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Professionalization of human resource development (HRD) practitioners in the Office of the Premier of the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government

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2015-03-09
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Professionalization of Human Resource Development (HRD) Practitioners in the Office of the Premier of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government.

By

Zamokwakhe Enock Khuzwayo

Research Report submitted to the Faculty of Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management)

31 July 2014

DECLARATION

I declare that this report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public and Development Management) at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

_____

Zamokwakhe Enock Khuzwayo
31 July 2014

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First, I wish to thank my Almighty for granting me the strength and resilience to do this programme, including the 16 modules which preceded this research project, and finally getting to complete this research project. Glory be unto Him indeed.

Secondly, Mr. Motswaledi, my supervisor, never has a man been so patient and understanding of any situation like Mr. Motswaledi was with me throughout the period he was my supervisor. With him at any of the South African Research institutions, truly, the vision of this country to improve its research capabilities is assured.

Thirdly, my family, my wife Lerato “Noluthando” Khuzwayo, my kids, Lwandle, Phandulwazi, ZamaQwabe and Lindokuhle, thank you for allowing me to split your quality time between you and this programme, although unfavourable to yourselves as this may have been. As for Lindokuhle, who each time I tried to work on the family dining room table, saw an opportunity to sit on my lap and demand to type on the very laptop. I suppose you were wondering what the farce was all about.

Other individuals to whom I owe a great deal of gratitude for their wisdom who shared with me their views and pointed me in the right direction, I am truly grateful. Ms Colette Clark, the author of the Public Service HRD Strategic Framework: Vision 2015, where the issue of professional HRD Practitioners was first introduced, thank you for the impromptu discussions we had. Mr. Alvin, DDG Policy at DPSA; Mr Marius Meyer, CEO of SABPP; Dr. Shamritha Bhikha of the National School of Government; Mr. Sibusiso Mpungose of Gauteng City Region Academy; Mr. Bully Sedibe and Mr Thulare Senona of DPSA. My gratitude goes out to you all.

With Gratitude in my heart.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASTD	American Society for Training and Development
CPD	Continued Professional Development
GVA	Gross Value Added
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM&D	Human Resource Management and Development
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
KZNPPC	KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Planning Commission
OPSC	Office of the Public Service Commission
OTP	Office of the Premier
PDGS	Provincial Growth and Development Strategy
PS-HRDSF	Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework
PSTF	Public Sector Trainers' Forum
SAMDI	South African Management and Development Institute
SABPP	South African Board of People Practices
SACE	South African Council for Educators
WPPSTE	White Paper on Public Service Training and Education
PALAMA	Public Administration, Leadership and Management Academy

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to solicit views of HRD practitioners regarding the Professionalisation and Recognition of Public Service Human Resource Development (HRD) Practice, using the experiences of HRD practitioners in the KwaZulu-Natal provincial government.

Background: In recruiting employees into the public service, the South African Constitution dictates that policies that promote and maintain high standard of professional ethics should be applied. The principles of good human resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated (South African Constitution, 1996). As such, a series of human resource development strategies were introduced from 2002 aimed at building the capacity of the state, with the latest of such, being the Public Service HRD Strategic Framework (PS-HRDSF): Vision 2015, having been introduced in 2007.

The successful implementation of these strategies depended on the capacity of HRD practitioners in departments to drive these towards meeting their intended objectives, which is ensuring that the state has the capacity to deliver on its mandate. Amongst its priorities, the latest HRD strategic framework places premium on strengthening the capacity of HRD practitioners; by building a strong culture of professional practice in HRD. The aim is to create a sound foundation in public service institutions for the application of capacity development initiatives to enhance performance and improve service delivery (DPSA, 2007).

Literature Review: The study visited the work of researchers in the HRD practice who have undertaken investigations into the true character of HRD as an independent practice which has its own body of knowledge and theory. Furthermore, the study visited the literature on challenges facing HRD in the future, such as the future survival of the HRD practice, recognition of HRD and its practitioners, and professionalisation of the practitioners.

Methodology: The study, being of social science in nature and focusing into the topic of human development, was informed by a Critical Social Science (CSS) approach, in particular, the hermeneutic data analysis process. The study applied a mixed research method to ascertain (quantitatively), the views of HRD practitioners,

professional bodies and policymakers to (qualitatively) understand their views on professionalisation. The collection of data was through a survey of HRD practitioners using questionnaires and unstructured interviews for HRD policymakers.

Results: Using the hermeneutic data analysis process, the results were categorised into six themes: (1) Roles and competencies of HRD practitioners (2) Levels of growth experienced as a result of exposure to the implementation of HRD strategies in their respective departments within the province, (3) Recognition and professionalisation of HRD practitioners, (4) Common entry professional qualification into the HRD practice (5) Code of Conduct for HRD practitioners; and (6) Common Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for HRD practitioners.

Recommendations: The research makes recommendations that HRD practitioners themselves should take initiatives to elevate the HRD practice through the development of the body of knowledge and theory. They should increase their efforts to redefine the role and contribution of the HRD function to the organisational performance improvement. They should form themselves into communities of experts and mobilise for the development of a Competency Dictionary for HRD practice as a basis for the DPSA to develop a Competency Framework. The same Framework will serve as the basis for continuous professional development.

