the Transforming Public Service Delivery White Paper (Republic of South Africa, 1997b) and the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service (Republic of South Africa, 1998c) have begun to bring about key changes

in the public service. The second is happening at an organisational level within the administration and refers to the changes that have been initiated within the administration so as to ensure a synchronicity between the strategic objectives of the organisation and the ability of the organisation to meet those objectives.

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) era saw the implementation of a number of macro changes. These changes are reflected in the changes in the regulatory and legislative framework governing the State and the administration. On a macro level, government has integrated the previously diffuse and fragmented institutions of apartheid into three spheres of government - national, provincial and local. Each of these layers is responsible for some aspects of delivery. Administratively, national government remains a broad umbrella body, that defines policy, determines and defines funding and operates essentially as a coordinating and objective setting tier of government. National tier is specifically responsible for aspects of governance such as security, determining economic and fiscal policies, defense policy, international relations, foreign affairs and so on.

Nine provincial governments govern areas known as provinces and are particularly responsible for functions such as the provision of education, welfare, transport and particular health services. Due to the inequity of resources between the provinces, national government allocates funding on the basis of need.

Provincial government is also responsible for the allocation of housing subsidies and the restitution and redistribution of areas of land.

Local authorities collect rates and, taxes and in so doing, have access to a fiscal base. These rates and taxes are used for the provision of essential services such as water, electricity, and maintenance and refuse collection. This tier of government is most reflective of the disparity of resources between areas in South Africa and it is this tier of government that has become the tier of struggle for the redistribution of resources.

While the three tiers of government reflect different interests and areas of responsibility, they make up that body known as the public service. And it is this public service as a whole is that still "structured and managed in accordance with wholly outdated principles and methods" (Swilling & Wooldridge, 1996, p2).

Swilling & Wooldridge (1996) identify the problems of the administration as follows: Rule driven bureaucracy; corruption and mismanagement of resources; poor and outdated management; unresponsiveness to citizen-consumers; lack of accountability; lack of transparency; inadequately trained staff; poor labour relations and a deskilled hierarchy of jobs. Understanding these problems as the reason for ineffective and inefficient service delivery, the new public service (post-1994) is focusing its key reforms and transformation initiatives at specific structures and systems in government.

South Africa post 1994 has experienced significant changes. The most significant of all the reforms implemented by the new government has been the development of a new Constitution. The Constitution refers specifically to the basic values and principles governing public administration and states that, amongst other principles, "the public administration must be development oriented; people's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making; services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias; transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information" (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996b, p107).

The intention defined in the Constitution is a radical departure from the previous apartheid driven service provision of the past. The assumption underpinning the Constitution is that the needs, expectations and requirements of the citizens need to be responded to by the public administration and this extends to include the quality of services received. The Constitution further defines the rights of the citizens by asserting that all citizens are "Equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship" (Constitution of South Africa, 1996b, p3).

The redefining of government post-1994 has resulted in key transformation initiatives that attempt to match the organisational intentions with structure. The period directly after the elections (mid-1994) saw government in a quest to ensure

the amalgamation of different bureaucracies into a new organisational design. At that point change was focused on developing new structures, informed by a change in policy direction, to ensure a representative public service and to contain the size of the public service. "Despite massive over regulation and often-inappropriate directives from the central personnel agency, it seems most provinces were able to go through the motions with reasonable ease. Most of the management echelon of the new administration are representative, both in terms of gender and race, new departments with relatively lower personnel costs and probably space has been created for a new orientation and approach to public administration" (Ramaite, 1996, p1).

Phase 1

This initial phase, referred to as an organisational restructuring and merging phase, was achieved relatively painlessly. Reasons for this abound. Perhaps the most valid reason rests in the specific approach adopted by the Strategic Management Teams (SMT) that were convened to implement this aspect of transition. SMTs comprised people from various disciplines and experiences. The Premier's SMT for the Gauteng Provincial Government, for example, comprised academics, non governmental organisation staff, activists and public sector experts.

It was the approach adopted by the SMTs that ensured a quick and effective transition. In the words of Fitzgerald[3], Chairperson of the Gauteng Provincial Government SMT, "we were ruthless...it was like a war, we removed one third of all the old management. We took a hard-line, top down approach that meant that we changed the organisation structurally to meet the goals of the new government." Strong downsizing and the use of Chapter J[4] of the Public Service Act provided the setting for the SMTs to implement a series of alterations that brought about key changes in the top management echelon and ensured that the various pieces of the apartheid government were successfully incorporated into the new structure. Most importantly SMTs acted as catalysts to bring civil society into the policy process and the re-organisation of government.

What is clear about phase one - the phase of organisational restructuring and merging - is that it has managed to some extent to define the organisation structurally in line with the objectives defined by the post-1994 government. It is phase two and phase three - the phases in which government currently finds itself - that appear to be more difficult.

Phase two demands more radical transformation - transformation of the very essence of government in terms of its practices (particularly the management and labour practices), systems, design, human resources development, processes and

3 Fitzgerald, P. *Personal communication* with the Chair of the Provincial Service Commission, Gauteng Provincial Service Commission, held in the Chair's office, 10 April, 1997

4 Chapter J is that chapter of the Public Service Act (Republic of South Africa, 1994a) that governs all top management posts in the public service.

culture. A focus on performance and efficiency is required as well as a focus on the transformation of values, perceptions, attitudes and approaches. It is transformation in these areas that will begin to turn the way government works inside out. It is these changes that will shift the direction of government. It is the successful implementation of these changes that will ensure that government is able to deliver on the vision and objectives defined by the RDP and Gear.

Phase 2

Phase two of the transformation process sees an acknowledgment by government of two key factors:

- a shift from an input-oriented, rule driven organisation is central to ensure effective delivery;
- a focus on efficiency is central to ensure that the limited resources available are used optimally.

These assumptions have laid the basis for many of the transformation initiatives that emerged in government post-phase one. Perhaps the most notable transformation initiative in phase two has been the development of a Transforming Public Service Delivery White Paper (Republic of South Africa, 1997b). The significance of this White Paper is that it refers to specific interventions aimed at ensuring a more competent and effective public service. These interventions are seen as levers to begin aligning the new public service

with the intentions and visions described in the RDP/ GEAR documents. These interventions are designed to ensure an empowering, performance-oriented, democratised and representative workplace thereby effectively enhancing the ability of government to deliver services in an era of fiscal constraint and discipline.

Key areas of intervention have been defined in the White Paper as:

- Rationalisation and restructuring

The key intervention in this instance was to ensure a lean organisation where structure follows strategy. The decision of the government to rationalise the occupational and salary structure of the public service by reducing salary scales to 15 salary ranges and eliminating the multitude of allowances has gone some way in reducing the salary gap, by raising the earnings of the lower ranks and by capping the increases at the top end. This is in addition to a planned staff cut of about 300 000 civil servants. The impact of actual cuts on personnel, will account for a decline of three percent in national employment. It is clear that the contraction of the public service would mostly affect relatively well paid jobs. Whilst the public service now constitutes just under one-tenth of all employment, it accounts for a quarter of all jobs in the formal sector where employees earn over R1400 per month. The implications of such a transformation initiative will be felt on service delivery specifically in the area of community service such as hospitals, schools and the police force.

- Affirmative action and representativeness

The legacy of "sheltered employment" has led to a skewed level of representativeness in the public service. This intervention will ensure a public service representative of the greater South African population. The Employment Equity Act No 55 (Republic of South Africa, 1998a) from the Department of Labour and the White Paper on Affirmative Action (Republic of South Africa, 1997a) set a framework and specific targets for the private and the public sector. The White Paper on a new Employment Policy for the Public Service (1997b), which covers all the elements of diversity management and a framework for Human Resource management, has been completed.

- Transforming service delivery

The culture from which service delivery emanates reflects directly on the types of services delivered as well as the way services are delivered. This intervention will set benchmarks and performance indicators thereby ensuring that services are delivered optimally. The Transforming Public Service Delivery White Paper (Republic of South Africa, 1997c) has been ratified by Parliament, which will make it mandatory for departments to publish and meet service standards.

- Institution building and management

Managers must begin to involve themselves directly in the transformation of the public service, governance and service delivery. They will do this by playing a

key role in promoting a commitment to public service transformation and building a sense of organisational pride in the public service. Amendments to the Public Service Act (Republic of South Africa, 1994a) have been developed and it will replace the current overly regulated framework of the administration with a model that empowers managers to manage. The Department of Public Service Administration has completed the development of regulations that will support the changes in legislation and will give credence to a "new" management and more of a human resources development approach.

- Human resources development and training

Perhaps the greatest travesty of the public service has been the complete lack of interest in human resources development and training (Gauteng Provincial Service Commission Report, 1998). This has led to an underdeveloped and demotivated workforce who lack the wherewithal to deliver effectively. A focus on human resources development will begin to ensure a commitment to developing the key resource in the public service. A White Paper on Skills Development and Training (Republic of South Africa, 1997d) has been developed for use in both the public and private sectors.

- Promotion of professional service ethos

Swilling & Wooldridge (1996, p1) refer to an "unresponsiveness to citizen-consumers". This intervention aims to ensure the development of a service ethos, which focuses the workforce on viewing the citizen as a valued customer. A Code

of Conduct (Republic of South Africa, 1997e) has been adopted by the public service, which will inform and guide civil servants in their actions.

- Democratising the workplace

The development of workplace forums, the implementation of the new Labour Relations Act No 66 (Republic of South Africa, 1995a) and the Employment Equity Act No 55 (Republic of South Africa, 1998a) will all contribute to the development of workplace in which all staff feel valued and comfortable and where no staff member is discriminated on the grounds of race, gender, disability and illness and a range of other factors.

- Labour relations and employment conditions

To ensure effective delivery and performance improvement, a focus on the conditions of employment is critical. Directed by the new Labour Relations Act (No 66 of 1995a) and encouraged by tools such as the Gauteng Personnel Performance Management System (Gauteng Department of Corporate Services, 1997), the environment for public servants should begin to align itself more closely with that of the private sector.

The intention of these eight transformation priorities is to align the public service with the aims defined in the broader policies of government. A priority, therefore, in the transformation of the public service is to ensure a juxtaposition between

policy requirements of government and the ability of the administration to implement these policies in the most effective and efficient manner.

While Phase Two is likely to be ongoing, the South African public service has concurrently begun entering Phase Three.

Phase 3

This is the critical phase - that phase where the quality and type of public services being delivered is examined. This is further extended in phase three by the acknowledgement that the citizen is the customer and it is this customer who needs to begin defining the quality and types of public services offered.

Fitzgerald states that improved performance is identified as a major challenge to South African public service management in the 1990's. Fitzgerald[5], argues that reasons for the emphasis on performance abound:

- A focus on improved productivity requires a more effective use of available resources. A focus on performance in this instance will encourage public servants to utilise their resources more appropriately and to ensure that wastage associated with shoddy and incomplete work can be avoided;
- Better citizen-state relationships. Historically the citizen-state relationship in South Africa has been problematic. Public services were allocated on a race and gender basis, which has resulted in distrust and a culture of non-service.

5 Fitzgerald, P. *Personal communication* with the Chair of the Provincial Service Commission, Gauteng Provincial Service Commission, held in the Chair's office, 10 April, 1997

A performance orientation will ensure that all customers (citizens) are dealt with equitably and will be dealt with on the level of customer rather than on the level of race, gender, disability etc;

- Quality and choice in services. The apartheid government delivered services in a non-consultative, arrogant manner. This pattern of the past has led to questions regarding not only *how* government delivers services but also *what* services are delivered. While the questions on *what* services should be delivered by government have only been examined in the most superficial way, it is envisaged that the 1999 general elections will provide an opportunity for more stringent discussion;
- Global Competitiveness. The role of government in ensuring global competitiveness is apparent in all states where world competitiveness has been achieved;
- Customer/ citizen/ community/ societal empowerment. It is recognised by the post-1994 government that only a radically transformed public sector can provide the necessary leverage for the state to fulfil its initial goals and aspirations so that accelerated social infrastructure development can occur within the restrictive fiscal discipline imposed by GEAR.

The pressure to transform the delivery of services is located in both political and economic terms. Particularly, national departments have acknowledged the importance of improved performance and service delivery in the quest for long-

term economic sustainability and thus the ability to deliver the service promised to the electorate in the 1994 elections. In an era of GEAR, required sustainable economic growth and a more dedicated citizen orientation, effective and efficient performance in the South African public service is critical. However, performance in the public sector, both nationally and internationally, is often difficult to achieve due to a number of factors. Debates around the definition of performance in the public service are covered more thoroughly in the literature review.

A key factor which is seen to inhibit government performance is the "public service culture" (Metcalfe & Richards, 1987; Drewry & Butcher, 1988; Johnston, 1993; Lawton & Rose, 1991; and Lovell, 1994). Most citizens would define a "public service culture" as a culture that accommodates elements such as ineffective and inefficient performance, wastefulness, inflexibility, nepotism, wasteful expenditure and laziness. While no real effort has been made to interrogate the elements of organisational culture in the public service in the South African context (as noted in a review of the literature), some contemporary management theorists would acknowledge an organisational cultural basis to the inability of government to perform optimally.[6]

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6 *Personal communication at the Karos Hotel, Rustenburg,* with Mark Swilling (Co-Director of the Spier Leadership Institute and member of the Spier Strategic Planning Team and Honorary Professor at the School of Public and Development Management, University of the Witwatersrand), 24 July 1998

In the South African context however, the specific organisational culture elements have not been defined. As such, this research report intends to firstly, identify those specific factors of organisational culture that both inhibit and facilitate performance in the public service and secondly examine the role of organisational subcultures as they relate to the issue of organisational culture. This research report assumes a link between the understanding of a specific organisational culture and how this understanding can be used to improve performance in an organisation.

1.2 Research Problem

As South Africa moves towards the new millenium, the importance of good and effective government has never been more pronounced. The critical role of government both in terms of implementing effective policies and in ensuring that public funds are being spent appropriately, is reinforced daily – in the media, by political opposition and by commentators of government. Examples of the significance and impact of government performance abound – both nationally and internationally. Nowhere is this experienced more acutely than in the financial markets.

Details of corruption, new government policies, lack of implementation and poor performance may cause flurries in national markets which in turn affects business confidence[7] and future economic stability.

In addition, the performance of government increasingly impacts on the daily life of the average citizen. From the delivery of potable water to rural areas to effective health care provision and education, no citizen is untouched by the performance of the public service.

The increasing importance of government does not, however, mean that government is more popular, in fact Peters (1989, p1) argues that in industrialised countries, the public image of government is more negative than ever and "The sheer size of government and the associated taxation, combined with the publicity given its failures, have reduced the faith and possibly even the allegiance of citizens."

The South African public service has received much criticism for its apparent inability to deliver services effectively and efficiently. Inherent in this critique is the fact that the *performance* of government is seen as not optimum. [8]

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7 An article written by David Roche, on South Africa's Capital Crisis which appeared in the influential Wall Street Journal, caused a flurry in South Africa's markets. The article examined particularly the role of government in ensuring the relief of such a crisis. This is a typical example of how the performance of government can determine levels of business confidence. (Business Day, 1998, p12)

8 Wholey, Newcomer & Associates (1989) have identified government performance as improving the productivity, quality, timeliness, responsiveness and effectiveness of public agencies and programmes.

This trend may be found in South Africa where an increasing disillusionment by the citizens is expressed daily. Reports on crime and corruption permeate the consciousness of the citizens. Linked to these reports is the corresponding understanding that the *performance of government itself is poor.* "I'm terribly disappointed in our government. Life with regard to crime seems to be worse than under apartheid. I do not see any will on the part of the authorities to stop this problem." (The Sunday Independent, 1998, p5). "...some public servants are, to put it mildly, not imbued with the spirit of public service – to the extent that even in instances where these funds are available [in the case of Social Grants and Pensions – own addition], they do not turn up on time and/ or they relate to senior citizens with attitudes bordering on the criminal" (Mandela, 1998, p5).

In the address by President Mandela to Parliament on the 6 February 1998, Mandela (Republic of South Africa, 1998d) refers specifically to the non-performance of public servants in the delivery of social grants and pensions. This perception of public servants not delivering or not delivering optimally, is apparent in many comments made about the public service. In fact, performance in the public service is one of the most highly charged issues, taken up by all commentators including recipients of services as well as the media, academics and business.

Lodge[9] for example, argues that while there have been impressive achievements by government in the area of land reform, delivery of water and housing, and in the health sector, the actual progress around service delivery is much slower than anticipated. Much of this lack of progress is due to poor performance by government departments due to administration difficulties and inefficiencies. Lodge goes on to assert that this performance is further hindered by the levels of corruption in the public service – "routine corruption is a key obstacle to service delivery." This view is reinforced by media reports and government leadership who believe that performance in the public service is not optimum. Maharaj[10] states "absolutely not...performance in the public service is nowhere near optimum. In fact there is so much to do still to address performance issues".

The public service in South Africa is therefore under increasing pressure to perform. This pressure to perform is defined in economic, social and political terms and as the role of government sophisticates and develops, the expectations of good government increase. An international literature review (Metcalfe & Richards, 1987; Peters, 1989; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Lawton & Rose, 1994; Lovell, 1994 and Moharir,1995) reveals that public services the world over are faced with the challenge of improving their performance while at the same

9 Input made by Professor Tom Lodge (Professor of Political Science), the University of the Witwatersrand), at a seminar on *The Politics of Delivery*, held in the Parktonian Hotel, Johannesburg, 28 August, 1998.

10 *Personal conversation* held with Pradeep Maharaj (Deputy Director General: Gauteng Provincial Treasury), 10 September 1998 in his office, 94 Main Street, Johannesburg.

maintaining the intrinsic objectives of government – namely the effective delivery of public services to a wide range of stakeholders.

In addition, public service delivery is fundamentally different to delivery by the private sector and these differences define both *what* services are delivered as well as *how* services are delivered. Osborne & Gaebler (1992) have defined the differences between public sector and private sector delivery as the following:

- the private sector is driven by the profit motive, while government leaders are driven by the desire to get re-elected;
- the private sector obtains most of its money from their customers, governments obtain most of their money from taxpayers;
- the private sector is driven by competition, government uses monopolies.

Differences such as these create fundamentally different incentives and motivations in the public sector.

The literature reviewed in the following chapter reveals that reasons for this inability to perform abound. While this research report acknowledges that the reasons for the lack of optimum performance in government are many, a specific focus is deemed more useful. As such this research report focuses on the factors of *organisational culture* that inhibit/ encourage performance in the public service. It is acknowledged in this research report that the ability of government to perform not only lies in the need to assimilate policy formation processes into the strategic framework and day to day activities of government, but more critical

is the need to understand the organisation, its structures, its processes and practices, and in so doing, being able to make strategic interventions that go beyond the classic strategic planning framework.

The structures, processes and practices of public service organisations cannot be viewed separately from the organisational culture itself. Rather, the organisational culture is seen to contain these elements and more and certainly a more textured and in depth understanding of organisational culture, in all its manifestations, is necessary for any effective change programme to take place (Lawton & Rose, 1994). This research report therefore posits, that for real performance improvement to take place in the public service, those specific organisational culture factors which inhibit/ encourage performance need to be unearthed and deconstructed, thereby ensuring a more strategic and sustainable set of interventions. Finally, it is hoped that research in this area will begin to enhance the debates on improving performance in the public service as well as providing a premise for public service departments (and managers) to design specific organisational strategies that will improve performance.

1.3 Sub-problem

Poor performance in the public service has been identified as a problem. This research report argues that while reasons for this poor performance abound, a specific focus on the impact of organisational culture on performance in the

public service is a useful platform from which to draw broader conclusions. Embedded in the concept of organisational culture is the significance of organisational subcultures that may too impact on performance. Sharpe (1997) argues that a workplace can include a number of significant and separate subcultures that may in turn impact on the broader organisational culture and Schumacher (1997) goes so far as to argue that an organisational culture is merely the umbrella for a range of even more significant organisational subcultures.

The history of the public service in South Africa has, to a large extent, been characterised by an 'us' and 'them' scenario. In the pre-1994 public service, Afrikaans-speaking white males dominated both the thinking and the key positions in the public service. The 'us' and 'them' scenario must have allowed for the development of significant subcultures in the public service. (Ybema, 1997, p163) argues that "given the complexity of these differentiation processes, patterns of interaction and interpretation can cross-cut formal lines of division within the organisation and often transcend organisational boundaries." The possibility of significant subcultures existing in the public service, and the various ways in which these subcultures influence performance, is real. This research report, therefore, intends to not only focus on the overall organisational culture but to also begin to reveal the various subcultures in the organisation. The specific elements of these subcultures may facilitate the understanding of the impact of the organisational culture on performance in the public service, as well as beginning to identifying potential strategies for each sub-group in the focus on

improved performance. The research, therefore, acknowledges the importance of organisational subcultures in the link between performance and organisational culture and the definitions supplied by Schumacher (1997) on organisational subcultures have framed both the understanding of subcultures as well as the research approach adopted by the author.

1.4 Research Objectives

The objectives of the research conducted include the following and as such have directed the research methodology implemented.

1. To identify the performance orientation in a public service department;
2. To indicate that the organisational culture that exists inhibits performance;
3. To identify those organisational culture factors that inhibit performance in the public service, which need to be adddressed;
4. To identify those organisational culture factors that inhibit performance in the public service as defined by the following organisational subgroups based on 'knowledge domains' (Schumacher, 1997), some of which may inhibit performance:

- Length of service – civil servants who have been in the employ of the public service for longer than five years;
- Top management – Directors and above (level 10 and above according to the Personnel Administrative System);

- Administrative staff – a group of staff who render a purely administrative function;
- Professional staff – staff who have a specific technical expertise in the form of a university education or professional status i.e. state accountant, teacher;
- Lower graded staff – staff who are ranked below level five according to the Personnel Administrative System (PAS).

To successfully respond to these research objectives, the research methodology has been divided into two phases. Details of these two phases are provided in Chapter Three.

1.5 Research Organisation

The Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs (DFEA) was considered a suitable research organisation. As a result of increasing pressure, the Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs has identified performance as a key issue facing the department in the next few years. This emphasis on performance is located in a particular context, namely the fiscal constraints imposed by GEAR and the increasing expectations of service delivery by both constituents and policy makers. The perceptions of performance may, in some instances, not be related to reality[11].

11 The Public Service has historically been viewed as having low levels of performance by its customers. This in fact may be just a perception in some areas, as very few government departments have measured their actual levels of performance against international benchmarks of any kind.

The Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, however, has embarked upon some programmes that measure current levels of service delivery, as perceived by customers, and the specific outputs of each service area. These programmes were motivated by the understanding that, as government moves into a phase of delivery that looks at performance, setting of service standards and customer orientation, the need for organisational analysis becomes critical. In addition, it was noted by the department that effective organisational analysis facilitates the setting of measures and standards and as such is a critical tenet in any performance improvement in an organisation.

It was in response to this that the Customer Service Programme, Staff Attitudinal Survey and budget prioritisation initiatives were conceptualised and implemented in the department of Finance and Economic Affairs in early 1998.

An analysis of the results of these initiatives has revealed a less than satisfactory level of performance in the department of Finance and Economic Affairs, as defined by both the customers, staff and top management.

An analysis of the Customer Service Survey and Analysis Report (Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1998b) brought to light the perceptions of the customers regarding the performance of the department. Fifty-two clusters of customers were identified by the department and over 140 customers were interviewed for the survey.

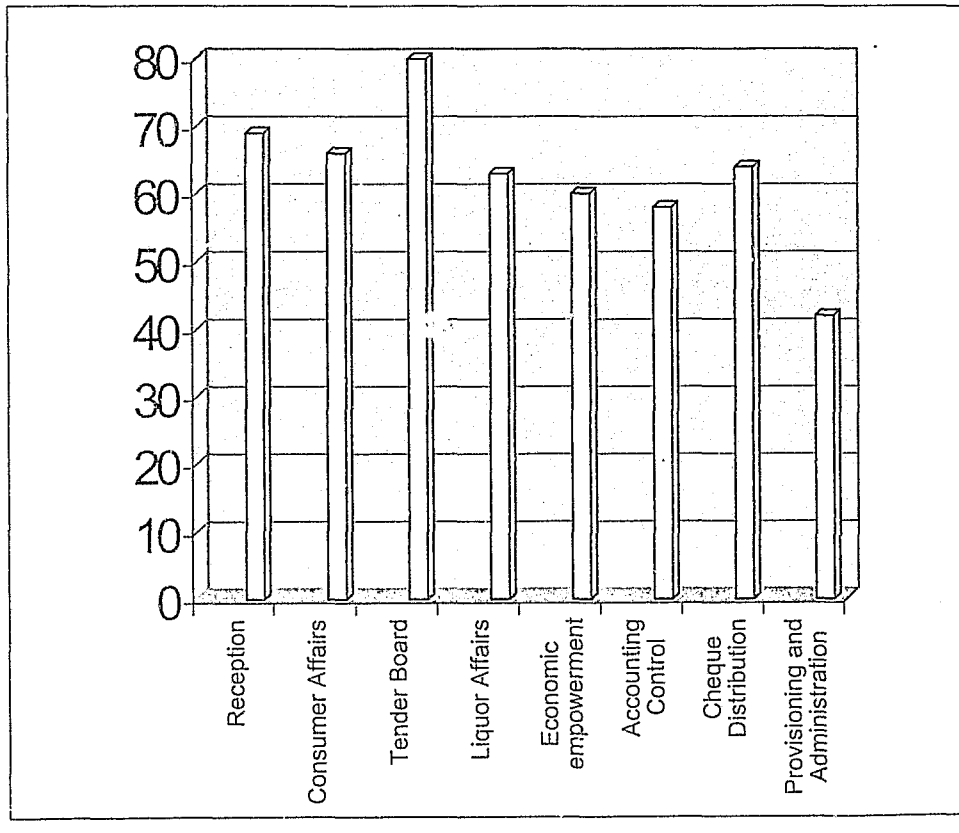


Figure 1: Average level of Satisfaction with Services provided at Department of Finance and Economic Affairs from February - August 1998 (Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1998b)

While the findings of the report reveal that the level of satisfaction by customers for the services delivered to customers on an overall basis reflects a clustering in the above average quartile, many of the units received negative responses regarding their delivery.[12] Where all the units, with the exception of Financial Control were ranked as having excellent service by some of the respondents, many of these units were also ranked as having poor service by respondents. This variance in performance by these units is in itself a reflection of less than optimal levels of performance and the conclusion drawn by the department was that overall performance of the department needs to be improved.

The Customer Service Survey and Analysis Report (Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1998b) is added to on a monthly basis by comments received by the customers of the department. Over a six month period – from March 1998 to August 1998 – more than 300 customers filled in customer comment cards which measure the level of service delivered by the department. The average level of satisfaction experienced by customers in this period was about 65% and on average more than 35% of the customers waited in a queue for longer than five minutes. (Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1998a).

The Customer Service Survey Report (Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1998b) was preempted by a Staff Attitudinal Survey (Gauteng

12 It must be noted that the author associates effective and efficient service delivery with good performance. The assumption being that poor performance will lead to ineffective and inefficient service delivery.

Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1997b) which was conducted in the department in late 1997. This attitudinal survey focused on three main areas namely human resource development, systems, structures and processes, and organisational culture. In this survey, approximately 70 staff members identified specific barriers to performance in the department. These barriers to performance identified by the staff included –

- Rules and regulations in the department;
- Lack of innovation and opportunities;
- Fear of taking risks;
- Time constraints;
- Lack of cooperation from other Gauteng Provincial Government departments, directorates and supervisors;
- Relevant training;
- Inappropriate skills;
- Fear of reprisal for decision making;
- No information about other people's work;
- 'Public service mentality';
- Lack of understanding in terms of who the department's customers actually are (Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1997b).

Aside from these initiatives and the Personnel Performance Management reviews conducted in the department, no other performance analyses have been conducted in the department. While this is a limitation in assessing *actual* levels of

performance in the department, what emerges is the fact that performance is a key issue in the department and that both staff, customers and management believe that performance is not optimum.

In keeping with the transformation agendas defined by both the RDP and GEAR, the role of this specific department is critical. The mission of the department has been defined as facilitating sustainable economic growth and job creation; economic empowerment and ethical business activity and maintaining sound public finances. The Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs employs approximately 300 staff members with jobs ranging from administrative clerks to economists. The Department provides two quite different types of services namely an economic development service and financial administration service. The services offered by financial administration were inherited from the previous government and the financial administration service (in its current formation) has been delivered since the 1970s. The services offered by economic affairs component may, however, be considered new services as they developed as part of the new dispensation.

About 40% of the staff who work in the Financial Administration section were employed in the previous government, while some 95% of the staff in the economic affairs unit may be considered new public servants. The Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs is considered a strategic department at the provincial level as it provides financial administration to the

entire province as well as being home to the provincial treasury. The Staff Remuneration unit in the Financial Administration unit for example, is responsible for the controlling of 65 000 salary deductions for provincial employees on a monthly basis.

The breakdown of the department in terms of race and gender reflects broadly the demographic breakdown of the country. In addition the Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs may be considered reflective of the demographic breakdown of the entire Gauteng Provincial Government.

Table 1.1: Gender breakdown in the department of Finance and Economic Affairs for the period 1994/5 - 1997/8

Departmental Breakdown						
	Time Period	1 April 1994	1 April 1995	1 April 1996	1 April 1997	1 April 1998
			(actual)	(actual)	(actual)	(projection)
Management & Administration						
	Men		2	5	13	20
	Women		3	6	10	20
Provincial Treasury						
	Men			5	8	15
	Women			2	7	12
Procurement Administration						
	Men			6	10	18
	Women			3	10	17
Financial Administration						
	Men	195	203	116	91	85
	Women	137	165	153	94	80
Economic Affairs						
	Men			3	11	12
	Women			5	13	13
Total						
	Men	195	205	135	133	150
	Women	137	168	169	134	142
	Total	332	373	304	267	292

Table 1.2: Race breakdown for the period 1994/5 - 1997/8

Departmental Breakdown	Time Period	1 April 1994	1 April 1995 (actual)	1 April 1996 (actual)	1 April 1997 (actual)	1 April 1998 (projection)
Management & Administration						
	African			6	14	25
	Coloured			2	2	4
	Indian			2	2	3
	White			1	5	8
Provincial Treasury						
	African			4	9	13
	Coloured			0	1	1
	Indian			1	2	3
	White			2	3	10
Procurement Administration						
	African			6	16	31
	Coloured			0	1	2
	Indian			1	1	2
	White			2	2	0
Financial Administration						
	African			48	88	75
	Coloured			3	4	12
	Indian			2	3	8
	White			216	90	70
Economic Affairs						
	African			5	19	7
	Coloured			0	1	1
	Indian			1	1	0
	White			2	3	4
Total						
	African			69	146	164
	Coloured			5	9	20
	Indian			7	9	16
	White			223	103	92
	Total			304	267	292

1.6 Limitations of the Research

This research has been limited in a number of ways.

1. A key limitation is the fact that previous research on the impact of organisational culture on performance in the South African public service appears minimal. While some research has been conducted on the organisational culture of the Gauteng Department of Education (Poppleton, 1997), most research on the public service in the last four years has been in other areas of interest, most notably in the area of policy. This may be considered a limitation of the research as the researcher has been unable to draw on past observations made in the South African public service, that may be pertinent for this topic. In addition, this has meant that the author has made a number of suppositions based on international literature and international case studies rather than on South African examples. The impact of this gap in literature has meant an inability to meaningfully contrast any South African findings and an inability to draw on past findings to guide the research.

2. A further limitation of this research is the fact that much of the literature on organisational culture is located within the private sector rather than the public sector. This has meant that assumptions on organisational culture made by the author have in most instances been derived from private sector examples. The literature review therefore has been restricted, to some degree,

by the lack of public sector information. This has had an impact on the research as many of the theories and ideas have been *assumed* to be applicable to the public service as well.

3. A further limitation on the research included the geographic confines of the research. Research for the report was confined to the department of Finance and Economic Affairs as a convenience sample was used. This restricts the use of broad generalities when referring to the public service in South Africa. This research must be seen as it applies in the Department of Finance and Economic Affairs context, although broad themes are likely to be applicable to all the Gauteng Provincial Government departments and perhaps even to all public service departments in South Africa. Certainly however these themes would only be broad in nature as any specifics around organisational culture and performance are geographically, environmentally, historically, and organisationally defined. Katz & Eisenstadt (1960) argue that even the introduction of new client groups into the public service (in their case immigrants) will substantially change the organisational culture. While this research report may certainly provide some backdrop to future research in the area, it cannot be seen to apply specifically to any other department.

4. A key limitation of this research is researcher bias that may have been incorporated both into the analysis and research. The researcher has been employed in the Finance and Economic Affairs Department for nine months

and has initiated and implemented many of the change programmes in the department. It is probable that the approach towards the research by the researcher may have been informed by this experience. Specific areas of concern include the questions used in the Nominal Group Technique (NGT). The two questions that were asked may have been directly informed by the researcher's experience in the department and this may have presupposed specific answers to the questions. While the members of the NGT were selected randomly using the Kth factor approach (Werbeloff, 1996), the construct of the NGT into subgroups was influenced by the researchers prior understanding of the department. Schumacher's (1997) model of 'knowledge domains' was used as a basis for the NGT group (see literature review) but the specific NGT subgroup choice was made by the researcher's existing understanding of the department. The implication of the researcher's relationship to the department may have led to increased subjectivity thereby undermining the ability of the researcher to engage objectively with both the research design and research findings.

5. Time was a further limitation in the research. The research was conducted primarily during September and October 1998. Due to time restrictions, the research was limited both in terms of the number of nominal groups held and in terms of depth of analysis. A further limitation was in terms of the time period over which the research was conducted. September and October are relatively poor months in which to conduct research as a number of staff

members take their annual study leave. This was unforeseen by the researcher but resulted in less questionnaires being returned (phase one of the research) and fewer available staff for the Nominal Group Technique process (phase two). Also the staff on study leave would have been those staff engaged in studies, and the research may have benefited from the perspective offered by this group of staff members. The implication of these staff members not being available is that a specific perspective may have been lost in the research and that the research was not as comprehensive and it could have been if these staff members had been available.

6. A further limitation that may have impacted on the research is the removal of three questions from the Performance Orientation Questionnaires (POQ). These questions were considered 'stand-alone' questions and did not contribute specifically towards the research. The removal of these questions, however, may have influenced the validity of the questionnaire which in turn may affect the results of the POQ. In addition, the removal of the questions might have distorted the weighting of each dimension.

7. A limitation of the research was the use of a private sector instrument (Performance Orientation Questionnaire) in the first phase of the research. The instrument has been used in the private sector but never in the public sector. The implication of using such an instrument includes the possibility of 'different' interpretations of concepts by the public sector respondents.

Certain words or statement may have different meanings in the public and private sectors.

8. A further limitation was the use of two facilitators in Phase Two of the research (Nominal Group Technique). The use of two facilitators may have introduced a subjective interpretation of responses by each individual facilitator as well as impacting on the content of responses. Respondents often respond in different ways to different facilitators (Werbeloff, 1996) and certainly it can be assumed that the kinds of responses may have varied between facilitators. This variance in response may have been mitigated by the actual NGT process which restricts any discussion. In addition, the use of identical questions attempted to ensure a greater level of commonality;

9. A limitation was noted during the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) process. The Top Management Group left immediately after the completion of the prioritisation process and did not stay for the informal discussion afterwards due to time constraints. This meant that a further probing into the responses from this group was not possible. While further discussion would have added some texture to the overall analysis, the integrity of the results were not compromised as the informal discussions did not make up the core of the research.

10. Finally, a major limitation of the research was the element of language. The Performance Orientation Questionnaire was originally constructed in English and it was expected that the responses would be provided in English. No provision was made for varying interpretations of the questions as translated from other languages, nor were definitions of the key words provided. The researcher attempted to mitigate this limitation by ensuring that during the NGT process, a facilitator, fluent in the four official languages of Gauteng, was used for two of the sessions. It was felt that these sessions (the subgroups of administrative staff and staff employed below level five) might require a facilitator fluent in languages other then English and Afrikaans. It must be noted that the use of languages other than English may have had other implications such as non-standard understanding of terminology and misinterpretation of words that would possibly have changed the respondent's understanding of the question, thereby reducing the significance of the NGT ranking and rating exercise.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Performance in the Public Service

At a major conference held at the University of Manchester on *Public Sector Management for the Next Century -1997* (Minogue, Polidano and Hulme, 1997, p2), the UK Secretary of State for International Development, Claire Short noted that "the main focus of Development Policy, the elimination of poverty, could only be achieved through strong and effective states", and added that "the era of complete enmity to the public sector in general and to state provision in particular is coming to an end." This is a sentiment reiterated in the World Development Report (1997) by the World Bank that focuses on the primacy of the state as a determining factor in sustainable development. The World Development Report (1997)[13] further highlights the fact that there is a clear relationship between good government (in terms of its policies and institutions) and levels of economic growth; as well as a clear link between the developmental success of a country and the effectiveness of the state.

This pressure to perform is further enhanced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Macroeconomic Strategy (GEAR) framework which demands a performance oriented approach by the public service. The main thrust of the GEAR, adopted on 14 June 1996 is that sustained growth, is required to generate

13 The World Development Report (1997) reflects a critical paradigm shift in the role and import of government.

employment and promote redistribution. Sustained growth in turn requires a competitive outward-oriented economy.[14] The key targets of the proposed integrated economic strategy are: to achieve a growth rate of six percent per annum and to create 400 000 jobs by the year 2000 in order to be able to meet the demands of international competitiveness. The GEAR strategy recognises that integral to the attainment of these goals is the need to transform the public sector, in order to increase the efficiency of both capital expenditure and service delivery. The primary goal is to achieve sustained development within the context of a globally competitive economy. The fiscal strategy is defined in terms of a medium-term deficit target. The following goals inform the fiscal policy:

- to cut the overall budget deficit and the level of government dissaving;
- to avoid permanent increases in the overall tax burden;
- to reduce consumption expenditure by general government relative to GDP;
- to strengthen the general government contribution to gross domestic fixed investment.

The thinking behind the restrictive fiscal strategy, is that government must lower interest payments which currently absorb a fifth of all government spending. Progress in cutting government spending will boost confidence in foreign investors and currency markets, thus arresting the decline in the value of the South African rand. This will in turn stimulate growth, and thereby increase government revenues, so as to ameliorate the effect of deficit reductions. If the

14 The author is aware of the current debates on GEAR but for the purposes of this paper this position has been accepted.

strategy works, it will ensure the elimination of wasteful expenditure, as well as cut overall government spending as a proportion of GDP and still improve services to the historically disadvantaged. The advantages of the restrictive fiscal policy will only be felt in the medium to the long term, as the advantages of right-sizing and reprioritisation will activate GEAR and result in sustained growth. In Gauteng Province, considered the economic stronghold of South Africa, the Head of Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, Hunter[15] approaches GEAR as an enabling framework. Hunter argues that "there should be no doubt as to its effectiveness as an immediate term catalyst, that will force government to root out inefficient practices and wastage within the bureaucracy as well as in programmes, projects and activities".

In the final analysis, only a radically transformed public sector can provide the necessary leverage for the state to fulfil its initial goals and aspirations, so that accelerated social infrastructure development can occur within the restrictive fiscal discipline imposed by GEAR. In the light of the fiscal constraints imposed by GEAR and, therefore, a more compelling requirement for effective and efficient utilisation of resources, optimum performance has become a priority of the 'new' public service.

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15 Hunter, R. *Personal communication* with the Superintendent-General of the Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, held in the Superintendent-Generals' office, 15 April, 1998.

In addition, there is a clear and defined link between the effective delivery of public services and increased economic growth. Mills, Begg & Van Nieuwkerk (1995) state that characteristics of a winning nation include social and political stability with an emphasis on individual security, achievement of a high standard of living, a high rate of economic growth and *an increasing ability to meet the basic needs of the population.* The International Monetary Fund notes that "while it does appear that globalisation increases the costs of economic distortions and imbalances, policy related or otherwise, it clearly enhances the rewards of sound policies ... if policies are adapted to meet the requirements of integrated and competitive world markets, then all countries should be better able to develop their competitive advantages, enhance their long run growth potential and share in an increasingly prosperous world economy (Pettifor, 1997, p12).

While the initial stress of Public Management Reform in South Africa appears to be on efficiency and economy, international attention has turned increasingly to the *effectiveness* of the Civil Service and the *quality* of services to the public. While most developed countries have experienced these two emphases as distinct phases, the South African public service is experiencing them simultaneously. GEAR juxtaposed on *Batho Pele*[16] is the challenge currently facing the South African public service. By providing a framework such as *Batho Pele* in the

16 *Batho Pele* is the name given to the South African Government's initiative to improve the delivery of public services and establish a customer orientation. *Batho Pele*, meaning "people first" is a shift to a more customer oriented and service delivery culture in the public service. The *Batho Pele* initiative is one of the eight priorities identified in the White Paper on Transformation. The *Batho Pele* White Paper (Republic of South Africa, 1997b) has been developed by the Department of Public Service and Administration in response to the growing need to change the way services have historically been delivered and to ensure that all the people in South Africa are served as effectively as possible.

context of GEAR, the public administration is forced to view the delivery of services in a new way.

The United Kingdom, for example, places a great deal of emphasis on performance (in the form of high levels of customer service) and an analysis of the public service reforms reveals an ongoing sophistication regarding the thinking around customer service and performance. Flynn (1990) argues that in the traditional administrative response to public services, the emphasis on management control is on money. Traditionally therefore, the focus on performance has been financial, most notably whether the public service department has kept within budget. This focus on financial performance is reflected in the systems operating in the public service. Systems directed to seeing how much money is spent in each period dominate information systems in the public service. The South African public service, for example, currently has only one effective information system to measure performance namely the Financial Management System (FMS) that monitors expenditure within departments[17]. Flynn (1990, p100) posits that "Only recently have other performance criteria become more prominent as accountability has concentrated more on what is being achieved through the expenditure of money and other resources in addition to the probity with which the money has been handled."

17 *Personal conversation* held with Pradeep Maharaj (Deputy Director General: Gauteng Treasury) 19 August 1998 in his office, 94 Main Street, Johannesburg

While the Citizen Charter in United Kingdom's (1998) initially focused on efficiency and economy in public service reform, the late 1990s has seen Government's attention turning increasingly to the effectiveness of the Civil Service and the quality of services to the public. In 1991 the Citizen's Charter launched a ten year programme to raise the standards of public services and in 1994 details achievements and plans for key services, and details and findings of the Citizen's Charter Complaints Task Force. This report included tables of departments' performance in the Competing for Quality programmes and a summary of government agencies' Charter Mark awards. An additional tenet of the UK customer service programme or citizen orientation, is the UK Charter Marks which are awarded to agencies which achieve certain quality standards of service delivery and management, and may be withdrawn if performance falls below par. The Charter Marks rely on performance indicators, which are made explicit both within the agencies and for customers of the services provided. The commitment to a citizen orientation lead to the previous Prime Minister declaring that "For each public service we will select the most effective means of delivering the best. For each service the techniques will be different. But the Citizen's Charter will have one common aim- achieving the highest possible standards of performance for those who rely on public services in this country"(Citizen's Charter Report,1998, p1).

The intentions of the UK Public Service regarding performance has therefore been made explicit through initiatives such as the Charter Mark Award and

Citizen's Charter. Inherent in these intentions therefore, is the acknowledgement that the citizen needs to drive the delivery of services both in terms of the expectations of the citizen and the quality requirements of the citizen. In addition, the Citizen's Charter initiative identifies a number of key performance indicators which should be met by departments in the public service. Specific performance indicators are value for money (independently validated financial and operational performance of services provided); customer satisfaction (monitoring and knowing customer perceptions of the services offered); measurable improvements in service quality (showing that the service is being continuously improved to meet higher expectations); and innovation (introducing at least one innovation without additional cost to the taxpayer) (Lovell, 1994, p147).

The USA has revealed a similar commitment to Customer Service and performance and on the 10th anniversary of the Innovations in American Government program, the Kennedy School of Government was asked to summarise the major lessons that the award-winning programmes have taught about government and innovations. A key lesson highlighted was that of identifying clearly the citizens and groups who are entitled to a specific government services and to focus attention as sharply as possible on their needs (Altshuler, 1997).

In this instance it was noted that many of the award-winning government agencies have borrowed customer service techniques from the quality-

management approaches found in the private sector. In the US example, a shift in thinking arose when government services started viewing themselves as having customers. This shift in paradigm allowed bureaucracies to transfer their focus from process to people, streamline their operations, define key performance indicators and encourage accountability through such tools as customer surveys (Altshuler, 1997).

In both these instances, the use of performance management has been fundamental. The role of performance management in improving performance has been acknowledged by a range of theorists (Spangenberg, 1994; Robbins, 1998 & Swanepoel, 1998) and certainly in the both the UK and the USA, performance management is identified as being a key mechanism for bringing about performance improvement. "The other kind of evaluation is not of the individual but of the team. It is based on measurable results, and everybody who contributes to the results gets the same grade. Workers are being judged and rewarded in terms of how well their teams achieve measurable results. Several variations of the new systems are being tried, and all have pluses and minuses; the hope is to find better, more productive means of gauging worker's performance"(Gore, 1997, p20).

Lessons learned from both these countries have been adopted in South Africa and the new Public Service Regulations[18] (Republic of South Africa, 1998e) takes up many of these principle and tenets. Initiated by the Department of Public Service and Administration[19] as a mechanism for stimulating improved performance in government departments, it is hoped that the Public Service Regulations (Republic of South Africa, 1998e) will achieve this by placing the *management* of departments in the hands of managers and not in the hands of central bodies such as the Public Service Commission. While specific interventions to improve performance are not specifically stated in the new act, what is apparent is that managers will have to pay far more attention to issues of performance management, human resource development, labour relations and reporting and monitoring.