CHAPTER 1: Introduction and Background

1.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this report is to present findings of the research conducted in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government on the views of HRD practitioners regarding the professionalisation and recognition of Public Service Human Resource Development (HRD) Practice. The study used the implementation of, and compliance with, the HRD strategies in the public service as a proxy in determining whether the HRD practitioners applied their professional competence as expected of them as professionals of the Human Resource Development Practice. Therefore, the objective was to solicit the views of HRD Practitioners on whether the implementation of the Human Resource Development (HRD) strategies by the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, implemented as part of the broader public service national directive, has contributed towards assisting HRD Practitioners, in (1) advancing their practice, (2) gaining professional standing and (3) improving their conduct as professionals. Furthermore, the studies also sought (4) to establish whether legal professionalisation of HRD Practice can contribute to the recognition of the HRD Practitioners as professionals and a field of practice in the Public Service. The study focused on the implementation of the HRD Strategies during the period from 2001-2012.

This chapter sets out the nature and scope of the research and the structure of the report is outlined.

The background issues setting the tone for the rest of the report are found in this chapter. Also in this chapter, the problem statement is discussed and the associated main research questions, as well as accompanying secondary questions are posed. This chapter further details the nature of the research; the key concepts are defined within the context of the study.

In a broader context, the study sketches benefits that are enjoyed by the members of the public who receive services from professionals in the regulated occupations, as well as the recognition status the practitioners in these occupations enjoy. Such arise

from the esteemed recognition associated with these professions, for example, medical doctors, teachers and nurses are examined.
The scope, the method, the data collection and analysis mechanisms used in this research are briefly discussed in this chapter. In conclusion, the chapter outlines the sequence of the remaining chapters in the report.

1.2. Background

This background entails a number of issues which give credence to the problem statement and rationale for this research:

- The South African Constitution and the Public Administration;
- The Role of the Department of Public Service and Administration in Human Resource Development for the Public Service;
- The KwaZulu-Natal Province and Human Resource Development
- The KwaZulu-Natal Public Service Training Academy

1.2.1. The South African Constitution and the Public Administration

Section 195 of the South African Constitution stipulates the basic values and principles governing public administration that (i) Public administration must be governed by the democratic values and principles enshrined in the Constitution, including, amongst others, the following principles:

a) A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained; and
b) Good human resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated (South African Constitution, 1996).

1.2.2. The Role of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) in Human Resource Development in the Public Service

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) draws its mandate from Section 195(1) of the Constitution which sets out basic values and principles that the public service should adhere to, and which are also found in the Public Service Act (PSA) of 1994, as amended (DPSA, 2014). In terms of the Public Service Act (PSA) of 1994, as amended, the Minister for the Public Service and

Administration is responsible for establishing norms and standards relating to human resource and governance of the Republic (DPSA, 2014).
The Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework, together with the related directives, determinations and prescripts which the DPSA issues constitute the norms and standards for human resource development practices in the public service. On the basis of these norms and standards, national and provincial departments develop their own departmental specific policies, informed by respective provincial and sectoral priorities. In the same vein, the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government and the provincial departments followed the same route in formulating and implementing their provincial HRD strategies.

The DPSA's role is then to support the departments to implement the policies, strategic framework, and directives, monitor, evaluate and report on the implementation, and when necessary, to intervene where there are challenges.

1.2.3. About the KwaZulu-Natal Province and Human Resource Development

As per the Cabinet Directive on the implementation of HRD strategies in Public Service, the KwaZulu Natal Provincial Government has been implementing human resource development (HRD) strategies since 2002. The success of this implementation has largely depended on the HRD practitioners utilising their unique skills to improve competency levels of public servants so that they become productive and contributing employees.

The Province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) is home to 10 645 509 people, the second largest province both in terms of its population (21.3%) and its economy is the second largest with an estimated annual contribution of approximately 17% to the national Gross Value Added (GVA), (KZN PPC, 2011). The Province's Growth and Development Strategy (PGDS), developed in 2011, quotes the National Planning Commission (NPC) Diagnostic Report (2011: p7) which states that, "The continued social and economic exclusion of millions of South Africans, reflected in high levels of poverty and inequality, is our biggest challenge." Therefore, the fundamental challenge that the 2011 KZN strategy would be focused on, is the creation of jobs for people over a sustained period of time. Primary amongst the main key challenges that the province aims to address with its strategy is the development of its largely unskilled labour force and to improve the quality of education of especially its black,

poor population, in order to achieve the educational outcomes that align with the growth and development path (KZNPPC, 2011).