Where Mintzberg (1983) may argue that performance in the public service cannot be fully and properly evaluated by objective measures and that measurement in the public service has failed, this paper acknowledges a clear link between a performance-oriented culture and improved performance. A key aspect of this link is the importance of performance management in encouraging a performance orientation. The effective management of individual performance is the major requirement for the achievement of organisational goals. If strategic objectives

18 The new Public Service Regulations (Republic of South Africa, 1998e) will replace the current Regulations (Republic of South Africa, 1994a), Public Service Staff Code (Republic of South Africa, 1994b) and all prescripts issued in terms thereof.

19 The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) is a national department that has as its key focus, the intention to transform the public service. This transformation is encouraged through the use of mechanisms such as Batho Pele (Republic of South Africa, 1998a) and the new Public Service Regulations (Republic of South Africa, 1998e).

are to be met, managers need to have access to information regarding the performance levels of their team members.

Performance management is an approach to managing people that entails planning employee performance, facilitating the achievement of work related goals and reviewing performance as a way of motivating employees to achieve their full potential in keeping with the overall objectives of the organisation (Swanepoel, 1998). The new Public Service Regulations (Republic of South Africa, 1998e) encourages this approach and it is expected that all managers will need to implement the appropriate systems and processes to allow this to happen. Spangenberg (1994) notes however, that the implementation of performance management to improve performance is only possible if a *culture of productivity and quality* exists in the organisation (Spangenberg, 1994). Certainly in the South African public service it would seem highly unlikely that such a culture exists and the challenge lies not in implementing the new regulations, but rather encouraging an organisational environment and culture where the elements of the act can be utilised most effectively to ensure improved performance.

It is clear that the in the 'new' era of government reform, both in South Africa and other countries (developed and developing), optimum performance is a priority. This is no accident – Altshuler (1997, p2) argues that "the progressive approach to public management assumes that there is "one best way" to handle every situation, and that way can be captured in a rule book. By contrast, the most

admired organisations today are generally distinguished by their capacity to learn, adapt, and innovate in the midst of constantly evolving conditions, knowledge, and technology, and the fact that citizens have learned to demand services tailored to their specific circumstances. So the great contemporary challenges of public management are to demonstrate effectiveness rather than mere adherence to rules, a capacity to learn rather than just mastering established routines, and democratic accountability by means other than action 'by the book'."

Internationally, certainly, there is an increasing emphasis on performance of the public service. This performance is defined both in terms of meeting the requirements of citizens' as efficiently and as effectively as possible and in ensuring that performance meets the strategic organisational goals. Gore (1997, p4) states that "President Clinton and I were determined to make government work better too. You probably haven't read or heard much about this part of reinvention – although we never intended it to be a secret – but we have made real progress. The government is beginning to produce more results and less red tape. I'll be the first to say that there is still plenty of room for improvement, but Americans are beginning to see the results in the form of fast, courteous service".

Whilst the 1990s has a seen a resurgence and pressure on improving performance in the public service internationally, many of the initiatives which have been introduced and implemented have failed. Rosen (1993) asserts that the reason for these failures is that barriers to performance continue to exit and impact on

effective public service performance. Rosen (1993) highlights two key barriers that are relevant to public service departments - resistance to change by public servants which means that productivity improvement involves continuous motivation and persuasion and the fact that public productivity is a relatively young field which means that it is plagued by ambiguities.

Lerner & Wanat (1992, p12) identify such constraints and possible barriers to performance in the public service as being - legal restrictions and requirements, social and ethical norms for public management, public opinion, legislative and elected official control, financial strictures, personnel procedures, paperwork and slowness traceable to size at some levels of the public administration. Lerner & Wanat (1992) add on that many of these constraints are not experienced in the private sector at all and are unique to the public service.

Peters (1989, p30) reinforces this position by stating that "the tendency of administrators to drag their feet, or at least not administer vigorously will be exacerbated in situations of high politicisation both of particular policies and of the society in general...civil servants have little to gain by close co-operation with politicians. Their careers are largely untouched by politicians in many countries (although not all) and it may in fact be a detriment to be too closely identified with a particular political party or politician especially if they lose office." Rosen (1993) defines this specific phenomenon as one where politics and productivity are like oil and water – they are naturally incompatible. Productivity,

argues Rosen (1993), is based on fact, while politics is based on values and interests. This incompatibility makes the functioning and delivery of the public service very complex and difficult. In addition, the implementation of programmes to improve performance in the private sector are often inappropriate for the public service where a range of factors, unfamiliar to the private sector, abound. Rosen (1993) examines specifically the difficulty of measuring productivity in the public service. Rosen (1993, p69) states that "The public sector produces services, and they are not for sale on the open market. While 'shadow' prices might be derivable for services with private sector analogues, many public agencies have no market equivalent. Similarly, the major resource in the public sector is labour, but the cost of labour is usually a function of longevity." Buntz (1986) argues that barriers to productivity improvement in the public service include resistance to change, lack of motivation, low morale, philosophical resistance, and organised labour resistance. Buntz (1986) adds that intergovernmental relations, policy shifts and social-political elements constrain improvements in performance.

This theme is enhanced by Fox, Schwella & Wissink (1991) who define the differences between the public service and private sector as being the degree of market exposure (the public service is subject to less market exposure than the private sector), the public service is subject to more legal and formal constraints, political influences are more pervasive in the public service, the public service is subjected to continuous public scrutiny, public service is expected to live up to

unique public expectations and finally, the public service has complex objectives and evaluation and decision criteria. In attempting to analyse the specific barriers to performance in the public service, the *differences* between the public and private sectors provide some understanding as to the kind of organisational culture that would develop in the public service in response to its unique characteristics.

Much of the literature on the performance of organisations and the relationship of the organisational culture to that performance, has been developed using private sector examples and cases. Ouchi (1981), Deal & Kennedy (1982) and Peters & Waterman (1982) are perhaps the best known of those theorists that conclusively link effective organisational performance to the culture of that organisation. This management-oriented literature has its roots firmly in the private sector. Lerner & Wanat (1992) argue that while the public administration is unique due its high levels of constraint, this does not necessarily inhibit the ability of the public service to deliver services efficiently or creatively. Instead, Lerner & Wanat (1992, p11) argue that "even though the public manager must operate in a very restrictive environment, action is still possible. In fact by knowing what the constraints are the manager can more effectively direct his or her energies to finding and capitalising upon the possibilities".

What is clear about the debates on public sector performance is that there is no absolute understanding of what public sector performance is, nor how to achieve

the required levels of performance, nor, in fact, what indicators may even be used in the measurement of such performance. In the South African scenario, rhetoric abounds. The Batho Pele White Paper (Republic of South Africa, 1997b) talks about "setting service standards" and popular discussion on public service reform refers to improving performance. Yet in all its constructs, performance in the public service appears a vague but fashionable concept. Stewart & Walsh (1994, p45) argue that performance in the public domain is an elusive concept "different parties can give different meanings to performance and meanings can vary from customer to customer and from citizen to citizen." In addition, the concept of performance measures in the public sector has never entirely been defined. Certainly in the South African scenario what one is seeing are performance measures that tend to measure the more obvious and quantitative measurables rather than the more qualitative outcome type measures. A public hospital in the South African context is more likely to measure performance by quantifying specific areas – an obvious example would be measuring the performance of a unit by looking at the more quantitative examples such as minutes waited in a queue or patients who have seen a doctor. This approach (in the tradition of both the UK Citizen's Charter and US approach) does not account for either the quality of the service received nor for the preferred aspects of performance to be measured. In the case of performance in hospitals, the patients would probably prefer a trade off between time waited and quality of service provided and, as such, a measure for the quality of the service may be more appropriate than for time waited.

Performance measurement in the public service is muddied by an additional concern namely that in the public domain, no set of indicators can ever be assumed to be complete since no relevant issues can be excluded and that these relevant issues will continue to change, develop and retreat. A further concern about measuring performance in the public service is raised by Mintzberg (1996) who asserts that the assumption that underlies performance measurement is that the goals that each activity must achieve can be expressed in quantitative terms. This is clearly not probable in the public service where policies are under continuous pressure and such do not remain fixed points but are, in fact, continuously dynamic. In addition, argues Mintzberg (1996) measurement often misses the point, sometimes causing awful distortions – imagine the hospital scenario where quality is comprised for shorter waiting times.

The debate on performance in the public service is endless and not likely to be pinned down. Certainly the literature review reveals no common understanding nor agreement on what is meant by public service performance. What does emerge from the literature, however, is the ongoing need to *improve* performance and this is the key area of interest. This research report is based on one main premise – that the public service needs to improve its performance and that to improve performance in any organisation, the factors existent in the organisational culture that inhibit performance need to be extracted and appropriate strategic interventions need to be put into place.

2.2 Organisational Culture and the Public Service

2.2.1 Overview

Organisational culture is a fairly recent phenomenon that has a wide range of meanings within management literature. Mead (1994) refers to three aspects of organisational culture which he defines as organisational beliefs, organisational attitudes and organisational values. Hofstede (1997) asserts that organisational culture is holistic – referring to a whole which is more than the sum of its parts; historically determined – reflecting the history of the organisation; related to things anthropologists study like rituals and symbols; socially constructed – created and preserved by the group of people who together form the organisation; soft and difficult to change.

Robbins (1997) states that organisational culture is a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguishes the organisation from other organisations. This system of shared meanings is in fact a set of characteristics that the organisation values. Robbins (1997) purports that there are seven primary characteristics that capture the essence of an organization's culture – innovation and risk taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, stability. Each of these characteristics exists on a continuum from low to high and an appraisement of the organisation, using these

characteristics, will give a synthesized picture of the culture of an organisation. Kanter (1977) argues that corporate culture is reflected in the language, rituals and styles of communication. Herbert (1976) defines culture as the composite of those beliefs, values and techniques for dealing with an environment which are *shared* among contemporaries and transmitted by one generation to the next. Johnson & Scholes (1997) note that there are significant differences in the corporate governance frameworks between countries and that the expectations of stakeholders is determined by the cultural context. Johnson & Scholes (1997) acknowledge the importance of subcultures and the impact of these subcultures on organisations.

Schein (1992) distinguishes ten categories of overt phenomena that are associated with organisational culture. These categories are observed behaviour regularities when people interact; group norms; espoused values; formal philosophy; rules of the game; climate; embedded skills; habits of thinking, mental modes and/ or linguistic paradigms; shared meanings; root metaphors or integrating symbols. None of these however, states Schein (1992), are the culture of an organisation or group. The culture of the group can be defined as "a pattern of shared assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems" (Schein, 1992, p12). Schein (1985) also refers to the culture of an organisation as consisting of three layers – values which are

easy to identify in an organisation and are often written down as a statements about the organisation; beliefs which are more specific; and taken-for-granted-assumptions which are the real core of the culture of an organisation. The taken-for-granted assumptions are those elements of an organisational life that are difficult to identify and explain but clearly exist.

The significance of organisational culture has been embraced by a number of practitioners and theorists. Robbins (1997) posits that culture performs a number of functions in an organisation. Robbins (1997) states that culture has a boundary defining role; conveys a sense of identity; facilitates the generation of commitment to something larger than ones self interests; enhances social system stability; and finally that culture serves as a sense-making and control mechanism that guides and shapes the attitudes and behavior of employees. The significance of culture in organisation theory is advanced by a number of other theorists including Ouchi (1982), Deal & Kennedy (1983), Kotter & Heskett (1992), Schein (1992) and Mead (1994).

Theorists such Kotter & Heskett (1992) and Schein (1992) have drawn links between performance and organisational culture and Robbins (1997) describes organisational culture as an intervening variable that is linked to both satisfaction and performance. Kotter & Heskett (1992), in their work on the power of culture, note that popular management literature in the 1980's saw culture as having a significant impact on performance of organisations. Organisational culture was

popularised through the assertion that 'strong' organisational cultures, where a uniform, consensual set of values runs throughout the organisation, is a recipe for corporate success (Fineman, 1993). This has been challenged by theorists such as Schumacher (1997) who argue that cultural consistency is fanciful and in fact it is more probable that there are conflicting subcultures or even cultures with no consensus at all. In addition, Flynn (1990) questions whether it is possible to create organisations in which everyone shares the same values, whether it is necessary for responsive service delivery that all employees share the same values and finally whether it is even possible to influence people's behaviour by creating structures in which they can work well even though underlying values are not shared.

Miles (1978) groups organisations into three basic types in terms of how they behave strategically. Organisations may be viewed as defender, prospector or analyser type organisations and each type of organisation has preferred strategies and planning and control systems. While Miles (1978) does not identify 'best' and 'worst' cultures – he does argue that the identification of what type of culture exists is critical to ensure a match between new strategies and the prevailing paradigm.

In response to these assumptions, Kotter & Heskett (1992) sought to determine the extent of the correlation between culture and performance. The studies revealed the following:

- Corporate culture can have a significant impact on the long time performance of a firm;
- corporate culture will probably be a critical factor in determining the success or failure of firms in the next decade;
- corporate cultures that inhibit strong performance do exist;
- and although difficult to change, corporate culture can be changed to enhance performance.

Kotter & Heskett (1992), however, go on to say that the "strong" culture position is inhibiting in its simplicity and neither the "strong" culture position nor the strong-cultures-are-bad perspective are holistic enough to explain the long term performance of the organisations studied.

Mead (1994) maintains that an organisational culture is strong when it is cohesive and group members share the same values, beliefs and attitudes; communication is easy and members can easily communicate with each other; and when members depend upon each other in order to meet individual needs. Mead (1994) does, however, draw a distinction between *strong* organisational culture and *positive* organisational culture. A *positive* organisational culture is a culture where members perceive that they have a stake in the outcomes of an organisation and when the organisation benefits, they benefit; profits and losses of the organisation are perceived to be shared fairly; demands for productivity are considered reasonable; and official relationships are considered reasonable. This

analysis arrives at the understanding that a *strong positive* culture is optimum and builds on Kotter & Heskett's (1992) work.

According to Schein (1985), leaders have the greatest potential for entrenching and reinforcing aspects of culture in an organisation. Schein (1985) describes five mechanisms through which this may be done – attention of leaders to priorities, values and concerns, reactions to crises, role modeling; allocation of rewards; and criteria for selection and dismissal. Schein (1985) goes on to describe five secondary mechanisms that are useful for entrenching and reinforcing culture – design of organisation structure, design of systems and procedures, design of facilities, stories, legends and myths, and formal statements.

The literature review reveals that there is a diverse understanding of both what organisational culture *is*, *how* organisational culture impacts on organisations and *whether* organisational culture can enhance performance. This is reinforced by Schumacher (1997) who argues that no consensus has been reached on the definition of culture.

2.2.2 Organisational Subcultures

Located within the debates on organisational culture is a debate on organisational subcultures. Schumacher (1997, p110) uses a philosophical model called constructivism to describe his understanding of organisational culture. Central to

the model is the assumption that each person categorises his/her experience and in so doing creates his/her own 'subjective reality'. Schumacher (1997, p11) goes on to state that this 'subjective reality' is a mode of thinking where "for each individual constructed reality is often viewed as an absolute reality and not simply as their categories of experience. Language is the most commonly used system for this categorisation of experience." Schumacher (1997) uses the example of language, namely that a group that shares a common language could constitute a *culture* in the constructivist framework. The constructivist framework accommodates the understanding that the uniqueness of the experience of each individual and the creativity brought to the construction of categories for that experience results in each individual having a unique reality. Added to this is the fact that the individuals continue to have new experiences that impact on the categories thereby forcing their category systems to evolve. The socially constructed categories are continuously changing and modernising due to the unrelenting influence of new experiences by member individuals. What this means for our understanding of culture, argues Schumacher (1997, p110), is that cultures must be "continuously built through communication that renegotiates the categories for, and interpretations of shared experience." This constructivist model effects the understanding of organisational analysis by acknowledging the uniqueness of the contributing individual's realities and the continuously changing shared category system. The constructivist model submits that researchers need to construct culturally unique instruments when engaging in analysis. The constructivist model also asserts that organisational subcultures

may often have "greater strength, coherence or richness than that of an organisation-wide culture. This is because energy must be continually expended to build up and maintain a culture" (Schumacher, 1997, p.111). Examples of organisational subcultures that may be derived from shared experiences include the sharing of a professional language, shared tasks that require the development of specific linguistic categories, personal interest or regular interaction that follows from geographic placement.

Schumacher (1997) posits that the two dimensions that could be used to describe a culture are the people that are 'members' and the 'knowledge domain' that they share. According to Schumacher (1997) any category for experience can be a domain. A single phrase or word may be used as a label for a domain and that single phrase may have different meanings to different groups. The definition of 'knowledge domain' means that there is an infinite combination of different knowledge domains and these domains differ in scope and detail as well as content. The usefulness of the constructivist model lies in the conceptualisation of culture change – namely that the constructivist model accommodates a deeper and more textured understanding of organisational culture and hence the appropriate interventions required for any kind of culture change. Schumacher (1997) refers to three key kinds of culture change.

1. *Drift* which is considered to be gradual change in few domains for few members of the culture. This kind of change is always occurring in cultures

but may be restricted to specific domains and have no impact on the broader organisational culture;

2. *Evolution* describes change in several significant domains for the majority of culture members. Most or all of employees are aware of evolutionary change and many experience some impact;
3. *Transformation* is described as change in many significant domains for the majority of members of the culture. The change is so significant that the identity of the culture is at least questioned and perhaps redefined.

The constructivist model of organisational culture provides a useful composition of culture and culture change processes that can be useful in describing organisational change.

Ybema (1997, p163) reinforces Schumacher's (1997) notion by arguing that "the division of work and workers into different groups and levels is a breeding ground for cultural division within an organisation. People with a common place or position, the same office or canteen, interact frequently, start to form a group, and may develop a distinctive group culture. Consequently, culture in organisations is tied to a workplace, a department, or a hierarchical level. In addition to this any individual may at any given time be associated with any number of 'knowledge dimensions'.

Hernes (1997) extends this theme by arguing that organisational culture and group membership are related concepts – meaning that the beliefs, values and norms of individuals in organisations may be demonstrated by their identification with the groups in which they are members. Around these subgroups certain patterns of inter-group relations will emerge. These inter-group relations are important for two reasons, argues Hernes (1997). The first reason is that these groups are perceived as being important by their members, and secondly, the evolving inter-group relations have a major impacts on the entire organisation. Hernes (1997, p344) goes on to say that knowledge about these subcultures is necessary for managing them "skilfully and hence successfully".

A review of the literature reveals an appealing case for the importance and significance of organisational subcultures – both in terms of *how* these subcultures relate to the broader organisational culture and the *role* the organisational subcultures can play in organisational change.

What is useful to note is that an acknowledgement of the importance of organisational subcultures does not detract for the broader debates on organisational culture. Instead, the ongoing research on organisational subcultures continues to enhance our understanding of organisational culture. In the discussions and analysis of organisational culture, this research report adopts a framework which appreciates the role of organisational subcultures and accepts the role that these subcultures may play.

2.2.3 Public Service Culture

A review of public service literature indicates that public services the world over can be said to have specific public service culture elements. Metcalfe & Richards (1987), Peters (1989), Lawton & Rose (1991), and Lovell (1994) contend that not only does the concept of a *public service culture* exist but that central to this *public service culture* is the concept of bureaucracy and the particular impact of the bureaucracy on this culture.

The significance of organisational culture extends to public service organisations. Peters (1989) argues that "good government" is influenced by an array of cultures such as political, societal, public administration and administrative cultures. Culture has a significant impact on the behaviour of public administration and public administrations respond to this array of cultures both in terms of policy delivery and in terms of good governance. Stewart (1980) shows how the budgetary environment can impact on the culture of public sector organisations,

Where Hofstede (1997) defines the dimensions of national culture that may impact on organisational culture, Bendix (1956) and Peters (1989) examine the impact of national dimensions of culture on the public service culture. This is affirmed by Katz and Eisenstadt (1960) who examine the displacement of a bureaucratic culture when new types of clients (immigrants) are introduced into the system. Kakabadse (1982) specifically examines culture in social services

departments and the impact of this culture on delivery. In addition, it is noted that national culture will also influence the internal *management* of public service organisations (Peters, 1989). For Lawton & Rose (1991, p62) culture is created as "Past values and beliefs are transmitted to new members through formal induction programmes and informal working practice epitomised in such phrases as 'We do things this way in this office". The transmission of values ensures continuity and allows the organisation to survive changes in personnel." This is particularly rigorous in the public service and Margaret Thatcher is supposed to have applied that acid test of 'is he one of us?' when making her senior appointments (Lawton & Rose, 1991).

Using Handy's (1985) various types of organisational culture as a framework, Lawton & Rose (1994) define a set of criteria appropriate to public service organisations. These criteria are identified as a political culture; an administrative culture; a legal culture and a market culture. The conduciveness of these cultures to change is examined by Hennessy (1989) who, in his work, maintains that the strength of a public service culture is formidable should change be introduced. Willcocks & Harrow (1992) argue that the professional and administrative cultures of the civil service hinder significant organisational improvements. They go on to say that public services have historically worked along a classic Weberian form and as such the elements of a bureaucracy have become entrenched thereby resisting change. Henessey (1989, p521) suggests that after three decades of moving up the hierarchy, senior civil servants become

indistinguishable from each, "their habits, modes of thought, patterns of speech, style of drafting will have rubbed off on one another to the point where a few free or tough or independent spirits resist mutation into a sludgy administrative amalgam." Finally, Metcalfe & Richards (1987, p16) posit that there is a cultural lag before any change can be implemented in the public service, "the ruling ideas appropriate to an earlier age persist and continue to exert an influence on administrative behaviour and organisational structure long after the conditions in which they have developed have disappeared."

A predominant term used to describe the way in which public service departments are constructed is the word "bureaucracy". The use of this particular term in describing the public service refers not only to the design of the public service but also to the processes, systems, regulatory framework and control structures. The phraseology – bureaucracy – consigns to the original Weberian concept which is "best understood as an elaborate annotated checklist of organisational features that bureaucracies are presumed to display, ideally. Behind this checklist stands a Weberian sociological view of the overall tone of modern secular societies that bureaucracy epitomises." (Lerner & Wanat, 1992, p41).

Bureaucracy in its purest and most traditional form is assembled of a number of elements. Tampoe (1994) posits that bureaucracy depends on the fact that people and systems within it will function in a consistent manner for at least 95% of the

time. In addition bureaucracy is made up of rules and regulations which are then embedded in a bureaucratic process.

While Tampoe (1994, p140) does go on to say that no large organisation can operate without bureaucracy, he still notes that "there is no denying that it may, sometimes, genuinely frustrate those who need to shortcut their way through the system or carve out a set of rules to suit the legitimate needs of the organisation they serve."

Lerner & Wanat (1992) state that the core element of bureaucracy resides in the specialisation or division of labour. Linked to this specialisation is the concept of impersonality which refers to the style of interpersonal interactions and the attitudes towards both the clients and the employees. A further principle of Weber's bureaucracy is that of the separation of official and private roles – the power of an official resides in his/ her position and not in his/ her person. Another element of Weber's bureaucracy is the idea that there is a direct relationship between the scope of one's organisational vision and the height of one's hierarchical position (Lerner & Wanat, 1992).

The combination of these elements has defined an organisational blueprint that is, or has been, apparent in almost all public service departments. Reasons for the adoption of such a singular model in the public service may be directly linked to the nature of government and the constraints that beset it. Lerner & Wanat (1992)

assert that the uniqueness of the public sector administration lies in the extent of the constraints surrounding and permeating it. These constraints are intrinsic to and are the distinguishing characteristics of public administration, as a result these constraints will be ever present. These constraints result in specific limitation experienced by public service departments. A pursuit of this trajectory may lead to the conclusion therefore, that the construct of the public service *has no option* but to be 'bureaucratic' given the nature and purpose of government. While it is acknowledged that originally many large private sector organisations were organised as bureaucracies (Robbins, 1997), over time significant changes have taken place in the private sector - spans of control have been widened, authority has become more decentralised and the use of teams has grown. The same rate of change is not as apparent in the public service in South Africa (Swilling & Wooldridge, 1996). Instead what is notable is that the public service regulations apparent in the South African public service ensure a continued bureaucratic model.

If it is to be believed that the bureaucratic systems, processes, regulations and structures all contribute to a kind of organisational culture, then the extension of this thought is that bureaucracies the world over will share a number similar cultural elements. "By the way, that long line of managers was not just waiting to convey the frontline workers' ideas to the top boss. They were busy producing rules and regulations spelling every detail of what front-line workers should and should not do... many bosses are changing the way they do their jobs –

encouraging innovation and customer service instead of just making workers toe the line." (Gore, 1996, p15)

The statement above suggests that a change in regulations and systems has brought about some change in the *culture* but that when the bureaucratic regulations and systems are in place, the response is a more bureaucratic culture. If it is understood then that governments, *by their very nature*, are bureaucratic, the question that needs to be asked is what impact does this bureaucratic nature have on the organisational culture? Metcalfe & Richards (1987), for example, identify three elements of the disbelief system of the British public service namely scepticism about proposals for restructuring organisations; the belief that reforms generally fail; immediate doubts about management theories of concepts which address broader or longer terms issues. Metcalfe & Richards (1987) are particular proponents of the 'cultural' approach to change in the public service, contending that while the stability of a particular organisational culture will always be at risk from environmental turbulence, an appropriate value orientation would provide a more secure foundation for the public services

Certainly, Schein (1985) argues that there are five secondary mechanisms that are useful for entrenching and reinforcing culture – design of organisation structure; design of systems and procedures; design of facilities; stories, legends and myths; and formal statements.

Johnston (1993), for example, states that most public service organisations are identified with a 'bureaucratic culture' and Lerner & Wanat (1992, p51) accent specific bureaucratic characteristics that exist in any public service – "If bureaucracy is, among other things, the format for rationally systemising large-scale tasks through co-ordinated specializations, the priority on technical correctness of performance and rational analysis of task becomes very great...when carried through to personnel practices, it places a priority on selecting and advancing people according to how well they demonstrate relevant skills. In the classic model, personnel selection and advancement thus come to emphasis the demonstration of task relevant merit. The ability to do the job must be the criterion for getting the job (at first entry and successive promotions), otherwise the original scheme for work will fall apart".

Peters (1989) goes on to assert that in public service organisations the relationship between superiors and subordinates is of interest as well as the cultural basis for the motivation of workers. These specific elements are of interest, argues Peters (1989), in terms of the examining the delivery of public organisations. This bureaucratic element or content is particular to all public services due to the very nature of government itself. Peters (1986, p52) suggests that "whether one accepts the state-centric model of agenda setting or not, one must realise that bureaucracies are central to the process of policy formulation"

Mintzberg (1996) refers to five models for managing government - the government-as-machine model; the government-as-network model; the performance-control model; the virtual-government model and the normative-control model. Each model, it is argued, has a specific role to play in the delivery of different types of services. It is not the definition of each model that is of interest but rather the subtext –namely that each model is a variation on the theme of bureaucracy. The fact that the public service has these bureaucratic elements, argues Mintzberg (1996, p82) is something positive: "There is no one best model. We currently function with all of them. Tax collection would be inconceivable without a healthy dose of the machine model, as would foreign policy without the network model. And no government can function effectively without a significant overlay of normative controls, just as no government today can ignore the need to shed what no longer belongs in the public sector. Government, in other words, is an enormously eclectic system, as varied as life itself."

While an overview of the literature presents a difficulty in attempting to define what organisational culture is, this research reports adopts a specific framework that assists in both the understanding of the topic and research conducted. The key tenets of the framework are:

1. There is a link between organisational culture and performance (Kotter & Heskett, 1992) although the dimensions of this linkage are more complex and dynamic than presented by Deal & Kennedy (1983) - especially in the public sector context (Rosen, 1993);

2. There is a *public service culture* that can be said to stem from the 'bureaucratic' model found in most public service departments (Lerner & Wanat, 1992; and Johnston, 1993);
3. Organisational culture is comprised of significant organisational subcultures which may emanate from 'knowledge domains' and according to the constructivist model, these organisational subcultures play a critical role any change programme (Schumacher, 1997).

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

3.1 Introduction

Based on the literature review, this research report argues that while effective performance has become a priority of government in South Africa (in keeping with international trends and the requirements of the macro-economic framework – GEAR), the organisational culture that prevails in the public service may actually inhibit or prevent this optimum performance. Theorists such as Metcalfe & Richards (1987), Hennessey (1989) and Willcocks & Harrow (1992) provide the appropriate theoretical framework for this assumption. In addition, it would appear that decision makers, rather than *actively* acknowledging, understanding or attempting to deal with organisational culture in the public service, implement change policies and interventions over the culture (Lawton & Rose, 1994). While it is acknowledged that there may be many factors that inhibit government performance, this research report argues that organisational culture is of specific significance. An observation made is that all public service departments in South Africa are governed by an identical legal and regulatory framework but that an ability and propensity for performance varies. As such, it would seem that the specific organisational cultures that exist in each case may therefore be more meaningful to study. This lack of acknowledgment of the influence of organisational culture in the public service threatens to thwart any effective

change processes as well as potentially resulting in the solving, at great expense, of the wrong issues.

3.2 Propositions

This research report therefore examines four key propositions:

1. In public service departments there is a low propensity for performance - Peters (1989); Wholey, Newcomer & Associates (1989); Osborne & Gaebler (1992) and Swilling & Wooldridge (1996);
2. Many of the inhibiting factors to performance are entrenched in the culture of the organisation - Peters (1989); Lerner & Wanat (1992); Johnston (1993); Lawton & Rose (1994) and Lovell (1994);
3. To ensure optimum performance in public service departments, fundamental transformation of the culture itself is required;
4. The organisational culture of the public service comprises organisational subcultures based on 'knowledge domains', some of which may inhibit performance - Johnson & Scholes (1997) and Schumacher (1997).

It is intended that this research will deepen the understanding of the role of organisational culture within the public service as well as increasing awareness about the importance of identifying the various elements of organisational culture and the influence thereof on performance in the public service.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research conducted comprised of two stages - a quantitative and a qualitative stage. Two stages were used so as to ensure a multi-dimensional approach to the research question and to provide triangulation (Werbeloff, 1996) of the research results. In addition, the information obtained from the qualitative research was required to provide a deeper and more textured understanding of the quantitative research question. The qualitative research provided the researcher with an opportunity to 'unpack' in some detail elements of the quantitative research and, as such, was felt to be a critical component of the research.

4.1 Population to be researched:

The population in this instance is the 130 000 public servants who work, on a full time basis, for the Gauteng Provincial Government and who are employed in terms of the Public Service Act (Republic of South Africa, 1994a).

4.2 Research Methodology

4.2.1 Phase One – Performance Orientation Questionnaire

In phase one (Performance Orientation Questionnaire) a convenience sample of 250 people was used. This method of sampling is non-probability sampling and

convenience sampling was used as the researcher had direct access to the Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs and in terms of resource and time constraints, this form of sampling is the most appropriate (Werbeloff, 1996). The entire staff complement of the Department of Finance and Economic Affairs was seen as the convenience sample and all available (i.e. those members of staff not on annual or sick leave) staff members were provided with the Performance Orientation Questionnaire. POQ questionnaires were distributed by hand to every available individual in the department (250 individuals). The questionnaires were attached to a letter signed by the Head of Department, that explained the process and the importance of such an exercise (refer Appendix 1). A period of two weeks was provided for the questionnaires to be handed in and a central point was made available where questionnaires could be collected. Anonymity was reinforced in letter written by the Head of Department and by the method of returning the POQ.

The first phase of the research used a quantitative questionnaire (refer Appendix 1) to assess the performance orientation of the department and to identify elements of the organisational culture as it relates to performance. Phase One of the research was used to test proposition one – '*In public service departments there is a low propensity for performance*'.

The quantitative questionnaire was also used to answer to proposition two – '*Many of the inhibiting factors to performance are entrenched in the culture of*

the organisation' – by defining the performance orientation culture of the department. Due to the specific construct of the questionnaire used, individual questions did not pertain to specific propositions. Instead the questionnaire *as a whole* responded specifically to propositions one and two.

The quantitative questionnaire used was based on a Performance Orientation Questionnaire (POQ) that has been used in many organisations to test performance orientation[20]. This POQ allows for the measurement of the performance orientation culture of an organisation as well as providing some guidelines to the *thinking* that the organisation may have around performance orientation. This questionnaire was originally developed by the Knox D'Arcy Group of Consultants, which is a United Kingdom based firm dealing specifically with the enhancement of performance in organisations, but was later adapted by the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The validity and reliability of the instrument has been proven by the use of the instrument in over 20 companies in South Africa ranging from manufacturing to the pharmaceutical industry. The results from each study conducted using this instrument has proved consistent with the expected results and the instrument is believed to provide an accurate assessment of the performance orientation of an organisation.[21]

20 Examples of organisations researched in South Africa include Mondi, Nabisco SA and Glaxo Wellcome.
21 Telephonic conversation held with Suzie Koch, Project Manager, CSIR, 21st August 1998.

This has meant that the reliability of the POQ has been determined by the test-retest method – namely that the results from POQ have proved consistent throughout its use (Werbeloff, 1996).

In addition the questionnaire is reproducible, as noted by its repeated use. The validity of the test has been assessed using construct validity and it is accepted that the POQ does indeed measure performance orientation in an organisation. This specific POQ was chosen as the researcher sought a questionnaire that would allow a thorough assessment of the performance orientation of the organisation as well as allowing a more in-depth understanding of those elements that may hinder performance. The POQ has to date only been used in the private sector and this has been identified as a limitation of the research.

Three questions were removed from the POQ questionnaire due to the unnecessary focus on managers. It is acknowledged that this may be seen as a limitation of the research as previously discussed. However, the researcher believes that the removal of these questions does not compromise the intention of the questionnaire. These three questions were 'stand alone' questions, and, as such, unlinked to the other questions. The POQ questionnaire comprises of a series of 46 statements that respondents are asked to respond to on a five-point Likert scale with an 'uncertain' central point. The Likert Scale allows the interviewee to express his/her degree of agreement or disagreement to the statements.

The POQ comprises seven dimension in which each of the statements is located. These dimensions allow the performance orientation of an organisation to be measured. These dimensions are as follows:

1. *Accountability and sense of urgency*

This dimension measures the extent to which the respondent feels personally accountable for both the achievement of his/her own work objectives and the performance of other members of the team. It, additionally, measures the extent to which the respondent perceives there to be a sense of urgency and pressure for good performance in the organisation.

2. *Potential for Change*

This dimension measures the extent to which the respondent feels that doing things differently is both necessary and possible in order to improve results and also assesses the level of difficulty the respondent perceives there to be in making changes in both his/her own job and in the organisation generally.

3. *Performance Planning*

This dimension measures the extent to which the respondent regards effective planning and organising of work as a characteristic associated with good managers and successful organisations as a basis for facilitating change and also measures the extent to which he/she believes that effective planning is possible within his/her own organisation's environment.

4. Communication and systems clarity

This dimension measures the extent to which the respondent has a clear understanding of exactly what is expected of him/her in terms of results and of the working practices and roles of others in the organisation. Additionally, it measures how he/she views his/her own role as communicator and the extent to which he/she values the communication of performance data as a means of prompting action.

5. Management Style

This dimension measures the extent to which the respondent understands that an 'active' as opposed to a 'passive' management style is the most appropriate way for ensuring results without detriment to quality.

6. Motivation

This dimension measures the extent to which the respondent believes that the motivation and productiveness of staff can be influenced by factors other than just pay. In particular it measures how much the respondent values the use of performance goals as a motivational technique and whether he/she believes there us a link between personal effort and doing well in the organisation both for him/herself and for others.

7. Organisational Readiness and Support

This dimension measures the extent to which the respondent believes that the organisation is ready to make significant changes and how active he/she believes top management characteristically is in supporting change. In addition, it assesses the respondent's perception of how well, smoothly and supportively changes have characteristically been handled in the past and thereby the extent of the respondent's real belief that change will happen.

4.2.1.1 Method of Analysis of Responses to the Performance Orientation Questionnaire

In phase one (POQ), two key methods of analysis were used. Once the POQ papers were returned, each paper was individually marked against a template provided with the POQ. This template provides the 'positive' and 'negative' response to each of the 46 statements. This may either be strongly agree/ agree or strongly disagree/ disagree. A response of 'uncertain' is always considered an 'negative' response. Each paper would have 46 markings considered either falling in the 'positive' or 'negative' column. Once marked, the responses were subdivided into the seven dimensions that make up the performance orientation assessment.

These dimensions were then graphed reflecting the percentage of responses that may be viewed as 'positive' or 'negative' as related to the culture that promotes performance (viz. they are reflected graphically on a negative response basis thereby highlighting the exact level of inappropriate performance orientation).
For example 'positive' responses are those responses that reflect a culture that **promotes** performance. While 'negative' responses are those responses that would reflect the extent to which the culture **does not promote** performance.

The dimensions were then compared against each other to determine particular areas of weakness as well as to determine overall organisation orientation towards performance. The method of analysis has been used by implementation consultants in a range of organisations such as Glaxo Wellcome (SA) and Nabisco (SA). It has proven effective as providing a 'first cut' indication of organisational attitude and culture towards performance.[22] Further analysis was provided by using the five-point Likert Scale. This allowed the scores to be summed, or summed and averaged to yield individual scores in an agreement or satisfaction continuum. Specific questions were analysed (outside of their dimension) using the five point Likert scale. Areas of interest that were raised later in the NGT were confirmed by examining specific answers in the POQ. Not all answers were assessed using an analysis of the five-point Likert scale. Rather, the researcher extracted specific themes in Phase Two and questioned those themes especially, by drawing on certain responses from POQ.

22 Telephonic conversation held with Suzie Koch, CSIR Project Manager, held on the 21st August 1998.

The themes extracted from the POQ to be analysed using the five-point Likert Scale were those themes pertaining specifically to organisational culture and therefore, deemed useful for further analysis for purposes of the research.

4.2.2 Phase Two – Nominal Group Technique (NGT)

In phase two a random stratified sample was drawn from the convenience sample. This random stratified sample (Werbeloff, 1996) was used for the nominal group technique that was conducted. In order to arrive at appropriate groupings for the Nominal Group Technique (Viedge, 1988), the entire staff complement of the department was used as a basis. A copy of a PERSAL[23] printout for the department was used to divide all staff into the categories identified by the researcher i.e. the entire staff complement of the Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs was stratified into five strata. These strata were based on the 'knowledge domains' identified by Schumacher (1997). Each strata was seen to represent a specific organisational subculture in the department. This assessment was based on the researcher's understanding and experience of public service departments as well as the fact that historically, the subcultures in any organisation are those which are centred around shared 'knowledge domains', language and job type (Schumacher, 1997). The researcher used this understanding as a basis for identifying the strata. Once the staff members in each strata had been identified, a random selection of individuals from each strata was

23 PERSAL is the information base of the staffing of all government departments. PERSAL includes information such as the age, rank and qualifications of each staff members and also provides informationm such as salary scale and promotability.

made. This was undertaken by using the Kth factor (Werbeloff, 1996) and, in this case, every fifth individual from a particular stratum was chosen. While the numbers of staff member per stratum did vary, a key requirement of the NGT process is that each process should have no less than five participants and no more than nine, and as such an equal number of participants were drawn from each stratum (Viedge, 1988). The number of participants per NGT process was not proportionate to the representation of that stratum in the staff complement of the department.

The strata identified by the researcher matches the assumed organisational subgroups. In some instances staff were associated with more than one 'knowledge domain' as is noted in the figures.

1. Length of service – civil servants who have been in the employ of the public service for longer than five years **113 staff;**
2. Top management – Directors and above (level ten and above according to PAS) **14 staff;**
3. Administrative staff – a group of staff who render an administrative function **103 staff;**
4. Professional staff – staff who have a specific technical expertise in the form of a profession such as accountants, teachers, economists, planners, psychologists etc. **35 staff;**
5. Lower graded staff – staff who are ranked below level five according to Personnel Administrative System (PAS) **60 staff**

In identifying individuals from each stratum, an original random group of twelve were chosen from each stratum. Groups of twelve people were originally chosen due to the expected attrition of the subgroups.

In phase two a qualitative methodology was used. A specific process was chosen which provides a more structured approach to discussion in groups. The Nominal Group Technique (NGT) was used to examine the approach by each subgroup to performance and to identify organisational culture elements apparent in each subgroup. The process also led to the identification of barriers to performance in the department. The NGT questions were aimed at distinguishing those 'agreed' organisational culture factors that inhibit performance in the public service as defined by the following organisational subgroups based on 'knowledge domains'. In the NGT, a 'thematic' questionnaire was used.

The thematic questionnaire comprised of two questions:

- 'What is performance?'
- 'What makes it difficult for you to perform your job?'

Question one – "what is performance" – was asked in order to test the various assumptions that different subgroups may have about performance in the department. This question tested proposition two – *'Many of the inhibiting*

factors to performance are entrenched in the culture of the organisation'. In addition, it was intended that this question would reveal underlying values regarding the issue of performance as per subgroup. This question was posed to deepen the understanding of the nature of performance in the department as well as to reveal the various dimensions of performance in the public service. Finally, this question was posed as a means *defining* what is meant by performance in the public service and the conflict/ convergence that may exist between the various subgroups. This question was posed to test proposition four – *'The organisational culture of the public service comprises organisational sub-cultures based on 'knowledge domains, some of which may inhibit performance''*.

The second questions asked – 'what makes it difficult to perform your job' – intended to reveal directly the barriers to p -formance as experienced by each subgroup. In addition it was supposed that this question would reveal the various contexts/ environments in which the subgroups operate through the responses. This question was deemed useful as a method of defining the concerns around which each group is based. This question was posed to test proposition three – *'To ensure optimum performance in public service departments, fundamental transformation of the culture itself is required'*.

In the NGT process, the sessions were conducted in such a way that half an hour was reserved for unstructured discussion. These discussions allowed for the interrogation of ideas which had stemmed from the NGT process. No specific

questions were posed, rather discussion stemmed naturally from the session, and focused (through facilitation) on the question of performance.

The NGT (Viedge, 1988) was used as it is a structured approach to decision making/ problem identification/ problem solving in a group environment. This process ensures a 'purity' of idea generation as discussion is avoided, except in one stage, and all participants are given an opportunity to provide a number of responses to the question. The NGT also prevents group dynamics from contaminating the session by using an individual rating and ranking of the responses. For the purposes of this research, homogenous groups were used ('knowledge domains') which are seen as more appropriate NGT groups as generally, there is greater conformity on issues and decisions may be reached - "The main difference between meetings and the NGT is that the NGT is a problem-solving process which elicits ideas from participants in an orderly and effective manner. The NGT follows a set sequence of stages, in certain of which no discussion is allowed among the participants. In contrast to an ordinary meeting, the NGT imposes a structure on the interaction, the focus of the group is maintained on a single problem, and finally, a definite outcome is assured by voting on the ideas generated" (Viedge, 1988, p2).

The five NGT sessions were conducted in the department of Finance and Economic Affairs in a neutral venue. In this instance the same venue was used for all five sessions namely the training room in the department. A comfortable

environment was created by placing the desks in a u-shape facing the facilitator. Cold drinks and biscuits were provided to all participants and participants were encouraged to relax and enjoy themselves. Two facilitators were chosen for the sessions. The researcher personally conducted the sessions for the following subgroups:

- Staff who have been in government for longer than five years;
- The professional group;
- The top management group.

The other two groups – the administrative staff and staff below level five – were facilitated by a member of staff able to conduct these sessions in two or more African languages. The limitation of this method has been discussed previously.

The researcher identified this as an issue as a number of staff employed below level five/ administrative staff are seemingly uncomfortable communicating in English due to low levels of proficiency[24].

24 This problem was identified by the researcher as 'participant observer' in the department.

An option was provided by the facilitator to conduct the sessions in languages other than English. Each NGT subgroup was required to complete a NGT questionnaire (as provided for by the process, refer Appendix 2) in response to the two questions asked.

Due to the stringency of the NGT process, the facilitators explained in detail this process to all participants as well as displaying overhead slides explaining the process.

4.2.2.1 Method of Analysis of Responses to the Nominal Group Technique

In phase two (NGT) two methods of analysis were used. The first method forms part of the NGT process and consists of the ranking and rating of the various responses (Viedge, 1988). As part of the process, the researcher is able to arrive at consensus position by the group after the rating and ranking exercise. Each sub-group votes on the top five responses to each question, which then reflects the response of the group. The analysis, in this instance, forms part of the process itself as a number of specific points are drawn out of the group. These points were plotted on a 'thematic' map. The map used had a number of themes picked up in the literature review and the POQ, and the responses of the various subgroups were then plotted on this map (See Appendix 3). This method allowed for analysis of convergence and divergence as well as indicating gaps and

overlaps in specific themes. Connections between the various themes were also highlighted. This map allowed for the plotting of the various dimensions of the organisational culture that may exist in the department as each subgroup can be said to contribute to an overall organisational culture (Schumacher, 1997). The second kind of methodology used to analyse the NGT was more qualitative and involved the use of anecdotes and stories to add substance to the themes. This information was drawn from the informal discussions held in each NGT. The anecdotes, stories and observations were juxtaposed on the thematic map and used both for triangulation purposes and to provide texture to the conclusions drawn from the NGT.