The development of the Strategy was guided by eight principles. The third principle states "***to Develop the Province's greatest asset, its human capital"***, (KZNPPC, 2011). The Strategy has seven strategic goals which it seeks to achieve. The second most important of these goals is the Human Resource Development (KZNPPC, 2011). For this recognition in the provincial growth and development strategy, the function of coordinating the implementation of the Provincial HRD Strategy resides within the Office of the Premier. Therefore this becomes a dual mandate for the Department (Office of the Premier), in that its perspectives are that of coordinating HRD activities undertaken by other departments within the province aimed at building internal capacity. On the other hand, those initiatives are undertaken to contribute to the implementation of PGDS. In addition, the Office of the Premier undertakes capacity building for HRD practitioners in departments, and for its own internal personnel. Therefore, it became necessary to create a dedicated structure in the form of an academy, the details of which are discussed in the following section.

1.2.4. The KwaZulu-Natal Public Service Training Academy

The Provincial Public Service Training Academy was established in 2007 as an institutional mechanism for co-ordinating a structured approach to human resource development in the Province. It is a dedicated unit within the Office of the Premier and its exclusive function is to provide a specialised training and organisational development service to the officials of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration.

According to Provincial Government, the Academy is a catalyst for change and it acts to inspire new behaviour and stimulate growth (KZN Provincial Government, 2007). It aims to empower individuals with critical thinking and decision making skills and to build a responsible caring public servant, one who displays behaviour and values necessary for enhanced service delivery (KZN Provincial Government, 2007).

One of the key activities that the Academy undertakes is the convening of a Forum of HRD Practitioners from all fourteen (14) provincial departments in the province on a quarterly basis. The purpose of the Forum is to report on HRD initiatives undertaken by each department within its sector in relation to the provincial, national and sectoral priorities. It also serves as a platform for sharing best practices and to

collaborate and synergise on programmes of common interest. The Forum also serves as a platform for the development and enhancement of HRD practices and the practitioners as professionals.

From the above background, KwaZulu-Natal became an obvious choice from which to draw the population sample for this research. There is evidence that the province places a premium in the human resource development practice. It is also very important to understand that successful implementation of HRD was dependent largely on the willingness and capabilities of the HRD practitioners within provincial departments. Therefore the role of these individuals is critical, and in order to ensure that their work remains of expected performance standard, the status and future of their trade presents an interesting topic to investigate.

1.3. Problem Statement

HRD practice in the public service has remained unrecognised, therefore leaving its development as a profession fragmented with no common approach for career-development of those taking it up as a career of choice. Low morale due to this disregard sometimes manifests itself into a brain drain to the private sector, abandoning the occupation completely, and/or results in low levels of professional conduct. In some cases, the Public Service is unable to attract the desired talent, thus leaving it with no choice but to fill the posts with less qualified and committed individuals.

1.4. Purpose Statement and Value of this Research

Van Der Sluis (2007) identified four major themes which future research in the HRD practice should venture to and one of these is professionalism in the HRD practice. Van Der Sluis (2007) posits that organisational dynamics, for instance, flexibility, creativity and innovativeness are needed to act and react on the continuously changing business environment (the public service included) which drive organisations to need a professional workforce. Such workforce consists of employees with characteristics like self-governance, a focus on gaining and developing knowledge, special skills, and ethical behaviour (Van Der Sluis, *op cit*). Furthermore, Van Der Sluis (*op cit*) emphasises trust among workers as very important to build a professional organisation. According to Van Der Sluis (*op cit*),

trust is about recognition of each other's qualities and competencies. He argues that if organisations want to invest in the development of their employees, they should start by stimulating or building social networks among employees. A number of potential research questions are being suggested.

The above rationale, problem statement and background make a compelling reason for investigating the perceptions held by HRD practitioners on the status and future of their practice, in particular, the professionalisation thereof.

The purpose of this research is thus to solicit the views of HRD practitioners in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government on whether the implementation of Public Service HRD strategies since 2002 to date, has contributed towards assisting HRD Practitioners to advance their practice, professional standing and conduct. The study also sought to establish whether legal professionalisation of HRD Practice will contribute to the recognition of the HRD Practitioners in the Public Service. In order to achieve this purpose, the study will be guided by primary and secondary questions tailored around the approved topic as underlined above.

1.5. Research Question

Using the experiences of HRD practitioners in the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal, this research solicits the views of HRD practitioners and other principal role-players in the HRD practice:

- Whether the implementation of the Public Service HRD strategies since 2001 to date, has contributed towards assisting HRD Practitioners to advance their practice, professional standing and conduct
- To establish whether legal professionalisation of HRD Practice can contribute to the recognition of the HRD Practitioners in the Public Service
- To establish if there is a universal agreement on the minimum core competencies that HRD practitioners should possess

1.6. Scope of Research

The focus of the research was limited to the KwaZulu-Natal provincial administration and its HRD practitioners, who constitute the Provincial HRD Forum. The research

looked at the HRD practitioners' perceptions of the impact made and/achieved through their involvement in the implementation of the public service HRD strategies in relation to their growth as professionals. The research also sought to establish if there is a universal agreement on a minimum set of core competencies that HRD practitioners should possess; academic qualifications currently being held and those being pursued by the practitioners were probed; including seeking a consensus on the one common qualification which practitioners thought should be the minimum entry requirement to practice as a professional HRD practitioner.