4.3 Method of Joint Analysis

Once the analysis of both the POQ and NGT had taken place, a force field analysis was used. This involved the graphic portrayal of specific inhibiting organisational factors on performance. The current scenario was described and those identified inhibiting factors juxtaposed on the existing scenario. The analysis identified the strength of forces resisting the performance. Once these forces had been identified and the impact of these forces on performance assessed, a strategy was designed with the aim of reducing the restraining forces and focussing any change initiatives directly on the source of the problem. The clusters of cultures per homogenous group as well as the overall patterns were included in the force field analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

5.1 Analysis of the Performance Orientation Questionnaire

A total of 85 responses were received in Phase One, resulting in a response rate of 34%. Two of the questionnaires were considered invalid as there were pages missing from the returned questionnaires. A response rate of 34% is considered a suitable response rate as most researchers consider a response rate of 25% for self-returned questionnaires more than adequate (Werbeloff, 1996). While the POQ did request demographic details such as gender, rank, directorate, unit and job title, only 73% of the respondents completed the demographic section. Reasons for not filling in this section were stated by some of the respondents and in one instance it was written " I cannot fill this in as it will no longer be anonymous." As a result of the incomplete response to the demographic section, the researcher did not analyse the responses according to demographic criteria. Instead the NGT process picked up on these themes in more depth. This was not seen as a limitation to the research, as the demographic details would not have added any substantial value to the process.

To test the orientation towards performance of the department, the results of the questionnaire were divided into the seven dimensions mentioned previously. This meant that each question attributed to a dimension – in most cases there were six to seven questions per dimension. Each response to these questions was

juxtaposed against a template of 'negative' and 'positive' responses. The response was either marked against the template as a 'negative' or 'positive' response. For example, both 'agree' and 'strongly agree' had the same status when compared to the appropriateness of the statement as did 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree'. According to the template used, the 'uncertain' middle point was considered 'negative' in all instances and marked as such.

Although each individual question provided for responses on a five-point Likert Scale, the Likert Scale was not used in the first analysis. Instead all 46 statements were marked against either a 'positive' or 'negative' response found in the template. The responses to these statements were then added together to equal a level of 'positiveness' or 'negativeness' to each dimension. The use of the words 'negative' and 'positive' is linked to the performance orientation culture and a 'positive' rating would refer to the extent to which the culture has a performance orientation and the extent to which the culture promotes performance.

The method of calculating this 'positiveness' or 'negativeness' is described below:

Dimension 1 comprised of statements 7; 14; 22; 33; 40.

Statement	'Negative'	'Positive'
Statement 7	45	40
Statement 14	75	10
Statement 22	63	22
Statement 33	33	52
Statement 40	26	58
Total	242	182
	57% 'negativeness'	43% 'positiveness'

Dimension 2 comprised of statements 1; 8; 20; 23; 25; 27; 34; 41

Statement	'Negative'	'Positive'
Statement 1	58	32
Statement 8	38	45
Statement 20	50	33
Statement 23	19	64
Statement 25	12	71
Statement 27	8	75
Statement 34	26	57
Statement 41	40	43
Total	251	413
	38% 'negativeness'	62% 'positiveness'

Dimension 3 comprised of statements 2; 9; 26; 28; 35; 42

Statement	'Negative'	'Positive'
Statement 2	54	29
Statement 9	41	42
Statement 26	27	56
Statement 28	49	32
Statement 35	10	73
Statement 42	39	42
Total	220	274
	44% 'negativeness'	56% 'positiveness'

Dimension 4 comprised of statements 3; 10; 17; 21; 29; 36; 43

Statement	'Negative'	'Positive'
Statement 3	5	78
Statement 10	11	72
Statement 17	16	67
Statement 21	72	11
Statement 29	42	57
Statement 36	60	23
Statement 43	38	45
Total	228	353
	40% 'negativeness'	60% 'positiveness'

Dimension 5 comprised of statements 4; 11; 15; 16; 30; 37; 44

Statement	'Negative'	'Positive'
Statement 4	52	31
Statement 11	37	46
Statement 15	20	63
Statement 16	21	62
Statement 30	47	36
Statement 37	19	64
Statement 44	72	11
Total	268	313
	46% 'negativeness'	54% 'positiveness'

Dimension 6 comprised of statements 5; 12; 18; 24; 31; 38; 45

Statement	'Negative'	'Positive'
Statement 5	24	59
Statement 12	45	38
Statement 18	52	31
Statement 24	29	54
Statement 31	55	28
Statement 38	16	67
Statement 45	12	71
Total	233	348
	40% 'negativeness'	60% 'positiveness'

Dimension 7 comprised of statements 6; 13; 19; 32; 39; 46

Statement	'Negative'	'Positive'
Statement 6	48	35
Statement 13	38	45
Statement 19	40	43
Statement 32	17	66
Statement 39	53	30
Statement 46	63	20
Total	259	239
	52% 'negativeness'	48% 'positiveness'

To ensure equal weighting of each dimension and to allow for comparability, the collective responses were converted into percentages.

Dimension 1: Accountability and urgency

This dimension comprises statements 7; 14; 22; 33; 40 (refer Appendix 1). In this instance a 57% level of negative responses to the statement was recorded.

Dimension 2: Potential for Change

This dimension comprises statements 1; 8; 20; 23; 25; 27; 34; 41 (refer Appendix 1). In this instance a 38% level of negative responses was recorded.

Dimension 3: Performance Planning

This dimension comprises statements 2; 9; 26; 28; 35; 42 (refer Appendix 1). In this instance a 44% level of negative responses was recorded.

Dimension 4: Communication and Systems Clarity

This dimension comprises statements 3; 10; 17; 21; 29; 36; 43 (refer Appendix 1). In this instance a 40% level of negative responses was recorded.

Dimension 5: Management style

This dimension comprises statements 4; 11; 15; 16; 30; 37; 44 (refer Appendix 1). In this instance a 46% level of negative responses was recorded.

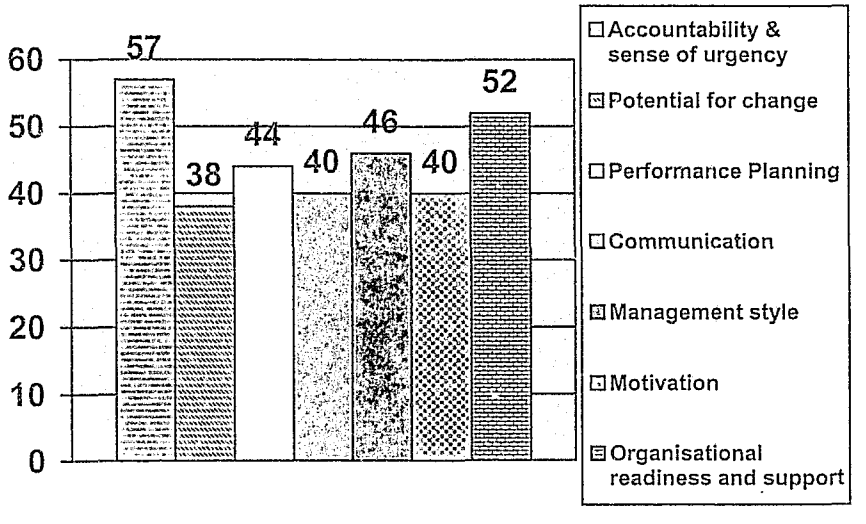
Dimension 6: Motivation

This dimension comprises statements 5; 12; 18; 24; 31; 38; 45. In this instance a 40% level of negative responses was recorded.

Dimension 7: Organisational readiness and support

This dimension comprises statements 6; 13; 19; 32; 39; 46. In this instance a 52% level of negative responses was recorded.

Figure 5.1: Percentage of Negative Responses



It is clear from the comparative graph that the areas of Accountability & Sense of Urgency; Management Style; Performance Planning and Organisational Readiness & Support scored the highest *negative* responses. These areas, therefore, can be considered the more problematic dimensions in terms of a 'negative' performance orientation culture.

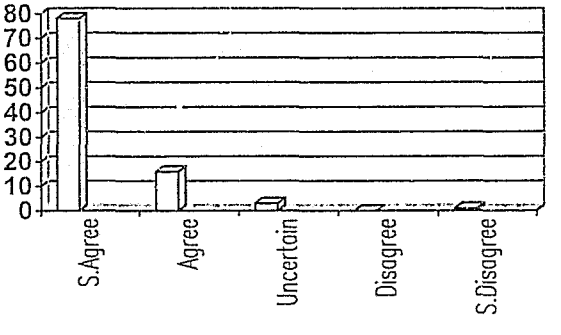
The second stage of analysis was conducted using the five point Likert Scale. In this stage not all statements were analysed. Instead the researcher focused on

those statements deemed most useful to the research, namely those statements that contributed specifically to the research on organisational culture. The following themes were examined (statements 3; 4; 10; 14; 15; 22; 27; 31; 33; 37 and 45):

Every theme that is examined is compared against **Proposition 1**; **Proposition 2** or **both.**

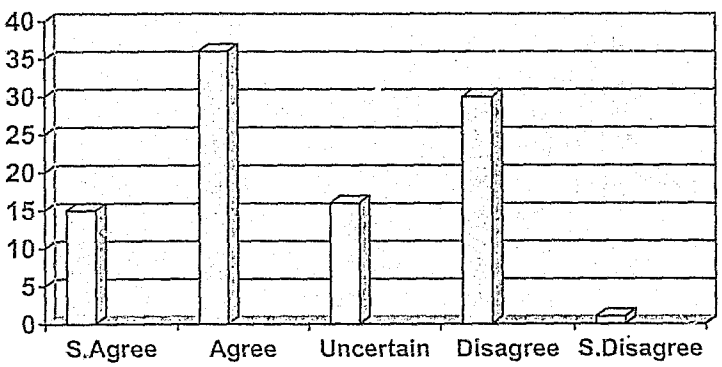
Theme 1: This theme examines the extent to which effective communication is seen as a contributor to a positive performance orientation culture **(Proposition 2)** In response to statement 3, *It is an essential part of the job of supervisors and managers to set up and maintain good communications between top management and the workforce.* 78% of the respondents strongly agreed, 16% agreed, 3% were uncertain and 1% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.2: Extent to which Effective communication is seen as a contributor to positive performance orientation



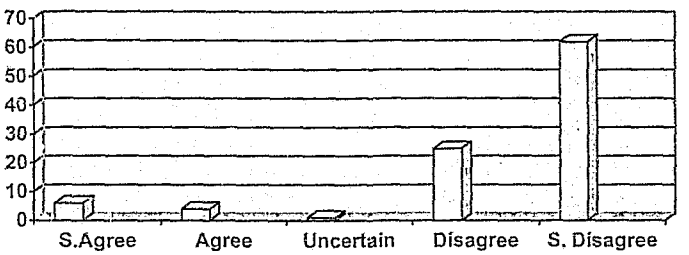
Theme 2: This theme examines the importance attached to performance management in an organisation (**Proposition 2**). In response to the statement 4, *When you leave people alone to do their job – that is when they work their best,* 15% of the respondents strongly agreed, 36% agreed, 16% were uncertain, 30% disagr l a. l 1% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.3: Importance attached to performance management in an organisation



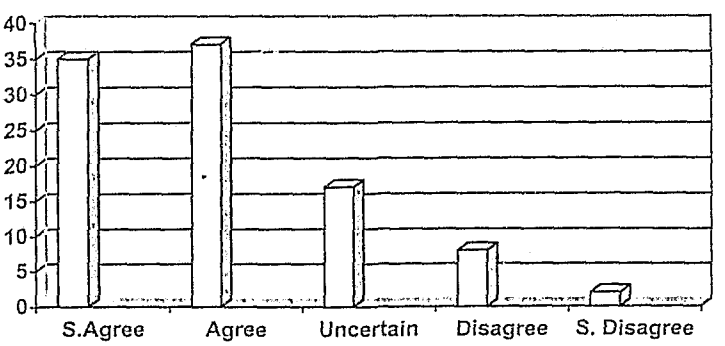
Theme 3: This theme looks at the importance of clarity of processes and policies. It also examines the importance attached to shared understanding within an organisation **(Proposition 2)**. In response to the statement 10, *The Department's policies, procedures, working methods and practices do not have to be clear for the department to be successful,* 6% of the respondents strongly agreed, 4% agreed, 1% were uncertain, 25% disagreed and 62% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.4: Importance of clarity of processes and policies



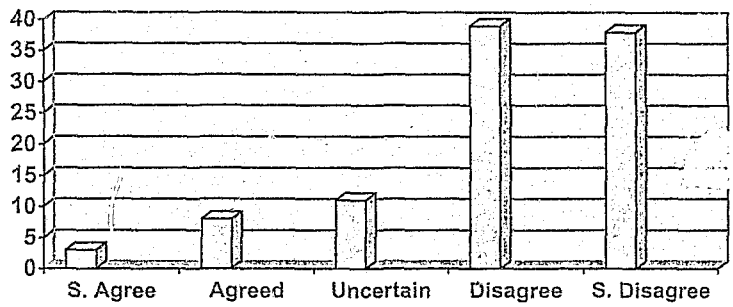
Theme 4: This theme examines the issue of accountability in an organisation and the perception of the kind of culture that exists **(Proposition 2)**. In this instance 35% of the respondents strongly agreed with statement 14, *It seems as though some of the people actually do most of the work, while the others do just enough to stay out of trouble.* Thirty seven percent agreed, 17% were uncertain, 8% disagreed and 2% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.5: Issue of accountability in an organisation and the perception of the kind of culture that exists



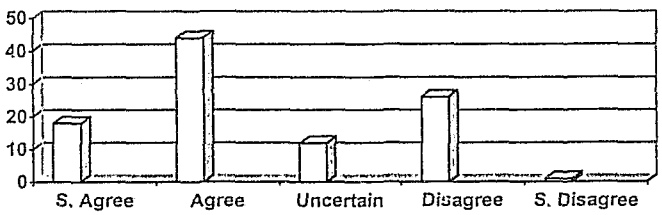
Theme 5: This theme assesses the level of emphasis on performance and willingness to perform in an organisation **(Proposition 1)**. In response to statement 15, *It soon becomes unpleasant to work for a department that starts emphasising productivity and efficiency,* 3% strongly agreed, 8% agreed, 11% were uncertain, 39% disagreed and 38% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.6: Emphasis on performance and willingness to perform



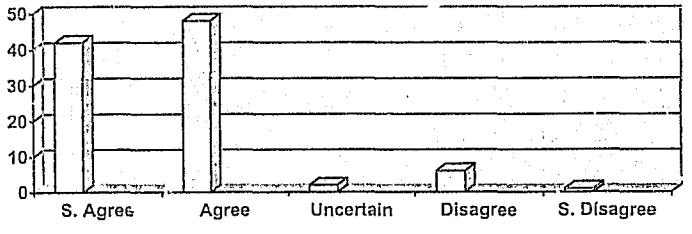
Theme 6: This theme assesses the levels of accountability and responsibility apparent in the culture **(Proposition 1)**. In this instance, 18% of the respondents strongly agreed with statement 22, *It is often difficult to determine who is actually responsible for what,* 44% agreed with the statement, 12% were uncertain, 26% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.7: Levels of accountability abd responsibility apparent in the organisational culture



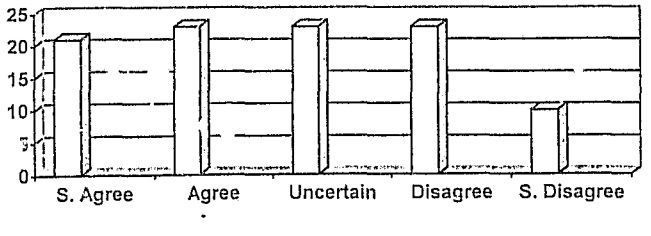
Theme 7: This theme examines the propensity for change in an organisational culture (**Propositions 1 & 2**). In response to statement 27, *In general I do not find it difficult to do something different or try something new in my job*, 42% of the respondents strongly agreed, 48% agreed, 2% were uncertain, 6% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.8: Propensity for change in an organisational culture



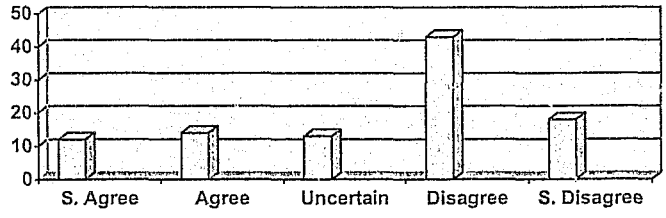
Theme 8: This theme focuses on the perceptions of performance motivation in an organisation (**Proposition 2**). In response to statement 31, *Most people are more interested in collecting their pay than doing a good job*, 21% of the respondents strongly agreed with this statement, 23% agreed with the statement, 23% were uncertain, 23% disagreed and 10% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 5.9: Perception of performance motivation in an organisation



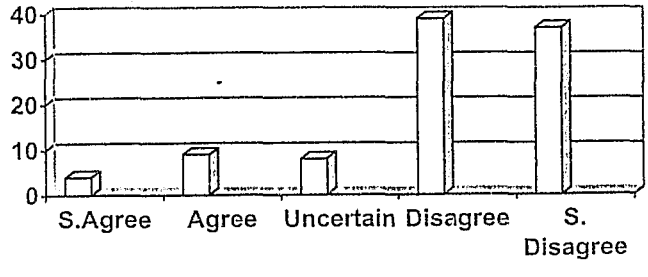
Theme 9: This theme examines the level of responsiveness and attitude towards performance in an organisation (**Proposition 1**). In response to statement 33, *The department's expectations of worker performance are too high,* 12% strongly agreed, 14% agreed, 13% were uncertain, 43% disagreed and 18% strongly disagreed.

Figure 5.10: Levels of responsiveness and attitude towards performance in the organisation



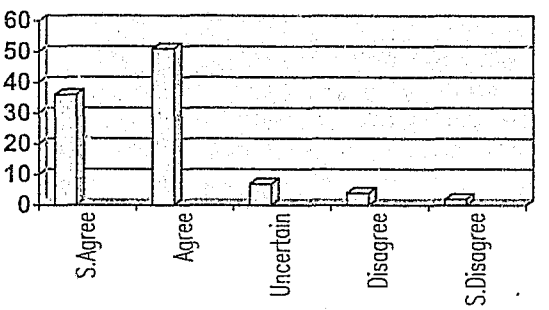
Theme 10: This theme measures the attitude of an organisation towards poor performance and the tolerance an organisation may have towards poor performance (**Propositions 1 & 2**). In response to statement 37, *It is not necessary to bring poor performance of people in my team to attention, since it is normal for people to perform poorly at times,* 4% strongly agreed, 9% agreed, 8% were uncertain, 39% disagreed and 37% strongly disagreed. This measures the attitude of an organisation towards poor performance and the tolerance an organisation may have towards poor performance.

Figure 5.11:Attitude of an organisation towards poor performance and tolerance an organisation may have towards poor performance



Theme 11: This examines the emphasis an organisational culture may have on performance management **(Proposition 2)**. In response to statement 45, *By reminding subordinates of their performance goals, supervisors and managers can usually obtain better performance*, 36% strongly agreed with the statement, 51% agreed with the statement, 7% were uncertain, 4% disagreed with the statement and 2% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Figure 5.12: Emphasis an organisational culture may have on performance management



The last part of the POQ namely Questions 47 and 48, measured whether the respondents believed that there was room to improve performance in the department **(Propositions 1 & 2)**. When asked to compare current levels of performance with potential levels of performance, 47% of respondents stated that the current levels of performance were average or below average. When asked to quantify performance improvement in their area if realistic changes and improvements were to be made, 35% of the respondents stated the performance

could be doubled (100% improvement); 38% stated that performance could be improved by between 50% to 60% and nine percent of the respondents said the performance could be improved by 30% to 35%.

While this does not provide conclusive proof that the performance in the department can be improved, it does provide an argument as to the possibility of *performance improvement* in the department.

5.2 Results of the responses acquired through the Nominal Group Technique

Five NGT sessions were conducted in the department over a period of two weeks. Each session was made up of the identified subgroups as discussed in Chapter Four.

The first session was the subgroup *Administration Staff* and seven staff members were randomly selected from that stratum to participate in the session. In keeping with the NGT technique (Viedge, 1988), participants were requested to write down (using telegraphic style), a series of responses to the two questions posed. The four key responses noted by each participant have been tabulated so that inter sub-group comparisons may be made. Once the responses were recorded, a process used to rank and rate the responses were used thereby allowing for the identification of five priority responses per subgroup.

These five priority responses reflect a collective agreement per subgroup. The *Administrative Staff* subgroup was the only group to display conflict around the responses. In fact this group was significantly split which protracted the process. It also forced a far more proactive role by the facilitator in this group than in the other groups an analysis for the reasons for this will be discussed in Chapter Six. This group was made up of three Black females and two Black males and one Coloured male.

The second group, namely the *Staff below Level Three,* had nine participants. In this instance there was a sense of agreed responses from the outset and the process was conducted smoothly. This was the only session where some stages were conducted in a language other than English and the facilitator allowed participants to engage in any of the four official languages of Gauteng. The limitations of using languages other than English have been noted in the limitations of the research. This group consisted of five Black females and four Black males.

The third session was the *Top Management* group with five participants. Like session two, there was no disharmony in this group. Instead a great deal of agreement around points was displayed. This session did, however, experience some time pressure and the facilitator was encouraged to fast-track the process due to other time commitments of the participants in this group. The breakdown

of the group was one Indian male; two African females; one White female and one African male.

The *Pre-1994 Incumbents* comprised 8 participants. Like sessions two and three, the participants in this session were in agreement with all of the responses and the session was conducted harmoniously. One participant was only able to participate for the first round (question one) due to pressing time commitments. This group was made up of four White females; three White males and one Coloured male.

The final session was conducted with the *Professional Group* that consisted of participants who could be considered professionals e.g. those staff who had legal, commercial, economics, teaching, or planning background, or any background that may be considered professional. This group displayed no conflict and there was agreement on all the responses provided. This group was made up of two White females; one Black male; one Black female and one Coloured female.

The next section provides a tabulation of the five identified priorities of each subgroup. Refer to Appendix 4 for a complete tabulation of all the NGT responses.

Table 5.2 - Group 1: Priorities identified by Administrative Staff

Questions	*Five Priorities*
What is performance?	• Control and taking initiatives over your work • Contribution by individuals to the set goal (group work) • Achievement of set goals / objectives • Attitude and service delivery • Good resources - knowledge, skills, management.
What makes it difficult to perform your job?	• Unclear instruction/lack of information on procedures that has to be undertaken in a given task (from supervisor) • Lack of training/skills • Shortage of staff • Lack of leadership vision (sub-directorates) • Insufficient facilities and equipment

Table 5.3 - Group 2: Priorities identified by Staff below level three

Question	*Five Priorities*
What is performance?	• Willingness to perform your duty • Service excellence • Competency/efficiency/productivity in your task • Availability to your work • Fairness
What makes it difficult to perform your job?	• Lack of leadership vision and management skills --Unnecessary bureaucratic procedures that hinder progress e.g. when the manager is not in the office, there is nobody in charge. • Laziness of colleagues - lack of co-operation • Unclear instructions/ Mandate • Lack of acknowledgement from supervisors- unrecognised skills • No motivation - lack of promotional opportunities; lack of developmental programmes

Table 5.4 - Group 3: Priorities identified byTop Management

Questions	*Five Priorities*
What Is Performance?	• Optimum input/output /outcome ratios • The outcome of a task assigned given preset standards • Quality of Services • Walking the extra mile – more than is expected • Benchmarking – i.e. identifying appropriate standards against which performance can be measured.
What Makes It Difficult to perform your job?	• Risk averse public sector • A public service that is not service delivery sensitive • Lack of objectivity regarding resource issues (vested interest) in terms of budget allocation • Lack of shared vision and rigidness of rules • Limited resources specifically skills and finances

Table 5.5 - Group 4: Priorities identified by Pre-1994 Incumbents

Questions	*Five Priorities*
What Is Performance?	• Quality of work • Getting the job done • Communication between different departments and units • Set objective that are achievable • Driven towards goals and objectives
What Make It Difficult To Perform Your Job?	• Lack of skills of staff members • Duplication of work between functions • Too many vacancies in the department • Lack of communication between units and between top management and other staff • Unskilled supervisors ("new" supervisors)

Table 5.6 - Group 5: Priorities identified by Professional group

Questions	*Five Priorities*
What Is Performance?	• Planning • Managing your time properly • Quality of work • Getting involved in the activities of the department • Using resources effectively
What Makes It Difficult to perform your job?	• No resources – such as no internet etc • No trust in management • Not enough time in each day • No cooperation from management • Incompetence of management

The figures presented below represent a summary of the frequency of responses to the two questions. These responses are tabulated in Tables 5.2 – 5.6.