1.7. Sequential order of the Chapters

The outline of Chapters in this Research takes the following sequence:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendation

1.8. Conclusion

Chapter One reveals that there is a compelling reason for the research of this nature to be undertaken in order to attempt to mobilise the professionals in the field of HRD do introspection as to where they stand in relation to their profession, the development of their practice and perhaps to even nudge them towards taking up an active role in the development of the practice and themselves.

The chapter also defined concepts associated with HRD and the processes concerning professionalisation.

The chapter sought to bring to the fore several attempts made in deciphering the practice of HRD and extricating it from the broader field of management. It sought to clear confusion with, and subjudication under the sister fields of human resource management and it removed a myth that it is synonymous with training and development.

As indicated above, the report will now deal with the literature review, outlining the in-depth academic research body of knowledge undertaken by other scholars in the field of HRD, professionalisation and evolution and recognition of HRD as a practice.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This section reviews literature on theory which has created a sufficient body of knowledge as the basis for deepening HRD as a profession. There is also a great deal of literature on the professional standing of human resource management, as a profession in South Africa, the management of professionally qualified persons in the South African Public Service, competencies for Human Resources Development Practitioners and finally the existing statutes relating to the professionalisation and recognition of HRD as a practice in the Public Service. With so much written about HRD and as the reader navigates through this amount of literature, it is important to point out that the literature presented here was selected to support the questions that the research sought to answer. The question is as follows:

To solicit views of HRD practitioners in KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government and policymakers in the HRD practice:

- Whether the implementation of the Public Service HRD strategies since 2001 to date, has contributed towards assisting HRD Practitioners to advance their practice, professional standing and conduct
- To establish whether legal professionalisation of HRD Practice can contribute to the recognition of the HRD Practitioners in the Public Service
- To establish if there is a universal agreement on the minimum core competencies that HRD practitioners should possess

Therefore, this chapter reviews the literature on the following topics:

- Defining of Human Resource Development;
- A place for HRD practice in the Public Service;
- The Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework and the role of HRD Professionals;
- The survival of Human Resource Development (HRD) as an independent field of practice;
- The distinction between Human Resource Development (HRD), training and Human Resource Management (HRM);
- Unique competencies of HRD Practitioners;

- HRD Learning Networks and Associations;
- A case for a legal professionalisation and establishment of a professional body for the HRD practitioners; and
- Continual Professional Development (CPD) for HRD practice and its professionals;

2.2. Defining of Human Resource Development

Swanson & Holton, (2008: 4) define human resource development (HRD) as a process of developing and unleashing expertise for the purpose of improving individual, team, work process, and organisational system performance.

Van der Sluis, (March 2007), defines HRD as the development of human resources, or the increase of human capital of organisations. This description defines HRD as the developmental process of individuals in organisations (Van der Sluis, 2007).

DPSA defines human resource development in the Public Service **"*as those efforts undertaken by organisations to ensure that employees are well prepared to undertake their responsibilities and grow into viable careers, thereby adding value to the productivity and service of their organisations, the motivation and performance of their peers and the attainment of the overall vision of the developmental state*"** (HRDSF Vision 2015: 11).

2.3. A place for HRD practice in the Public Service

According to the United Nations (1996), Human Resource Development (HRD) has over the past number of years become a popular topic in public administration and management internationally, and in South Africa. In part, this is due to the common occurrence of public organisations frequently failing to achieve their programme objectives and outcomes. The lack of appropriately qualified, trained and the unresponsiveness of public servants to citizens' needs is often at the root of public policy failures, especially at the implementation stage. Human resource development, with its focus on the need to systematically and strategically develop the skills of public servants which, in turn, it is hoped, will enhance individual and organisational performance and improve service delivery, has been readily accepted

by governments all over the world, especially in developing countries (United Nations, 1996).

Realising the truthfulness of the above assertion by the United Nations, the South African Government too, as the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), (2002) observed, has since 1994 acknowledged that HRD could play a huge role in transforming the fragmented, incoherent and uncoordinated nature of education, training and development that it inherited from the previous South African regime before 1994. In 1994, the Department of Public Service and Administration conducted a study on training in the public service, the level of competency amongst the public servants and how career opportunities in the public service were made possible. The study revealed that training was highly fragmented, uncoordinated and incoherent as well as not aligned to HRD functions. More importantly, the study revealed that training due to the absence of any HRD strategies, could not address the demands of a service-orientated public service (PMG, 2002).

It is the role of human resource development practitioners to plan for the sufficient, economic and effective use of human resources, based on the defined operational requirements of the organisation; definition of the role, status, duties, functions, responsibilities, as the specific performance requirements of jobs within the organisation, and control of individual's performance and accountabilities, against the job specific role, status, duties, and functions (Hoffman & Groenewald, 2009). Such is the complexity of the role of an HRD Practitioner, that there is a need to elevate the importance and status of training and in particular, that of the trainers (WPPSTE, 1997).

The Public Service cannot fulfil its mandate unless it has the capacity to deliver; and, most of this capacity lies in its people, in their ability to undertake their assigned responsibilities as public officials, and, in their level of commitment to serve and perform to the best of their ability (PS-HRDSF, DPSA, 2007).