Figure 5.13: Frequency of Responses to the question 'What is performance?', by all of the groups (Appearing more than once).

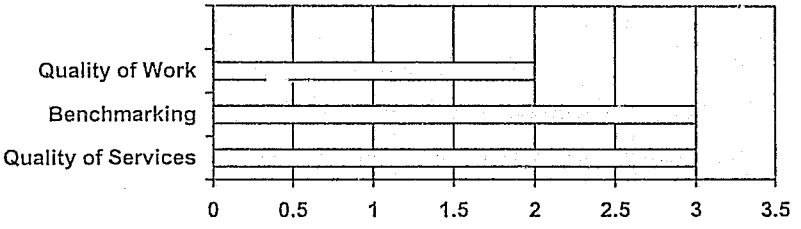
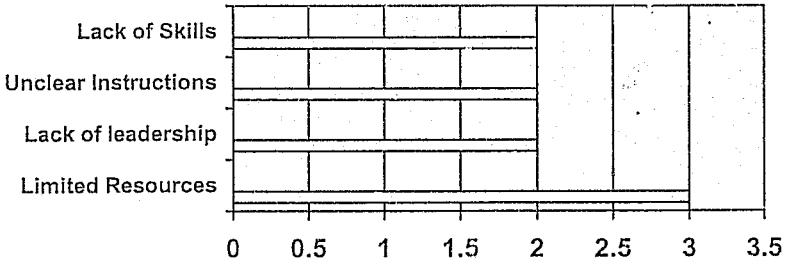


Figure 5.14: Frequency of Responses to the question 'What makes it difficult to perform your job?', by all five groups (Appearing more than once).



The Frequency Graphs reflect very little commonality among the responses to the questions asked. In fact of a potential fifty responses, only seven responses are shared (Quality of Work; Benchmarking; Quality of Services; Lack of Skills; Unclear Instructions; Lack of Leadership; Limited Resources)

5.3 Analysis of Informal Discussion in the NGT process

Broad themes were extracted to add texture to the conclusions arrived at in the NGT process.

- Group 1 (Administrative staff) focused much of the informal discussion primarily on the importance of being allowed to take initiative in the workplace and the importance of trust between their supervisors and themselves. The discussion in this instance centred around the conflict of interest between themselves (identified as the 'new guard' and black) and their supervisors (identified as the 'old bureaucrats' and white) and how this conflict played itself out in the workplace. The discussion also reflected a sense of the group having no control over their situation ("they tell us what to do") and the sense of having work "imposed" on them was conveyed.
- The discussion held in the Group 2 (Staff below level three) session flowed harmoniously with no dissension displayed by any of the members. This discussion focused primarily on experiences that respondents had had in the department. What emerged from this discussion was the emphasis this group placed on aspects of performance such as "service excellence", "good customer service" and the "service to the public" and how these terms framed the understanding of what it meant being a public servant. A key area discussed in this group was the sense of alienation this group feels from the broader processes in the department. In the discussion points such as "they

don't even greet us", "no one ever tells us if our work is good or bad" and "they should tell us if we are doing OK at work" were made.

- Group 3 (Top Management) no substantial discussion was held. This group defined, up front, the various time constraints that they had and in fact some resistance to the process was displayed "what's this all about" and "why are we even here".
- Substantial discussion was held in Group 4 (Pre-1994 incumbents). In this instance the discussion centred around the difference between now and "the olden days". This group described the systems that had worked effectively in the "old government" and much of the discussion was centred on the effectiveness of those systems. "We used to braai with whoever we liked not like now where you have to invite everyone otherwise they take you to the union". The issue of respect was discussed, particularly the difference between respect in the new public service and respect in the old public service - "the managers always used to walk around and we would hear through the grapevine that Mr. X was on his way up, and everyone would start preparing for his visit", "there was so much respect and you wouldn't have dared calling you boss by his first name, none of this Roland story – in the olden days he would have been called Mr. Hunter." This group also discussed the impact of affirmative action on the department: "you hire a person who may have some qualifications but no experience and then you sit with that person, trying to teach them some skill". This led to comparisons being made between the old public service (where a person "worked their way through the ranks") and the

current approach (where people could be hired in at relatively high levels) and the frustrations that the new approach brought.

- The discussion in Group 5 (Professional group) focused on the elements of choice. "We really don't have to be working for government "because we could walk into the private sector and get a job very easily – we work here because we want to not because we have to." This "choice" to work for government was an issue in that this group feel that management do not take seriously the skills they have to offer nor do they acknowledge the contribution they are able to make - "we are usually more qualified than our bosses which makes them very resentful and then they don't listen to any of our ideas, in fact they squash most of our ideas."

The themes that emerged from the informal discussions highlighted the variances among the different sub-cultures. This is noted in that there is no overlap in terms of the issues discussed between the groups nor is there any resonance in terms of the terminology employed. In addition, there appears to be no shared understanding of the issues discussed.

In some instances the discussion was rich and dynamic while in other instances the discussion lacked momentum. As this was not a key aspect of the research, this is not seen as a limitation of the research.

CHAPTER SIX: INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Research on organisational culture in the public service in South Africa has been minimal. While some research may have been conducted in individual departments, the specific link between the impact of organisational culture on performance in the public service appears to be an area entirely unexplored (see Chapter 2). What this has meant is that the outcome of this research has been exempt from any pre-existing assumptions based on previous research in South Africa. In addition, this research has operated from the premise that much of our understanding of the public service in South Africa is based on assumptions rather than on any scientific method. As such, the interpretation of the analysis is framed by this understanding and it is intended that the elements that emerge begin to deepen our understanding around performance in the public service.

6.1 Confirmation of Proposition One and Proposition Two

In terms of Proposition One – *'In public service departments there is a low propensity for performance'* – and Proposition Two – *'Many of the inhibiting factors to performance are entrenched in the culture of the organisation'* - the results of the POQ were analysed specifically.

As described in Chapter 5, the POQ reveals worrying levels of 'negative' (as compared to an organisational culture that promotes performance) responses in

the areas of Accountability and Sense of Urgency (57%) and Organisational Readiness and Support (52%). The dimension described as Management Style (46%) is problematic although less so than the other two areas mentioned.

Accountability and sense of urgency

This dimension, with a 57% level of 'negative' responses, is the most problematic of the areas. The response rate clearly reflects that more than half of the respondents do not feel personally accountable for performance and the meeting of work objectives. The implications of this attitude are extensive as lack of accountability leads typically, to low levels of commitment to performance and a risk-averse culture (Robbins, 1997). By operating in this kind of culture, staff members apparently feel no ownership to their performance, and as such the ability to motivate performance becomes restricted. In addition, it would seem to suggest that the probability of taking responsibility for the outcome of individual performance is reduced and the commitment associated with accountability is missing. This is confirmed in the responses to Statement 22 – *it is often difficult to determine who is actually responsible for what* – where 62% of the respondents agreed with the statement, and in the response to Statement 14 – *it seems as though some of the people actually do most of the work, while the others do just enough to stay out of trouble* – where 72% responded 'negatively'.

This dimension also measures the sense of urgency and pressure to perform. A 57% level of 'negative' responses indicates low levels of pressure to perform, and

unquestionably, in the public service, appropriate mechanisms to set and measure performance goals and objectives (aside from financial measures as discussed previously) have never been put into place (Swilling & Wooldridge, 1996). This lack of performance measures has an impact on the performance culture of an organisation as weak or non-existent focus on performance cannot be expected to encourage or motivate either individual or organisational performance (Spangenberg, 1994). It is clear, therefore, that there exists no pressure to perform and hence performance will remain sluggish and unchallenged in DFEA.

Potential for Change

With a 38% level of 'negative' responses, this dimension received the lowest level of 'negative' responses. This result challenges the perception of the public service as an antiquated organisation unprepared or unable to change. Instead, what is revealed is that the respondents believe in the importance of doing things differently to improve results. This was also reflected in the performance improvement (refer Chapter 5) results that show that over 90% of the respondents believed that performance can be improved in their area. What this dimension reflects is the *understanding* staff may have about the importance of improvement and change – which may be considered a critical step in the intention to improve performance. The results of this dimension are unsurprising as the most consistent element of the public service since 1994 has been the continued high levels of change. Indeed 'change' as a concept has been internalised by most public servants and every government department (with a

few notable exceptions) can be said to have some form of a 'change' culture[25]. Schumacher (1997) refers to this kind of culture change as *transformation* – changes in many significant domains for the majority of the members of the culture and the change is so significant that the identity of the culture is at least questioned and perhaps redefined. In this instance it would appear that the change forced upon government officials has resulted in some changes in the organisational culture.

This dimension also measures the level of difficulty staff may perceive there to be in making changes in both his/her own job and in the organisation generally. In this instance it would appear that there is a reasonably 'change' friendly culture and respondents feel able to make changes in their own jobs. This is reflected in the responses to Statement 27 – *In general I do not find it difficult to do something different or try something new in my job* – where 90% of the respondents agreed with the statement. The response to Statement 15 affirms this potential where 77% of the respondents disagreed with the statement – *it soon becomes unpleasant to work for a department that starts emphasising productivity and efficiency* – which may suggest that respondents are comfortable enough with the concept of change. This dimension of the organisational culture offers potential for notable transformation in the organisation.

25 An organisation which undergoes change in the way that the "new" government has over the last four years, must have assimilated a response to continuous change. Certainly departments appear to handle significant changes far more comfortably now than in the past. Examples of ongoing and continuous change would include the fact that, in Gauteng, almost all departments have seen significant changes in leadership (often more than one change), focus, customer base, colleagues, key objectives and even functions.

This element of flexibility is a conspicuous aspect of the DFEA organisational culture and is reflected in other aspects of the culture such as dress style (staff are able to wear whatever they prefer) and the development of informal groups over the last six months (a Women's Forum, Choir, Netball Team, Soccer Club, Christmas Club; Pub). These elements were not extracted from the research, rather the researcher made these observations as a 'participant observer' in the DFEA (Werbeloff, 1996).

Performance Planning

This dimension had a 44% level of 'negative' responses. This response may be directly linked to a culture where performance measures are not encouraged. If performance goals and objectives are not highlighted in an organisation, it would seems illogical that the *methodology* to achieve the goals and objectives would be highlighted. The effectiveness of planning to achieve performance is clear (Robbins, 1997) and the apparent disregard this culture has towards planning, is a restrictive factor in performance improvement.

Communication and systems clarity

This dimension measured a 40% level of 'negative' responses. This would attest that almost half the respondents do not have a clear understanding of what is expected of them in terms of results and working practices that will impact directly on the ability to perform in a large organisation. This finding would seem to indicate an unfocused approach to work, and hence performance, and one can

suppose that there is a lot of unnecessary expenditure of energy on the *wrong* areas. While 87% of the respondents agree that the policies, procedures, working methods and practices of the department have to be clear for the department to be successful and 94% of the respondents believe that it is an essential part of the job of supervisors and managers to set up and maintain good communications between top management and the workforce, in reality, the organisational culture does not encourage this approach. Performance data, for example, is not distributed to members of the department and in most instances, this data is not even available to be communicated.

Management Style

This dimension received a 46% level of 'negative' responses. This asserts that a culture that encourages a 'passive' management style is in place. The contrast between a rule-bound culture and an 'active' management style is stark in the public service (Hennessy, 1989; Willcocks & Harrow, 1992). Managers appear reluctant to 'actively' engage in the arena of performance and this is noted where 51% of the respondents agreed that when you leave people alone to do their job that is when they work their best. This 'passive' management style manifests in a culture where the rules replace any active engagement on performance (Metcalfe & Richards, 1987). As long as public servants adhere to the rules and regulations as defined by the bureaucracy, engagement on performance issues is suppressed (Lerner & Wanat, 1987).

There was, however, a positive element of this dimension as reflected in the response to Statement 37 – *it is not necessary to bring poor performance of people in my team to attention, since it is normal for people to perform poorly at times.* Approximately 77% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This appears to signify that employees are prepared to engage with their managers on the issue of performance and that in fact, performance improvement has the potential to become a dynamic process in the department. This was reinforced by a 87% agreement with Statement 45 – *by reminding subordinates of their performance goals, supervisors and managers can usually obtain better performance.*

Motivation

In this instance a 40% level of 'negative' responses was recorded. The traditional perception of public servants is that they work in the public service as an 'easy option'. This perception is driven by the understanding that the public service offers a job for life, security and in addition the public service is viewed as a staid, conservative and reliable employer (Lawton & Rose, 1991). The traditional public service culture has, therefore, historically attracted a risk averse individual and as such performance motivation has primarily been focused on adherence to rules and regulations (Lawton & Rose, 1994).

The risk-averse culture of the department was reiterated, when 25% of the POQ responses did not include *any* demographic details for fear that management may

identify the respondent[26]. This indicates a sentiment prevalent in the department that shows a clear fear of reprisal. This may be a characteristic of a bureaucracy where agreement is admired and where any dissent or unpopular position is disliked (Henessey, 1989).

Output oriented performance management systems did not exist in the South African public service pre-1997. Instead awards for performance were motivated on incidences that were input oriented (Swilling & Wooldridge, 1996). This kind of culture was exacerbated by the fact that no comprehensive strategies to improve performance were implemented that were output focused.

The historical construct of public service departments has led to a culture where increased performance is seen to be directly linked to increased pay and where other motivating factors are disregarded. In addition it appears that non-conformist performers may have even been punished for their non-conformist attitude rather than being rewarded for their performance.

26 Many of the comments provided to explicate why respondents hadn't filled in the demographic details included phrases such as "you can work out who I am" and "you will find out who wrote this".

In this dimension, respondents appear not to value highly the use of performance objectives and goals, and this is believed to be as result of minimal exposure to the effectiveness of defining individual goals and objectives[27] as a motivating factor for improved performance.

This is confirmed by the response to Statement 31 – *most people are more interested in collecting their pay than doing a good job*- where almost 50% of the respondents believe that people are more interested in pay than other factors such as job satisfaction and job improvement. The response to this statement confirms the perception that public servants are unprepared to go the 'extra mile' as they are purely motivated by payment at the end of each month. This perception is encouraged by the culture, where good performers and 'high flyers' are not appropriately rewarded (Gauteng Department of Finance and Economic Affairs, 1997b). Instead the more capable public servant is likely to experience great frustration in this system and will eventually leave the organisation.

A major problem that has been identified in the public service is the inability of government to ret in excellent performers (Public Service Regulations, 1998e). The response to this dimension would also seem to suggest a high level of demotivation within the workforce as confirmed by the response to Statement 37. In addition 55% of the respondents agreed with Statement 12 -*an assumption that*

27 In 1998, the Department of the Premier implemented for the first time an output oriented Personnel Performance Management System (PPMS). Due to systemic and implementation flaws, this system is perceived to have done much damage to perception by staff members of the effectiveness of performance management. As such it is unlikely that the value of such a system would have been appreciated by the respondents.

is often made by managers or supervisors is that people only work because they have to and not because they want to.

The high levels of demotivation suggest that the culture is accommodating this demotivation without attempting to alter it in any way. In fact, the entire response to performance would begin from the recruitment stage where a specific type of individual may be hired to fit into the culture (Robbins, 1997). This individual may in fact have chosen entry into the public service in response to the perceived public service culture. This cycle is unlikely to be broken until such time as 'active' intervention around changing these elements is undertaken. Perhaps the most fundamental factor influencing this type of culture is the job security offered to public servants as a result of the moratorium on retrenchments. This culture has also been extended to management practice where in some departments, no staff have been dismissed on the grounds of poor performance. The DFEA, for example, has not dismissed any worker on the grounds of poor performance, since April 1994.

Organisational Readiness and Support

This dimension received a 'negative' response rate of 52%. This high level of 'negativeness' indicates that staff may not believe that the organisation is ready to make significant changes and that top management does not characteristically support organisational change. This level of 'negative' responses also reflects the perception of employees to the way change has been handled in the past and the

commitment of management to bringing about change. Clearly, the track history of management has been poor in the managing of change (even though change does happen) and support structures provided around change. In addition, the high level of 'negative' responses suggests that the respondents do not have real belief in significant change taking place.

When compared to two studies conducted in the private sector, namely Acrow CPE Limited and Meadow Feeds Limited (Pietermaritzburg)[28] the level of 'negative' responses of the three dimensions mentioned, is significantly higher.

Table 6.1: Percentage of 'negative' Responses per Organisation

Name of Organisation	Meadow Feed Ltd (PMB)	Acrow CPE	DFEA
Accountability and Sense of Urgency	27%	34%	57%
Management Style	25%	32%	46%
Performance Planning	26%	37%	44%
Communication	21%	31%	40%
Motivation	19%	36%	40%
Potential for Change	36%	37%	38%
Organisational Readiness and Support	39%	54%	52%

28 Interview held with Suzie Koch, Project Manager at the Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research, CSIR Park, Pretoria, 2 November 1998.

Except in the area of organisational readiness and support, it is clear that the DFEA scores an average of 5 – 10 % more 'negatively' than the other two organisations. What is interesting to note however, is that in the areas of Potential for Change and Organisational Readiness and Support, the DFEA scores are remarkably similar to the other organisations. This may be as a result of the amount of exposure the public service has had to transformation over the last four years, and the attitudes that have developed around change (Schumacher, 1997). It is encouraging to note that the Potential for Change is on par with the two private sector organisations reviewed, as it contradicts the more popular perception of the public service and its lack of propensity for change.

It is apparent from the POQ conducted, that the DFEA has a poor performance orientation culture. This is reflected in the results of the dimensions and in the comparative table. The organisational culture in the department may therefore not be considered a 'strong positive' culture (Mead, 1994) but may be seen to inhibit performance instead. The following inhibiting dimensions of the organisational culture have been identified:

- Lack of commitment to performance as reflected in the low levels of accountability;
- 'Negative' systems to support and encourage performance;
- Inhibiting management style – more likely to be driven by input rather than output;
- Low levels of understanding regarding performance – performance is not an agreed value of the department;
- Lack of ownership by employees towards performance;
- Culture that accommodates (and in some instances actively encourages) *minimum* output;
- A culture that encourages passivity both of managers and employees;

- A culture that maintains the perceptions of the public service as a 'job for life' employer and facilitates poor performance;
- A culture that provides absolutely no pressure to perform, either through a reward, recognition or punishment system;
- The culture seems to accommodates change fairly easily and certainly great resistance to change has not been a characteristic of public service departments in Gauteng, if it had service delivery would have most certainly ground to a halt.

These findings support **Proposition One** – *'In public service departments there is a low propensity for performance'* and **Proposition Two** – *'Many of the inhibiting factors to performance are entrenched in the culture of the organisation'.*

6.2 Confirmation of Propositions Two, Three and Four

Where the POQ facilitated an understanding of the level of performance orientation in the department, the second area of research attempted to interrogate further Proposition Two – *'Many of the inhibiting factors to performance are entrenched in the culture of the organisation'.* An analysis of the NGT results supports Propositions Three – *'To ensure optimum performance in public service departments, fundamental transformation of the culture itself is required',* and Proposition Four – *'The organisational culture of the public service comprises organisational sub-cultures based on 'knowledge domains''.*

Perhaps the most notable finding from the NGT process is the confirmed existence of subcultures within the department. Using Schumacher's (1997) definition of subculture, the researcher identified five subgroups in the department that were then put through the NGT process. What was apparent from the results of the NGT process - and in keeping with Schumacher's (1997, p111) assertion that organisational subcultures may often have "greater strength, coherence or richness than that of an organisation-wide culture...because energy must be continually expended to build up and maintain a culture" - was that each subculture had significantly different understandings of the concept of performance and the factors that inhibit performance. In fact in only one instance was there an overlap in response – both Group 4 (pre-1994 Incumbents) and Group 5 (Professional Group) agreed on 'quality of work' in response to the question *What is performance?* This indicates an agreement level of 4%. In response to the second question -- *what makes it difficult to perform your job?* – the level of agreement was higher at 16%. Group 1 (Administrative Staff) and Group 2 (Staff below level 3) both identified 'unclear instruction/ lack of information' and 'lack of leadership vision' as a barrier to performance.

This low level of agreement **between** sub-groups but high level of agreement **within** sub-groups, suggests that the subcultures in the department are in fact stronger and exert more influence than an overall departmental culture. In

addition, it reinforces the findings from the POQ, namely that performance is not an agreed value of the department.

In addition is the fact the subcultures identified in the NGT may even be in conflict with each other and certainly the in response to the question – *what makes it difficult to perform your job?* – each subgroup criticised another subgroup for their inability to perform (refer to Tables 5.2 – 5.6). Group 1 criticised their supervisors (Group 4); Group 2 criticised lack of leadership vision and management skills (Group 3); Group 3 criticised a risk averse public service (Groups 1,2,4,5); Group 4 criticised lack of skills of staff members and unskilled supervisors (Group 1 & Group 5); and Group 5 criticised incompetence of management (Group 3).

The conflict that appears to exist between the sub-groups may be a leading inhibitor of performance in the department. Certainly the discussions in each sub-group describe a fairly destructive interaction rather than a constructive mode of interaction and this should be noted. This supports the position of Miles (1978) who argues that in organisations it is probable that there are conflicting subcultures or even cultures with no consensus at all. A further dimension of the sub-groups is the aspect of race and culture. Many of these sub-groups are still defined along racial lines (with the exception of Groups 3 and 5). This divide between sub-groups encourages further racial division among staff in the

department. Issues of race were identified in the first round of the NGT process by members of Group 2.

The hierarchical construct of government would also add to the potential conflict that may exist amongst sub-groups and aside from the pre-1994 Group 4, all the other sub-groups were divided by rank (this was not an intentional division but was a consequence of the use of 'knowledge domains'). The emphasis placed on hierarchy (rank) in the government and the disempowerment experienced by those employees lower down the hierarchy would explain some of the conflict between the subcultures (Lerner & Wanat, 1992). Unless dealt with appropriately, these distinct subcultures may result in an organisational culture that is fundamentally split, with little hope of any kind of convergence. The results of the NGT process as analysed supports **Proposition Four** – '*The organisational culture of the public service comprises organisational sub-cultures based on 'knowledge domains, some of which may inhibit performance'*.