It is the task of human resource development (professionals) to ensure that the employees within the Public Service are competent to understand and respond successfully to their ever-changing environment (PSC, June 2011:21).

In 2002 the DPSA published the initial HRD Strategic Framework for the period 2002-2006 and the main objective was to re-construct a productive public service and to ensure that education, training and skills development take place in a holistic, cohesive, coherent and strategic manner (DPSA, 2006). The Strategic Framework introduced in 2007, as Vision 2015, took a comprehensive overview of the HRD practice in the public service, which was to consider all the success factors essential to the thriving of HRD implementation. These included the organisational support initiatives and governance initiatives. The Governance Strategic Objective places a prime value on building a strong culture of professional practice in HRD in order to create a sound foundation in public service institutions for the application of training initiatives to enhance performance and improve service delivery.

The researcher, having located the role of the HRD practitioners in the implementation of the Public Service HRD practice, at that point undertook an examination of the unique role that the HRD practice and its practitioners offer to the organisation. Therefore, the next section deals with the competencies of the HRD practice and its practitioners.

The underlying key assumptions and beliefs constituting the conceptual framework of this study are those supported by the White Paper on the Transformation of the Human Resource in the Public Service, the Principles underpinning the Public Service HRD Strategic Framework and those of Batho Pele. Miles and Huberman (1994) defined a conceptual framework as a visual or written product, one that “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied — the key factors, concepts, or variables — and the presumed relationships among them” (p. 18). The White Paper proposed that, [the state] having identified the "gap" between future requirements and existing capacity, a strategy will then be devised to enable the public service organisations to meet its human resource needs. The strategy is likely to be wide-ranging, including, for example, organisational redesign, standard human resource management instruments such as training, promotion, career management, amongst others (DPSA, 2007).

The principles the PS-HRDSF sought to promote are those which sought to establish a common set of beliefs among practitioners and stakeholders, so that HRD interventions are not based on different stakeholder values and assumptions (DPSA,

2007, p12). The PS-HRDSF further envisaged a Code of conduct being promulgated as a basis for extending Batho Pele into value structures that are pertinent to HRD practitioners. Therefore building a strong culture of professional practice in HRD so as to create a sound foundation in public service organisations for the application of HRD to the initiatives to enhance performance and improve service delivery (DPSA, 2007, p118).

2.4. The Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework and the role of HRD Professionals

The Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework (PS-HRDSF): Vision 2015, observed that while so many interventions had been made, very few had been targeted at building the capacity of HRD practitioners whose job it is to implement the said strategies. The only departments with structured programmes and resources to develop trainers and HRD practitioners are the Departments of Defence, National Health and International Relations and Cooperation. Furthermore, the value and the meaning of HRD in the public service is misunderstood both by those who are "assigned" to practice it, and the leadership.

It is safe to attribute the above disparities to the phenomenon that the meaning and interpretation of HRD, as a practice in the public service, differs among HRD professionals and among managers in their respective departments. While some perceive HRD in a broader and holistic sense as an investment in human capital to meet the organisation's strategic agenda, others view HRD as merely training that is delinked from its value on performance and productivity (DPSA, 2007: 11). Unfortunately, the perceptions of HRD manifest in the manner in which HRD is organised, orchestrated and prioritised in public service organisations (DPSA, 2007:11), but most importantly, how the HRD practitioners have sought to advance their field of practice, including organising themselves to inform future development, codes of conduct and administration of the practice.

Strategic objective three of the Public Service HRD Strategic Framework is focused on Governance and Institutional Development Initiatives. The intended outcome here is to ensure that HRD in the public sector is effectively governed in order to promote effective implementation of the strategy (DPSA, 2007). The authors held a view that in order to achieve this, there was a need to promote a code of ethical conduct

amongst HRD practitioners (DPSA, 2007). The belief is that sound values are the basis for good professional practice (DPSA, 2007). There was an intention to promulgate a code of conduct as a basis for extending Batho Pele into a value structure that would be pertinent to HRD practitioners (DPSA, 2007). In this respect, HRD was to have a code of good practice for its practitioners (DPSA, 2007). The focus was on building a strong culture of professional practice in HRD so as to create a sound foundation in public service institutions for the application of training initiatives that would enhance performance and improve service delivery (DPSA, 2007).

The approach the DPSA took is that one aspect of the governance responsibility is to bring about unity, consistency, quality and ethical standards in the field of HRD. These are held as important drivers of the HRD strategy implementation as they establish a common voice and a unified orientation to practice (DPSA, 2007). Stated boldly, the interest here was to further professionalise the field of HRD in the public service, and to thereby build a solid foundation for moving into the future (DPSA, 2007). The strategy puts DPSA at the leadership in creating an enabling collaboration and engagement among practitioners and stakeholders in the development of ethical standards. The DPSA undertook to make efforts to conduct workshops and training sessions on the standards developed for the HRD practice. As a disclaimer, the DPSA states that the true value of these standards and codes of conduct would be added only if practitioners and their respective institutions applied these standards in enhancing practice and performance (DPSA, 2007). The DPSA states that while it offers to take the lead in the development of the standards, practitioners would be expected to be agents to transform their own practice (DPSA, 2007).

In respect of key activities that were to be undertaken in fulfilling the above objective, the Strategy identified the following five (5) activities: (1) **to establish and promote professional bodies or councils by occupational classes to promote norms and standards and professional codes of conduct**; (2) **Batho Pele performance indicators developed for HRD**; (3) **a code of ethical practice is developed for HRD practitioners in a consultative manner**; (4) **workshops held on code of ethical practice for HRD**; and (5) **to ensure that HRD professionals join related HRD bodies which would assist in enhancing their practice**(DPSA,2007: 116).

As the strategy is being reviewed after five years of implementation in 2013, this research will also contribute to the determination of whether this objective has been achieved, or what progress has been made towards achieving this objective.

2.5. HRD as practice and its practitioners

A question on whether human resource development would survive has been asked by Short, Bing, and Kehrhahn, (2003). Short et al (2003) bemoans the perception that HRD practice appeared divorced from real-time problems in organisations, that HRD professionals see their work being completed by those from other professions and there being little evidence that HRD has really moved far from a *"fad",* meaning "*an intense and widely shared enthusiasm for something, especially one that is short-lived; a craze"* (Oxford Dictionary, accessed on 25 April 2014). The subject of misconception is that HRD is viewed as being all about a short – term training panacea, and practitioners are still measuring training in person-hours rather than through the relationship between learning and productivity is cause for serious concern (Short, et. al. 2003).

The body of work done by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) Research-to-Practice Committee (Short, et. al. 2002), raises challenges which the HRD profession must overcome to ensure the effectiveness and success of the field in the following years, and these challenges are raised to provoke thoughts and action (Short, et al, 2003).

2.6. A Practitioner

A practitioner is an individual practicing a particular occupation or practicing and possessing a level of competence gained following receipt of an academic qualification and/or recognition of competence gained through a certain number of years of experience in that occupation. In professions which are organised into formal statutory or non-statutory associations, the title practitioner is only acquired or awarded once the individual has met a set of minimum requirements.

For the purposes of this study, only challenges 2 and 5 are being referenced to, to support the purpose of the study, these being: (2) **Measuring HRD Impact and Utility** and (5) **Achieving Professional Recognition**.

2.7. (a) Measuring the Impact and Utility of HRD Practice

Regarding the measuring HRD impact and utility in the organisation, (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001, Swanson & Holton, 1999 as cited in Short, et. al, 2003) posit that, in order for HRD practitioners to establish themselves as key players in the development of organisational strategies, they should demonstrate how what they do correlates with the productivity and welfare of the organisation. The point being advanced here is that demonstration of impact and utility will not only lead to a greater influence of HRD on the overall organisation, but will strengthen HRD's reputation as a legitimate profession (Short, et Al, 2003). In order to systematically determine the utility and impact of HRD in the organisational productivity, Short et al (2003) put it that there ought to be a clearly focused linking of learning and human process to performance and measuring learning, human process, and the resulting change in performance.

(b) Achieving Professional Recognition

Right up front, Short, Bing, and Kehrhahn (2003) stated that HRD is a relatively young field, and few consider it a profession. For as long as HRD is seen as a momentary incident that is reactive and those who lack sound understanding of core HRD theory and practice continue to fill HRD jobs, HRD will be viewed as secondary to other professions in the organisation. This may take an unpleasant process and effort of further development of practitioners or the loss of existing people. However, HRD as a profession needs to take specific steps to increase its credibility in organisations and its recognition as a discrete field of research and practice (Short, et al, 2003).

Efforts to build professional recognition will require HRD to construct a sound theory base and apply those theories in practice, (Short, et al, 2003). The efforts will require a sound education for HRD professionals with accompanying professional recognition and continuing professional development, and ethical standards that are understood and applied by professionals and overseen by professional bodies (Short, et al, 2003). The promotion of awareness and recognition must be accompanied by a strong focus on values, ethics, the quality of practice, and a set of competencies through which both research and practice can be undertaken, and avoid investing energy in the building of bureaucratic processes of credentialing and

standardisation (Short, et al, 2003). The issues raised above present a valid case for an investigation into the practice of the HRD, and the perception of HRD practitioners on the status and future of their practice.

2.8. The survival of Human Resource Development (HRD) as an independent field of practice

There is much that has been written about the Human Resource Development as a practice. Authors have asked some questions about the life expectancy of HRD as a practice and field. Short, Bing, and Kehrhahn, in the Human Resource Development Quarterly (Fall, 2003), posed a question whether "Human Resource Development (HRD) will survive?" The concern arises from the perception that HRD is seen to be *"fad"*. The Oxford Dictionary defines the term "*fad*" as an intense and widely shared enthusiasm for something, especially one that is short-lived and without basis in the object's qualities; a craze.