The cycle of criticism exposes a further concern. The question - *what makes it difficult to perform your job* – was posed to each sub-group. This question was structured in such a way that respondents were not directed to identify any particular kind of barrier. In this instance, however, the response to the question by each individual and each group (see Chapter 5) reflects an overwhelming external locus of control mindset. In each individual's responses (the first four responses per individual), only 13% of the responses appeared to be of an internal

locus of control nature. The remaining 87% could be characterised as being of an external locus of control nature – i.e. viewing their barriers to performance as being controlled by outside forces.

This observation is confirmed by the POQ results that show that the Accountability and Sense of Urgency dimension had the highest level of 'negative' responses. Robbins (1997) argues that an external locus of control perspective has negative implications for performance. Individuals who rate high in externality are less satisfied with their jobs, have higher absenteeism rates, are more alienated from the work setting and are less involved in their jobs. Externals believe that they have little control over those organisational outcomes that are important to them and as such are less satisfied in the workplace. Robbins (1997) posits that the overall indication is that internals perform better on their jobs, although clearly this varies from industry to industry.

While there is no conclusive proof that the individuals who participated in the NGT process are all external locus of control individuals, it is apparent that barriers to performance were viewed in most cases as stemming from factors over which the individual had no control. Even in Group 3 (Top Management) a number of 'external' factors were identified. These factors are factors over which managers theoretically have some control, and as a result should have already been removed as a barrier to performance. Responses such as 'low level of skills', 'poor quality information', 'lack of innovation by public servants' are all areas

where managers may have a direct impact. This does not detract from the acknowledgement that managers do have very significant barriers to performance, that interestingly enough, were not mentioned in the NGT process[29]. The regulatory framework, for example, is repeatedly cited by managers as a key barrier to performance, yet was not mentioned by any of the sub-groups. The assumption may be then, that the broader, and seemingly insurmountable problems, were not even raised by the sub-groups in this process. This may be as a result of two reasons – either a sense of helplessness in the face of the bureaucracy meant that sub-groups did not see the value of raising these problems, or that employees have worked within these frameworks for so long that they are no longer even perceived as problems.

Fox, Schwella & Wissink (1991), Lerner & Wanat (1992) and Rosen (1993) argue that the public service has unique conditions that hinder its ability to perform optimally. Inasmuch as this may be true, the themes identified in the NGT (see Chapter 5) certainly do not pick up on the any of these kinds of barriers to performance. Group 3 (Top Management) did identify two barriers of this nature – *a lack of objectivity regarding resource issues (vested interests) in terms of budget allocation* and *administrative/ political interference.* The other groups made no mention of any of the broader and bigger picture issues that may impact on government performance.

29 Examples usually cited include the procurement process, PERSAL, Public Service Act (Republic of South Africa, 1994) etc.

A further area of interest was the emergence of themes from the NGT process. These themes are useful as they provide some insight as to future areas of intervention. In addition these themes contribute to a broader organisational culture and over time the stronger/ dominant themes will begin to direct the organisational culture. Specific themes (refer to Tables 5.2 – 5.6 for the summary of results) identified include:

- Poor information flow and systems, including horizontal and vertical communication;
- Lack of an identified vision for the organisation both in terms of performance and in terms of an overall vision;
- Passive and 'distant' management style (Several subgroups refer to the lack of acknowledgement of managers, incompetence of managers and lack of trust in management. This would seem to indicate a rather distant and disengaged management team, also a management team that has not been active in building the trust of their subordinates);
- Lack of effective Human Resources Development in the department;
- Bureaucratic public service – risk averse, rigidness of rules, unnecessary bureaucratic procedures, and not service delivery sensitive;

While factors such as insufficient facilities and equipment, and limited resources (finances, Internet etc.) were identified as barriers to performance, these factors may not be considered an organisational culture 'theme'. Instead these factors would be apparent in any organisation ('hygiene factors') and are certainly not

unique to the Department of Finance and Economic Affairs (Robbins, 1997). The identification of these specific themes supports **Proposition Three** – *'To ensure optimum performance in public service departments, fundamental transformation of the culture itself is required'.*

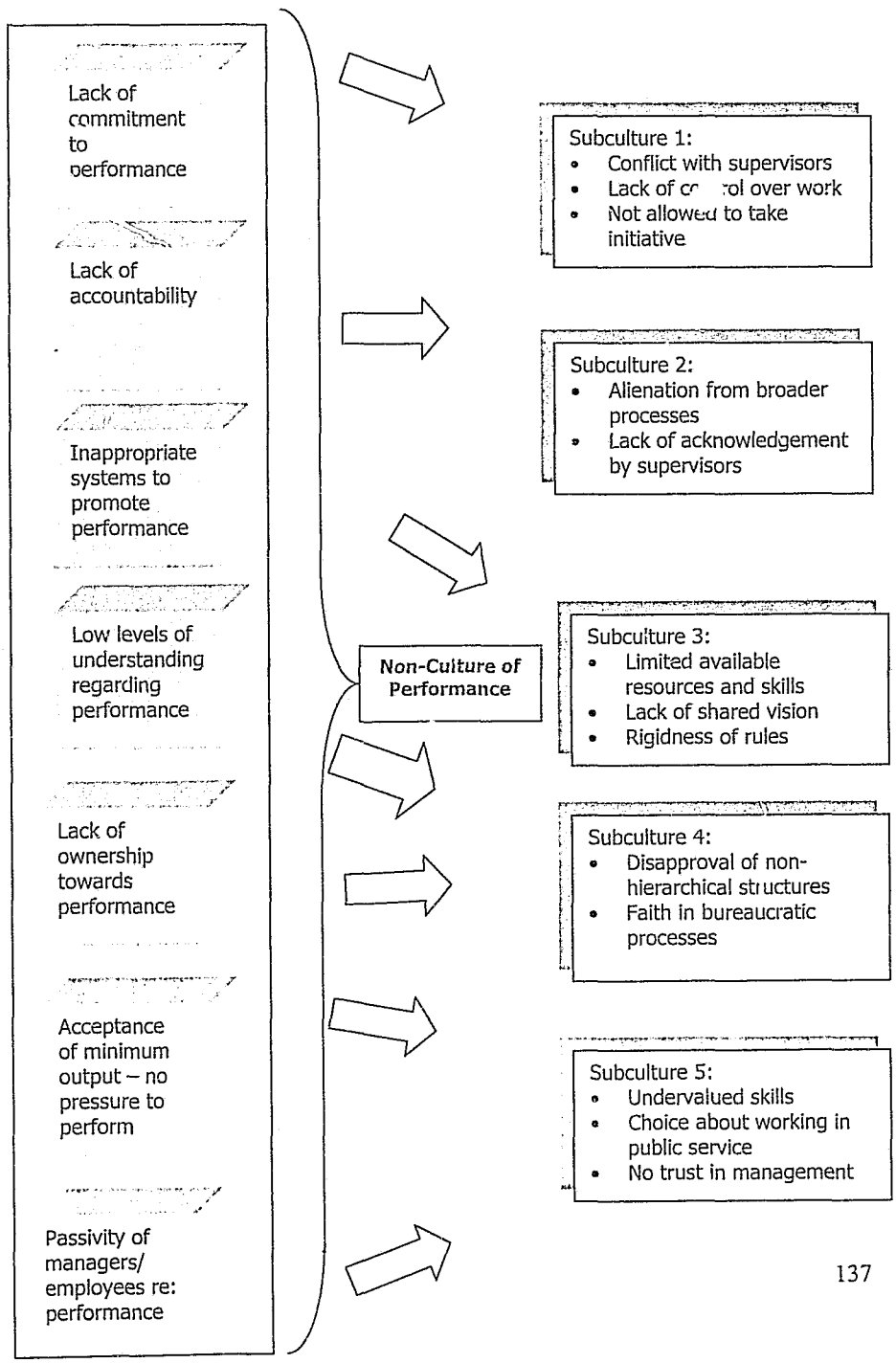
Mintzberg (1983) argues that all government departments are intrinsically bureaucratic and it is merely the type of bureaucracy that changes from department to department. Mintzberg (1983) goes on to say that a bureaucracy itself is not a hindrance to performance (as presumed by most observers) but rather that bureaucracies have a number of positive elements that contribute to effective delivery. Certainly, this research does not isolate the *bureaucratic culture* as a meaningful hindrance to delivery. Instead, what is noted is that a non-culture of performance is a greater hindrance. An inability to share a common definition of performance across sub-groups, a cycle of criticism and blame, a lack of accountability and responsibility about individual performance, an externalism towards an ability to perform and divisions among sub-groups seem far more powerful organisational culture elements that hinder performance than any of the bureaucratic elements. In fact one may even argue that a culture of bureaucratic control is what has kept several of the departments functional.

The researcher has used the phrase 'non-culture of performance' to describe the culture of the public service. This is a culture that neither actively encourages *nor* discourages performance and as such cannot be considered either a culture of

non-performance (this would indicate an active approach to non-performance) nor a performance culture (this would indicate an active approach to performance).

The following is a graphical representation of the organisational subcultures (as defined by the five subgroups) and the dimensions of the organisational culture that impact on the subcultures and that inhibit optimum performance.

Figure 6.1: Representation of Organisational Culture and its impact on performance



CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Historically, our understanding of the Public Service has been based on a range assumptions. These assumptions have driven most of the processes in government, including the processes around transformation. These assumption-driven processes have, at best, added no value to the organisation, but at worst misdirected and misguided the organisation to its detriment.

As the pressure on transforming the public service increases, so does the need to deepen our understanding of what factors motivate, hinder and prevent performance in the public service. This need to deepen our understanding is increasingly becoming more important as organisations continuously adapt in relation to their environment. It becomes critical that managers are not only aware of *how* these organisations have changed from phase to phase, but are also aware of what motivates an organisation to change. In order to sophisticate their understanding, managers need to understand the culture of the organisation and how this culture impacts on the way the organisation functions. Miles (1978) argues that it is critical to identify exactly what type of culture exists, so as to ensure a match between new strategies and the prevailing paradigm.

In keeping with this thinking (Miles, 1978), this research has attempted to deconstruct the organisational culture that exists in the DFEA thereby providing managers in the public service with a richer understanding of the fabric of the

organisation. By deconstructing the organisational culture, managers will be provided with a map that will enable them to more easily traverse the change terrain.

As explained at the outset, much of our understanding of the public service is based on assumptions. This research has cast doubt on many of these assumptions. Firstly, the culture of performance has been identified by the researcher as a 'non-culture' of performance. It would certainly seem inappropriate to say from the research that there is a culture of non-performance. Instead, there has been *no* focus by the department on performance in any way and as such the level of consciousness of the department around performance is minimal. This has led to a situation where performance is not considered an issue and as such has not been assimilated into either the processes of the department nor into the values, beliefs or taken-for-granted assumptions of the department (Schein, 1985). Secondly, it is apparent that public service departments comprise significant organisational subcultures. These subcultures, it may be argued, usurp the significance of a broad organisational culture (Hatch, 1997) and this is noticed in both the level of dissimilarity between the subcultures and the pressure the subgroups may exert upon their members. "These inter-group relations are important for two reasons. The first reason is that the groups are perceived as being important by their members and secondly, the evolving inter-group relations have a major impact on the entire organisation (Hernes, 1997, p343). In addition, it becomes vital that public service managers are aware of these

subcultures so that the knowledge of these subculture will allow managers to "manage them skilfully and hence successfully" (Hernes, 1997, p344).

This research has also revealed that many of the assumptions that exist about the public service can be challenged, and that the continued use of transformation interventions that focus on the conjectured elements of the culture are detrimental and non-value adding. Certainly the public service in South Africa has seen far too many consultants offering 'blanket' change packages that do not even begin to address the nuances of the public service culture. What is even more problematic is the ready acceptance managers may have towards these packages as no real research has been undertaken to undermine these assumptions. The assumptions that exist about the public service extend into the arena of broad government-led transformation programmes. The range of White Papers (Republic of South Africa. 1996a, 1997a, 1997b, 1997c, 1998e) dealing with transformation in the public service, all focus on the need for decentralisation and deregulation as key means of improving public service delivery. While this may indeed be a valid approach, the research conducted in the DFEA shows that the 'non-culture of performance' may in fact be a greater hindrance than the over-regulated framework. Although there is no doubt that the new wave of deregulation and decentralisation processes underway in government may do much to expedite the processes in public service departments – the question remains, however, whether this approach will have an impact on performance

improvement or whether, as this research has shown, there are other more fundamental issues that need to be addressed by departments.

Proponents of the New Public Management Theory (Lawton & Rose, 1994) argue that a change in the regulatory framework is what is required to bring about a change in the organisational culture. While this may be true, fundamental organisational culture change will only be brought about when the significance of organisational subcultures (Schumacher, 1997) is understood and when the organisation arrives at a dedicated programme focused directly on 'creating' a performance oriented culture. Unquestionably, a key focus of any public service manager should be to begin addressing the specific needs of each organisational subgroup. This can only be achieved when subgroups have been identified and when their concerns have been uncovered. Furthermore the areas of potential conflict and convergence need to be managed in such a way that a constructive dynamic is created. This research report indicates that any long term neglect of the potential conflict between subgroups is likely to cause divides that will be impossible to unite. The challenge for managers is to begin 'actively' engaging with performance issues. This engagement needs to be directed and dedicated and will involve programmes that 'umbrella' every staff member. Arriving at shared values (especially in the area of performance), setting performance goals for the department, measuring levels of performance on a regular basis and implementing the fundamental tenets of a good performance programme, are all key aspects of building a performance culture (Kotter & Heskett, 1992). Finally,

the areas where great weakness is displayed (such as Accountability, Externality - as identified in the NGT - and Management Style) need to be tackled directly. All staff need to be made accountable for their performance and the cycle of blame/ criticism needs to be broken. Unless these tenets are put into place, the 'non-culture of performance' will continue to be the prevailing culture of the public service

7.1 Recommendations for the DFEA

The overall transformation of the public service can be seen as a generational activity. The first generation of reforms (macro reforms) are usually focussed on legislative and regulatory reforms while the second generation (micro reforms) are focussed on gearing departments to meet the pressures and commitments required of public service departments. The DFEA is currently struggling with the second generation of reforms. A key aspect of the second generation reform process is performance improvement thereby ensuring effective and efficient delivery of services. The research conducted in this department provides a useful insight as to what kinds of micro reforms should be implemented. A two-pronged reform approach is recommended for the DFEA. The first area for change needs to focus specifically on systems and processes, while the second area of change should focus on attitude development and training. It is expected that these recommendations can be implemented in all public service departments although in some cases other public service departments will have to conduct initial

research. In the instance of the DFEA the research report may be used with great effect as an *advocacy* tool and as a way of ensuring management 'buy-in'. Other departments may have to utilise other advocacy tools.

7.1.1 Systems and Process Change

Gore (1996) refers specifically to the implementation of a 360-degree goal setting process in US government agencies as a critical way of improving performance. This 360-degree goal setting process consists of setting performance measures at individual, unit and departmental levels. Individuals and teams (units) are then evaluated by managers, subordinates, colleagues, customers and suppliers. As a first step it is recommended that the DFEA sets three levels (individual, unit, departmental) of clearly defined performance measures. These measures will be used to evaluate the performance of the department. As an individual performance management system already exists in the department, it is suggested that the Personnel Performance Management System (with suggested changes) continues to be used in the 360-degree goals setting process. It is important that the performance measures set are as far as possible *quantifiable* as it is intended that these performance measures will lay the foundation for setting service standards[30].

30 The first step of such a programme must be the identification of services and service levels required by customers. The Customer Service Survey (1998) conducted in the department is the mechanism to identify required services. A Customer service Survey will conducted in March 1999 in the DFEA. It is recommended that such a process takes place in all government departments before performance measures are set. This research report does not consider the complexities of current policy debates around delivery, rather the focus is specifically on micro reform.

Each unit will need to define clearly articulated service standards that will be publicised within the department. Setting customer standards is a powerful way of improving performance as standards focus on things that are most important to customer as well as telling employees where to focus. The setting of these measures will ensure a fundamental process shift as the goal of employees will change. Historically the goal for employees has been not to make mistakes, now the goal will shift to one of customer service.

It is important that a standardised system of performance measures is implemented as the success of such a system relies on the shared understanding by all employees. In addition, the performance measurement process needs to be a closed loop system. It is recommended that five dominant indicators are identified by managers that will provide the framework for the remaining performance measures.

It is hoped that by setting performance goals and measures, the corresponding methods of work will be altered accordingly. By March 1999, the new Public Service Regulations will be implemented (Republic of South Africa, 1998e) and this will ensure a positive environment in which more radical transformation of methods and processes can take place. The transformation of these methods and processes will rely fundamentally on the appropriate attitude and as such the second recommendation focuses on development of an appropriate attitude (Kotter & Heskett, 1992).

7.1.2 Attitude development and training

Schein (1992) and Kotter & Heskett (1992) argue that some 'cultures' will facilitate or encourage performance in an organisation. This is noted where 'strong' cultures promote a uniform, consensual set of values that will run throughout the organisation. If these values are appropriately focussed, this will be a recipe for performance 'success'. The second recommendation focuses on the development of an appropriate attitude and training thereby ensuring long term behaviour change. Schumacher (1997) identified the following methods to bring about organisational culture change:

1. Identifying other organisations as role models:

By identifying other government departments as role models, or by highlighting achievements of other departments, a sense of competition may emerge. This has already begun to happen in the DFEA where many initiatives are first time initiatives for any government department in South Africa. When these initiatives are communicated to employees, this aspect is always highlighted. A competitor is one way of strengthening an organisational culture (Schumacher, 1997) and coherence.

2. Telling stories that stress ideals

Particular themes need to be highlighted and reiterated by managers. These themes can be contained in organisational stories that are repeated regularly. These stores and references to cultural ideals (working late, getting rewarded for good performance, zero tolerance for poor performance) need to be made at all public events and in the DFEA internal newsletter.

3. Regular communication from leaders

The leaders of the DFEA need to make a significant effort to communicate with all employees. This may be done by using the internal newsletter as a mouthpiece for describing the vision and objectives of the department. Leaders also need to describe the vision of success and future of the DFEA in a way (and continuously) so that all employees are driven by the articulated, and shared vision. This is important in an organisation that is as diverse as the DFEA where areas of commonality need to be highlighted (Thomas, 1996). Managers need to make a significant contribution to the DFEA newsletter thereby influencing the culture through their articles. Social events where managers are present is also a way of communicating with employees and employees will be encouraged to share their ideas and ask manager's questions .

4. Public rewards and recognition

A culture building activity that has been accepted is the giving of rewards and recognition. This may be done by rewarding staff members for performance, innovations and other activities that meet the ideals of the organisation. Gore (1996) refers to the success of the "Hammer Award" for those civil servants or teams that were showing the way to reinvention.

5. Considerable attention to employee selection

The selection of new employees is a critical in bringing about an appropriate attitude development. New employees offer the opportunity to select those people who will make a contribution to the organisation along the identified trajectory. If innovativeness, customer service and performance improvement are the organisational goals, it is critical that new incumbents embody these principles. The public service has traditionally recruited staff who are conformist and non-risk taking (Metcalfe & Richards, 1987) which has resulted in a corresponding public service. A change in the type of person recruited will result in an organisational culture shift. It is therefore imperative that an environment is created that attracts a wide range of diverse people. By creating such an environment, diversity may be nurtured and the benefits of having a diverse workforce may be accrued (Thomas, 1996). There are numerous other ways of bringing about organisational culture change. Training is a notable method. Training in the form of functional training, on the job training and orientation and

induction. The success of training as a mechanism lies in the consistency of message embedded in any form of training. The DFEA needs to ensure that the training programmes chosen not only focus on functional training but also on training that will facilitate the transformation of attitudes. Customer service training is an example of a training programme that will see a specific shift in attitude.

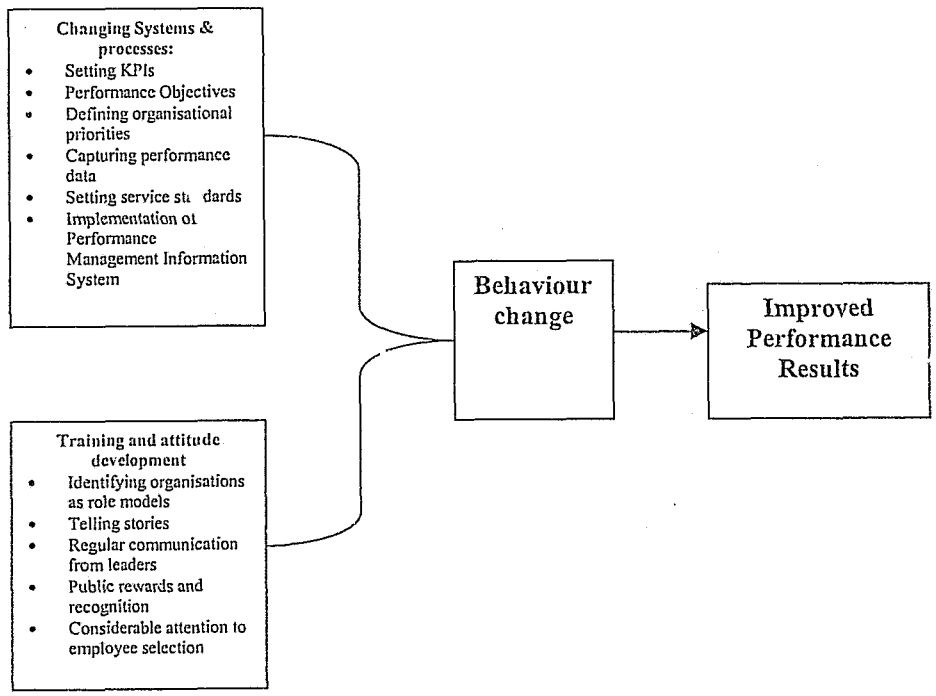
7.1.3 Dealing with organisational subcultures

These recommendations have not dealt specifically with the issue of subcultures. Subcultures exist in every organisation and as such contribute to the overall organisational culture. Schumacher (1997) argues that subcultures cannot be eliminated rather an overall cultural identity need to be forged that is more *influential* than the individual subcultures. To do this the communication processes need to build up a shared reality within the DFEA thereby introducing a thread of connection that does not alienate any of the subcultures. Once subcultures have been acknowledged in a department, the variance among these subcultures can be taken into consideration and the specific contributions each subculture may make can be tapped into. The two-pronged approach discussed previously should accommodate any problems associated with subcultures.

The following figure is a graphic representation of the proposed approach. This approach proposes a compact of changing the systems and processes of the

DFEA with dedicated training and attitude development. It is intended that this combination will, in time, bring about improved performance results for the DFEA.

Figure 7.1: Recommended Change Model for Building A Performance Oriented Culture



7.2 Further Areas of Research

It is hoped that this research has opened the door, even slightly, to a fuller and more substantial understanding of the public service in SA and how it operates. There are numerous questions that still need to be answered (and posed) and it is only once these questions are interrogated meaningfully, that public service departments will begin solving the *right* problem with the *right* solution. It is suggested that future areas of research include:

- *An analysis of the political/ administrative interface and the impact this interface has on performance in the public service.* Many of the restraints in public service delivery may be associated with the political/ administrative interface (Peters, 1989). A conflict arises between the administrative abilities and the political expectations in all government departments. In addition, policy development happens outside the arena of the administration, resulting in conflict between the two concerns. In South Africa this conflict has been particularly noticed as a result of the 'legacy' administration and the new policy that needs to be implemented.

- *An examination of perceptions of the public service and the impact this may have on future recruitment into the public service.* The recruitment process is a key mechanism for ensuring appropriate and required culture change in the

public service (Lerner & Wanat, 1992). The public service has, historically, been unable to attract innovative and highly skilled pers_ nel. This is as a result of the perceived bureaucratic nature of government departments, uncompetitive salaries, and 'cradle to grave' career option. These perceptions have, to a large extent, defined the type of people attracted to the public service. In so doing, the organisation is unable to attract different kinds of people with potential to change the existing organisational culture. The challenge for the public service is to assess exactly what these perceptions are, the impact these perceptions have on the ability to recruit a diverse range of individuals, and finally the strategies that are required to bring about a change in the perceptions.

- *The impact of national culture on the internal management of public service organisations.* Johnston (1993) argues that a 'bureaucratic culture' exists in all public services in the world. Lerner & Wanat (1992) argue that this 'bureaucratic culture' is as a result of the nature of public services. A research report that examines these arguments more closely and that measures the impact of the South African national culture (if there is one) on the management of public service departments, will allow for a deeper understanding of the influences on the way public service departments are managed in South Africa.

The South African public service is in a continuous state of transformation. The 'legacy' systems, processes and culture that exist, need to be transformed. To ensure that this transformation is appropriate and adequate, an in-depth and more complex understanding is required. The body of work that currently exists on management issues in the public service is minimal.

This lack of information hinders the ability of managers, policy makers and leaders to make informed and accurate decisions. It is hoped that as more research is conducted in this field, public service management in South Africa becomes less of a 'hit and miss' and more of an exact and informed body of knowledge.

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Appendix 1



FINANCE AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS
FINANSIES EN EKONOMIESE SAKE
TSA DITJHELETE LE IKONOMI
EZEZIMALI NE ZOMNOTHO

To all staff

The Department of Finance and Economic Affairs has committed itself to improving performance in all our services. To ensure that this is done properly, the department needs to understand what some of the performance related issues are in the department. Once these issues have been identified, appropriate programmes can be put into place.

Please assist us by spending 10 minutes in completing the questionnaire. This is an ANONYMOUS questionnaire and your honesty in answering these questions will be appreciated.

The questionnaires must be returned to Samantha Rockey in Room 705 by Friday the 11th of September 1998.

Thank you for your time and effort!

Roland Hunter (Head of the Department of Finance and Economic Affairs

Finance and Economic Affairs, 94 Main Street, Johannesburg. Private Bag X091, Marshalltown 2107.
Tel: (011) 355 8701. Fax: (011) 355 8500.

PERFORMANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Gender (Please tick box) : Female ☐ Male ☐

Rank: _____

Directorate: _____

Unit: _____

Job Title: _____

When did you join government? _____

INSTRUCTIONS

On the following pages there are a number of questions about your various aspects of your job and the department. We would like to know how you feel about each of these statements and how much you agree or disagree with each one. .

Please read each statement and decide how you feel about it. Then put a circle around the letters corresponding to your reaction.

There are five possible reactions:

Strongly agree: _____ Put a circle around "SA"
Agree: _____ Put a circle around "A"
Uncertain or Undecided: _____ Put a circle around "U"
Disagree: _____ Put a circle around "D"
Strongly Disagree: _____ Put a circle around "SD"

Please only circle ONE response against each statement, indicating your own personal reaction to the statement .

This questionnaire should take about **10 minutes** to complete.

SA -- Strongly agree

A – Agree

U – Uncertain

D – Disagree

SD – Strongly disagree

1. People normally do not feel uncomfortable when changes are made	SA A U D SD
2. Even with good planning most problems cannot be avoided	SA A U D SD
3. it is an essential part of the job of supervisors and managers to set up and maintain good communications between top management and the workforce.	SA A U D SD
4. When you leave people alone to do their job – that is when they work the best	SA A U D SD
5. The work and effort of any one individual in the department cannot make a significant contribution or difference to the department.	SA A U D SD
6. I do not believe that the department is really ready, or determined, to change things and to drive those changes through	SA A U D SD
7. I am under pressure in my job	SA A U D SD
8. The best way for me to improve the performance in my area is to do things differently	SA A U D SD
9. Due to the complex nature of our department, it is very difficult to plan the work	SA A U D SD
10. The department's policies, procedures, working methods and practices do not have to be clear for the department to be successful	SA A U D SD

SA – Strongly agree

A – Agree

U – Uncertain

D – Disagree

SD – Strongly disagree

11. It is important that a manager or supervisor avoids conflict. Therefore they have to accept people the way they are	SA A U D SD
12. An assumption that is often made by managers or supervisors is that people only work because they have to and not because they really want to	SA A U D SD
13. Even though people try and change things, it really seems to be a waste of time and effort	SA A U D SD
14. It seems as though some of the people actually do most of the work, while the others do just enough to stay out of trouble	SA A U D SD
15. It soon becomes unpleasant to work for a department that starts emphasizing productivity and efficiency	SA A U D SD
16. It is not necessary to know how other team members do their work, as long as they know what is required of them	SA A U D SD
17. I know exactly what results and performance levels I have to attain	SA A U D SD
18. The best way to get people to be more productive is to pay them more	SA A U D SD
19. When we want to make changes in the company, the top management give their active support to these changes	SA A U D SD
20. It is very difficult for people to do things differently	SA A U D SD
21. The cooperation between different departments is often, unavoidably, poor	SA A U D SD
22. It is often difficult to determine who is actually responsible for what	SA A U D SD

SA – Strongly agree

A – Agree

U – Uncertain

D – Disagree

SD – Strongly disagree

23. Meeting high performance targets does not mean that there is any reason why quality should suffer	SA A U D SD
24. It is more likely in this department, that people who show initiative will do well	SA A U D SD
25. In order to meet objectives it is essential that changes have to be made	SA A U D SD
26. As long as the reasons for poor performance are known, it is possible to tolerate poor performance	SA A U D SD
27. In general I do not find it difficult to do something different, or to try something new in my job	SA A U D SD
28. It is not really necessary to plan most people's performance on a day to day basis	SA A U D SD
29. It is essential to look at performance statistics to get the job done	SA A U D SD
30. Most people know what needs to be done and they get on with it and therefore do not need supervision or instruction	SA A U D SD
31. Most people are more interested in collecting their pay than doing a good job	SA A U D SD
32. All the changes that management want to introduce into the department have to be discussed and agreed with the employees otherwise government will not be able to deliver services	SA A U D SD
33. The department's expectations of worker performance are too high	SA A U D SD

34. One cannot expect things to change very much in a department such as this one	SA A U D SD
35. The planning systems should be used to help and assist with the change process	SA A U D SD
36. You cannot rely on others to get accurate information – you have to get it yourself	SA A U D SD
37. It is not necessary to bring poor performance of people in my team to attention, since it is normal for people to perform poorly at times	SA A U D SD
38. I do not really have to use my skills and abilities well to get my job done	SA A U D SD
39. Before changes that affect us are implemented, we are usually consulted about such changes	SA A U D SD
40. Whether or not I achieve my objectives depends entirely on other people	SA A U D SD
41. To improve performance it is not necessary to change the work methods or work procedures	SA A U D SD
42. It is not possible to avoid many of the problems that occur even by planning properly	SA A U D SD
43. I should be prompted to take action by most of the information that I receive	SA A U D SD
44. I always tell people exactly how long I expect the job to take whenever I give the work to someone to do	SA A U D SD
45. By reminding subordinates of their performance goals, supervisors and managers can usually obtain better performance	SA A U D SD
46. Most of the training that we undergo does not work well in practice, even though the principles sound fine in theory	SA A U D SD

47. When compared to **potential** levels of performance, how would you on average describe the results in your area? Please circle your answer.

1. Very High
2. High
3. Average
4. Low
5. Very Low

48. By how much do you think the performance in your area could be improved if realistic changes and improvement were to be made?

1. Don't know
2. Double (100%)
3. 50% – 60%
4. 30% - 35%
5. 5% - 10%
6. None (0%)

Nominal Group Technique

Section 1

Question:

Time allowed for this section 7 min. STOP ➡ __h__

Idea	✓

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Nominal Group Technique

Section 2

What you are required to do:

- Select from SECTION 1 your **FOUR** best ideas
- Rewrite these ideas in approximately **FIVE** words each



Time allowed for this section 4 min.



__h__

Idea
1
2
3
4

FIVE WORDS?

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Section 3

What you are required to do:

- > Rate the ideas listed (tick the appropriate box) according to how you perceive their worth
- > Identify the ten ideas you consider most worthwhile
- > In the points column, rank your ten most worthwhile ideas in order, giving 10 points to the top idea, 9 points to the next best idea, and so on down to 1 point for the tenth
- > Transcribe your rank point scores to Section 4



Time allowed for this section **9** min.



⇒ __h__

Idea	Excellent	Good	Fair	Points	Idea	Excellent	Good	Fair	Points
1	☐	☐	☐	☐	26	☐	☐	☐	☐
2	☐	☐	☐	☐	27	☐	☐	☐	☐
3	☐	☐	☐	☐	28	☐	☐	☐	☐
4	☐	☐	☐	☐	29	☐	☐	☐	☐
5	☐	☐	☐	☐	30	☐	☐	☐	☐
6	☐	☐	☐	☐	31	☐	☐	☐	☐
7	☐	☐	☐	☐	32	☐	☐	☐	☐
8	☐	☐	☐	☐	33	☐	☐	☐	☐
9	☐	☐	☐	☐	34	☐	☐	☐	☐
10	☐	☐	☐	☐	35	☐	☐	☐	☐
11	☐	☐	☐	☐	36	☐	☐	☐	☐
12	☐	☐	☐	☐	37	☐	☐	☐	☐
13	☐	☐	☐	☐	38	☐	☐	☐	☐
14	☐	☐	☐	☐	39	☐	☐	☐	☐
15	☐	☐	☐	☐	40	☐	☐	☐	☐
16	☐	☐	☐	☐	41	☐	☐	☐	☐
17	☐	☐	☐	☐	42	☐	☐	☐	☐
18	☐	☐	☐	☐	43	☐	☐	☐	☐
19	☐	☐	☐	☐	44	☐	☐	☐	☐
20	☐	☐	☐	☐	45	☐	☐	☐	☐
21	☐	☐	☐	☐	46	☐	☐	☐	☐
22	☐	☐	☐	☐	47	☐	☐	☐	☐
23	☐	☐	☐	☐	48	☐	☐	☐	☐
24	☐	☐	☐	☐	49	☐	☐	☐	☐
25	☐	☐	☐	☐	50	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Section 4

Individual Rankings

Name:_____ Date:_____
(optional)



Time allowed for this section 3 min.



__h__

Ranking	Idea No.	✓
10		
9		
8		
7		
6		
5		
4		
3		
2		
1		

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Nominal Group Technique

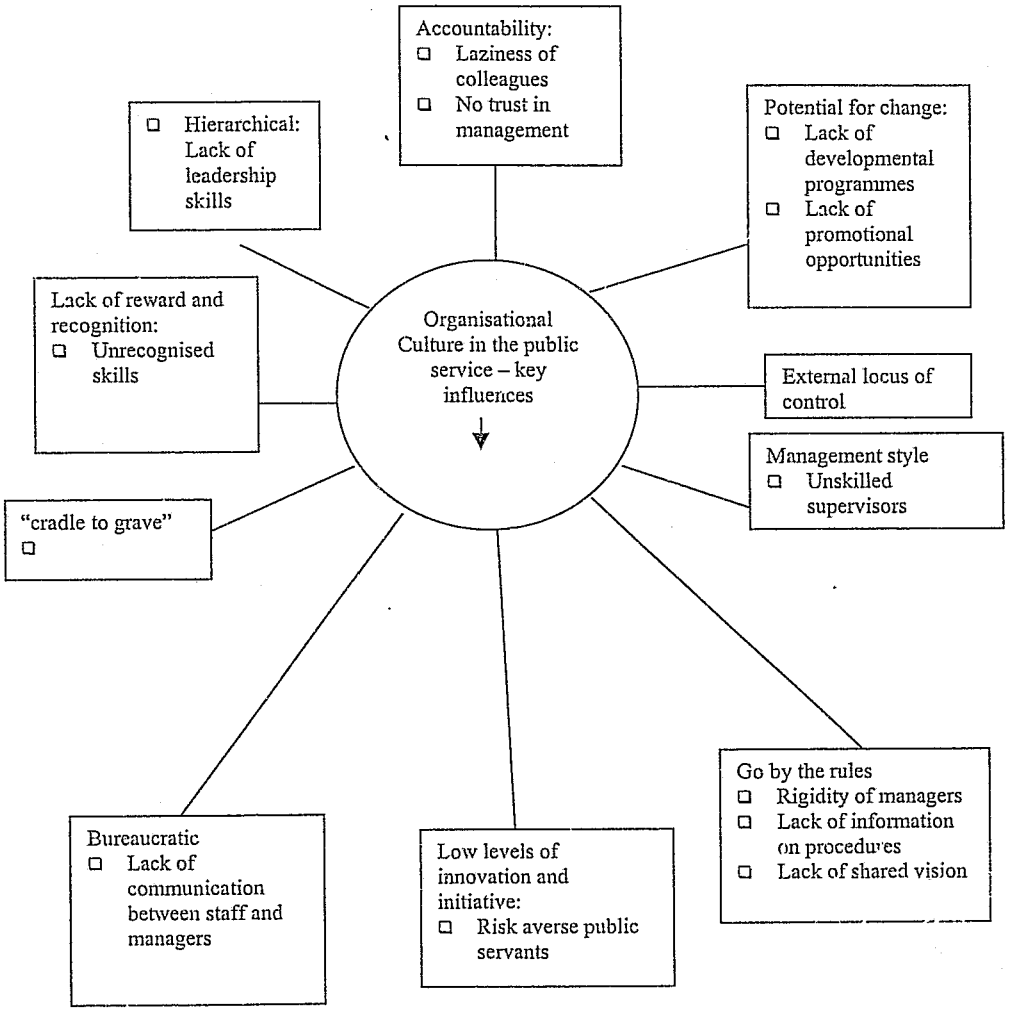
Section 5

Pooled Rankings

Idea	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	Total	Rank
1																	
2																	
3																	
4																	
5																	
6																	
7																	
8																	
9																	
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48																	
49																	
50																	
Total																	

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APPENDIX 3 – NOMINAL GROUP TECHNIQUE MIND MAP



APPENDIX 4 – TABULATION OF NGT RESPONSES

Table 1 - Group 1: Administrative Staff (7 participants)

Questions	*Responses*	*5 Priorities*
What is performance?	1. The ability to:- • Be in control • Take initiatives 2. Process towards the achievement of a set goal/objective, through group or individual action. 3. It's a process that requires a good attitude and good customer service. 4. Proper usage of intellectual abilities/ Knowledge/experience	• Control and taking initiatives over your work • Contribution by individuals to the set goal (group work) • Achievement of set goals / objectives • Attitude and service delivery • Good resources - knowledge, skills, management.
What makes it difficult to perform your job?	1. Unclear instructions/lack of information on procedures that has to be taken in a given task (from supervisors) 2. Lack of training/skills development for staff members 3. Lack of delegation by supervisors to develop skills 4. Manager's bad attitude 5. Lack of timeous communication (vertical and horizontal) 6. Barriers created by managers / system (bureaucratic procedures that hinders progress/no room for initiatives) 7. Shortage of staff (work overload) 8. Lack of motivation and encouragement from managers 9. Lack of leadership vision (sub-directorates) 10. Usage of wrong delegation to address staff needs (lack of accountability) 11. No feedback after meetings 12. Low salary scale 13. Lack of understanding of procedures 14. Lack of consultation by managers when they draw up procedures and policies 15. Culture problem (race) 16. Pressure and victimisation by supervisors 17. Deprivation of privileges 18. Insufficient equipment and facilities 19. Lack of acknowledgement from staff 20. Lack of interaction with top managers 21. Favouritism displayed when using the Personnel Performance Management System 22. Language problem (communication)	• Unclear instruction/lack of information on procedures that has to be undertaken in a given task (from supervisor) • Lack of training/skills • Shortage of staff • Lack of leadership vision (sub-directorates) • Insufficient facilities and equipment

Table 2 - Group 2: Staff below level three (9 participants)

Question	*Responses*	*5 Priorities*
What is performance?	1. Service excellence 2. Rendering of services to the public 3. Loyalty to duty 4. Willingness to perform your duties 5. Total ability to do your work 6. Competency/Effectiveness/Efficiency 7. Mutual respect 8. Availability to one's work 9. Productivity 10. Participation/Flexibility to task 11. Ability to adhere to deadlines 12. Confidence in one's job 13. Accountability 14. Fairness 15. Being motivated on duty 16. Setting objectives and achieving your goals	• Willingness to perform your duty • Service excellence • Competency/efficiency/productivity in your task • Availability to your work • Fairness
What makes it difficult to perform your job?	1. Unequal treatment in my group by supervisor (unfair labour practices e.g. job equity) 2. Misunderstanding with supervisor 3. Unclear instructions from supervisor 4. Lack of communication channels 5. Lack of skills 6. Lack of training 7. Lack of motivation from supervisor/manager 8. Punctuality of colleagues 9. Harassment - nagging supervisor - impulsive manager (bombarding you with work just because s/he does not plan well to reach deadlines) 10. lack of acknowledgement by supervisor (unrecognised skills) 11. Wrong allocation of duties 12. Unwillingness of colleagues to perform their task 13. Laziness of colleagues - Efficient - unwilling to co-operate 14. Non-conducive environment 15. Unproductive environment - lack of leadership vision and management skills (supervisors) - unnecessary bureaucratic procedures (if the manager/supervisor is not at work, nobody could give authority.	• Lack of leadership vision and management skills - Unnecessary bureaucratic procedures that hinder progress e.g. when the manager is not in the office, there is nobody in charge. • Laziness of colleagues - lack of co-operation • Unclear instructions/ Mandate • Lack of acknowledgement from supervisors - unrecognised skills • No motivation - lack of promotional opportunities - lack of developmental programmes

Table 3 - Group 3: Top Management (5 Participants)

Questions	*Responses*	*5 Priorities*
What Is Performance?	1. Human resource effort in achieving outputs 2. The outcome of a task assigned given preset standards 3. Assessment of individual capabilities 4. Quality of Service 5. Walk the extra mile – more than is expected 6. Way you deal with what is assigned to you 7. Optimum input/output/outcome ratios 8. Execution of task meeting of objectives 9. Production of outputs at lower cost of an assessment 10. Output measurements 11. Benchmarking	• Optimum input/output /outcome ratios • The outcome of a task assigned given preset standards • Quality of Services • Walking the extra mile – more than is expected • Benchmarking – i.e. identifying appropriate standards against which performance can be measured.
What Makes It Difficult to perform your job?	1. Lack of administration support by lack of auxiliary services 2. Lack of shared vision and rigidness of rules 3. Too many variables involved 4. Low level of skills 5. Frequent requests for unplanned work 6 Sensitive balance between different spheres of government 7. Limited resources e.g. skills and finances 8. Risk averse public sector 9. Lack of urgency 10. Lack of innovation by public servants 11. Administrative/ political interference 12. Centralized decision making 13. Poor quality information 14. Not service delivery sensitive 15. Changes take too long 16. Lack of objectivity regarding resources issues (vested interests) 17. Red tape 18. Non – defined preset standards 19. Working in silos (between departments)	• Risk averse public sector • A public service that is not service delivery sensitive • Lack of objectivity regarding resource issues (vested interest) in terms of budget allocation • Lack of shared vision and rigidness of rules • Limited resources specifically skills and finances

Table 4 - Group 4: Pre-1994 Incumbents (8 participants)

Questions	*Responses*	*5 Priorities*
What Is Performance?	1. Evaluation of task 2. Punctuality and commitment to timeframes 3. Getting the job done 4. Quality of work 5. Do things according to rules and regulations 6. Overcome difficulties 7. Driven towards goals and objectives 8. Adapting to changes 9. Give satisfactory result of what is expected 10. Delivery of services timelessly and correctly 11. Ability to make use of resources 12. Set objectives that are achievable 13. Communication 14. Development of required skills and knowledge 15. Human relations 16. Mind Frame/ Attitude with which job is completed	• Quality of work • Getting the job done • Communication between different departments and units • Set objective that are achievable • Driven towards goals and objectives
What Make It Difficult To Perform Your Job?	1. Management is planning my day 2. Too many vacancies 3. Continuous phone calls 4. Lack of skills 5. Limited experience and knowledge of officials 6. Lack of communication 7. Negative attitude performance of colleague 8. Unskilled supervisors 9. Lack of support of management 10. Computer system that is off 11. Non performance of other direction/departments 12. Impracticality of certain deliverables 13. Lack of involvement, clear guide lines, instruction from management e.g PPMS 14. Budget restraints contracts 15. Duplication of work 16. Untrained officials at other department 17. Implementation of affirmative action 18. Too many long meetings 19. Unrealistic deadlines	• Lack of skills of staff members • Duplication of work between functions • Too many vacancies in the department • Lack of communication between units and between top management and other staff • Unskilled supervisors ("new" supervisors)

Table 5 - Group 5: Professional group (5 Participants)

Questions	*Responses*	*5 Priorities*
What Is Performance?	1. Planning 2. Work effectively 3. Quality 4. Dedication 5. Getting involved 6. Manage your time 7. Using resources effectively 8. Render an excellent service 9. Quality of outputs 10. Ensuring everyone is productive 11. Be competent 12. Establish good working relationships 13. Using creative means	• Planning • Managing your time properly • Quality of work • Getting involved in the activities of the department • Using resources effectively
What Makes It Difficult to perform your job?	1. Computer system always off 2. No cooperation from management 3. Poor management and lack of trust 4. Having to do administration tasks 5. No resources -- no internet etc 6. Incompetence of management 7. Difficult subordinates 8. Red tape 9. Difficult customers – want 1st part 10. Poor interrelationship with colleague 11. Over qualification in comparison to management 12. No trust in management 13. Lack of mobility / flexibility 14. Not enough time in day	• No resources – such as no internet etc • No trust in management • Not enough time in each day • No cooperation from management • Incompetence of management

Author Rockey S J
Name of thesis The Influence Of Organisational Culture On Performance Iin The Public Service Rockey S J 1999

PUBLISHER:
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
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