The same question should be asked about the practitioners if they can see the horizon of their occupation in the future. It is the practitioners in the field whose function is to generate distinct knowledge about their occupation (HRD), who must ensure the development of HRD as distinct occupation, see that it adds value to the daily operations of an organisation and also to safeguard the entry into and integrity of the occupation. Perhaps critical is the definition of the competencies and the clear unrivalled strategic role that HRD offers to any organisation's performance and transformation. This research being focused in the public service, it is at this point that we should turn to examine the role of HRD practice in the public service.

2.9. The distinction between Human Resource Development (HRD), training and Human Resource Management (HRM)

There is always this debate about the usage of HRD, training and HRM. For the purposes of this assignment it is important to draw a clear line between the three concepts. The purpose of training is more concerned with the development of an individual and only addresses deficiencies identified in one's set of skills, in relation to the organisational competence profile. On the other hand, the functions of HRD are individual development, organisational development, career development and performance improvement (Pederson, 2000). Training decisions cannot extend

beyond lecture room or training plant, but HRD plays a critical role in the strategic direction of an organisation.

Regarding the difference between human resource development (HRD) and human resource management (HRM), while the latter has generally been considered the overall field encompassing HRD (Pederson, 2000), research has proven that the two practices are separate. McGoldrick and Stewart (1996) in Pederson (2000), argue that HRD has been derived from the literature and practice of organisational development (OD) as well as training and development education and practices. Human Resource Management is only concerned with utilisation, administration and remuneration of personnel.

2.10. Competencies

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2005) defines competencies as more than just knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Competencies involve the ability to meet complex demands, by drawing on and mobilising psycho-social resources (including skills and attitudes) in a particular context (OECD, 2005). An ability to communicate effectively is a competency that may draw on an individual's knowledge of language, practical information technology skills and attitudes towards those with whom he or she is communicating, (OECD, 2005). In this context, this research explores the core competencies of HRD practitioners; hence the survey questionnaire included a question on competencies.

2.11. Unique competencies of HRD Practitioners

There is a need to define core competencies of HRD practitioners. Noe (2008, as cited by Erasmus, Loedolff and Hammann (2010) identifies four unique roles for the HRD practitioner, namely (1) learning strategist, (2) business partner, (3) project manager and (4) professional specialist. He concluded that HRD practitioners require the following combined clusters of competencies in order to be effective and be "business partners", combining works by Valkeavaara (1998) and the ASTD Study by Noe (2008):

- **Business/Management Competencies**: (Business understanding, Thinking Strategically; Industry Understanding, Project management, Organisational Development, Cost-Benefit Analysis Skills, Organisational Behaviour

Understanding; Improving Human Performance; Delegation Skills; Analysing needs and proposing solutions).

- **Interpersonal Competencies:** (Coaching Skills, Feedback Skills, Group process skills, Negotiation Skills, Presentation Skills, Relationship Building Skills and Business Writing Skills).
- **Personal Competencies**: (Demonstrating adaptability and Modelling personal development).
- **Intellectual Competencies**: (Data reduction skills, Information Search Skills; Intellectual versatility; Model building skills; Observing Skills, Self-Knowledge; Visioning Skills).
- **Technical Competencies:** (Adult learning understanding; Career Development understanding; Computer competence; Competency identification skills; Electronic systems skills; Objectives preparation skills; Subject Matter understanding; Training and development theories and techniques; and Research skills).

2.12. HRD Learning Networks and Association

In an attempt to organise the HRD practice in the Public Service, an informal structure called Public Sector Trainers' Forum (PSTF), was established in 1997, with an endorsement of the Minister for Public Service and Administration. PSTF is managed by Public Administration, Leadership and Management Academy (Palama), then called the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI). The purpose of the PSTF is to organise and support practitioners and managers who facilitate human resource development initiatives within the public sector.

The general objectives of the PSTF are to:

a. encourage practitioners and stakeholders in training and development (T&D) from the public sector as well as the private sector and civil society, in promoting the implementation and improvement of training and development in the public sector.
b. share ideas and best practices regarding training by convening workshops, an annual conference and other related activities.

c. contribute to the awareness and adoption of quality standards for T&D within the public sector; and
d. foster the development and growth of T&D practitioners in the public sector.

However, after 16 years of existence, the PSTF has not been able to influence the promulgation of a statute that would elevate its status and achieve recognition similar to the reputable traditional occupations in the Public Service. The analysis of the general objectives of the PSTF reveals a great concern in that the PSTF itself, is the very same that perceives HRD in a broader and holistic sense as an investment in human capital to meet the organisation's strategic agenda. Others view the HRD as merely training that is delinked from its value on overall institutional performance and productivity (DPSA, 2007: 11).

To this end, provinces and departments have progressed at different rates depending on the level at which the HRD function and the associated structures, systems and resources are prioritised. The outcome of these disparities, manifest themselves into uneven Public Service delivery levels, thus triggering even bigger social phenomena such as migration into provinces where service delivery standards are perceived to be better than other provinces. Can the Public Service afford these uneven levels of performance? It is perhaps an opportune time to investigate the possibility of organising and elevating the HRD Practice in the Public Service.

2.13. The American Society for Training & Development (ASTD)

The American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) has proposed a latest Competency Model which they assert that "*it redefines the skills and knowledge required for trainers to be successful now and in the future. It captures changes driven by digital, mobile, and social technology; demographic shifts; globalisation; and economic forces (ASTD, 2013).*

FIGURE 1: American Society for Training and Development Model



Source: http://www.astd.org/Certification/Competency-Model# Retrieved 05 February 2014

Locally, the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) (2011) also issued what it considers as a National HR Competency Model. SABPP (2011) regards a competency model as an important component for any profession as it clearly expresses what the professionals in that field should be able to deliver.

2.14. The South African Board for People Practices' HR Core Competencies

According to the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) (2011), the five core competencies constitute the different layers of bricks or building blocks of the house. These competencies are the basic competencies all HR professionals need to be effective in the workplace:

- **Leadership and Personal Credibility:** All HR professionals should possess leadership skills to drive the HR profession. Likewise, HR professionals should have personal credibility in organisations, irrespective of level in the organisation, but this can only be achieved if they display a high level of competence in executing professional HR work.

- **Organisational capability:** Understanding the organisational context and needs of the business is critical in the process of planning and delivering HR practices.
- **Solution Creation and Implementation:** HR professionals create, plan and implement HR solutions, including interventions and practices according to the needs of the organisation.
- **Interpersonal and communication skills:** All HR work depends on successful relationships, and excellent interpersonal and communication skills are of utmost importance.
- **Citizenship for the future:** Over and above the HR strategic partner role, the new business environment requires HR professionals who can drive innovation, optimise technology and contribute to sustainability. Thus, HR professionals become citizens for the future in ensuring sustainability of organisations and the environment.

Source: SABPP (http://www.sabpp.co.za/about/our-projects/hr-competency-model/) (Retrieved 10 June 2014)

Short, et al. (2003) suggest that, as their core competencies, HRD professionals must become (1) skilled systems thinkers who can design and conduct measurement and analysis across the organisation and pinpoint the influences of HRD efforts on employee productivity and organisational performance, linking past research results to current practice. Preskill and Russ-EFT (2003), as cited in Short, et al (2003), adds to the competencies of HRD professionals that they must have skills to identify valid measures of learning and growth and develop meaningful and accurate interpretations, while being ever-mindful of the myriad intervening variables that can influence learning and performance curves in work settings. Short, et. al, (2003) further adds that as a fundamental point, the issue of ethics and good conduct is essential amongst HRD practitioners. Ethical engagement in measurement work will maintain integrity around the complexity of learning and performance processes and will prevent the laying of blame on the learners and facilitators.

2.15. Professional Qualification

Professional Qualification refers to an award conferred by an appropriate body or authority to an individual considered to have met the minimum requirements against a set or acceptable standard of, and or as having demonstrated acceptable levels of competence in order to practice a particular occupation. In this case, such qualification would be a recognised qualification permitting one to practice as an HRD practitioner. Both the questionnaires for the surveys and the questionnaire for interviews asked the respondents to identify or recommend one such qualification to be considered as a pre-requisite for an individual to practice as an HRD practitioner.

2.16. Continual Professional Development (CPD) for HRD practice and its professionals

Very often HRD practitioners spend months and even years developing other people at the expense of their own self-development (Meyer, 2007: 505), therefore there is a need for HRD Practitioners to undertake continual professional development (CPD). CPD is a process of continuously maintaining and developing knowledge skills and competence at work (Meyer, 2007). It is a personal commitment to keeping professional knowledge up-to-date and improving capabilities (Meyer, 2007). As a Head of the South African Board for People Practices Meyer (2011) proposed a National HR Competency Model which according to SABPP (2011) provides a foundation for the continuous professional development of human resource professionals.

Although CPD points to the need for a structured and disciplined approach to private study (Meyer, 2007) there is no single common entry level qualification for HRD practitioners into the Public Service. It can therefore be argued that Lynham (2000) is correct in her assertion that there is a need to create a sufficient body of knowledge as the basis for deepening HRD as a profession. The same author argues that human resource development (HRD) is concerned with practice, therefore the conversations in the field often focus on the “how” rather than probe for deeper understanding of the “what” and the “why” of the HRD phenomenon.

Currently, human resource development is not regarded as an independent practice and occupation, but is seen as part of the generic management discipline. The argument for professionalisation of human resource development is also supported

by the King report (2006) in Dixon (2011) that regulating human resource management and development will facilitate compliance with suitable codes of conduct as the basic requirement for good practice.

2.17. Definition of Professionalisation

Van Rensburg, Basson and Carrim (2011) define professionalisation as a method of making a developing occupation socially legitimate. Pellegrino (2002: 379) in Van Rensburg, Basson and Carrim (2011), defines profession as a specific kind of activity and conduct to which members commit themselves and to which they can be expected to conform. The essence of a profession then is this act of profession - of promise, commitment and dedication to an ideal. Cooper (1995), in CPFA (2011), warns that "It is one thing for an occupational group to designate itself a profession but quite another to attain public recognition of this status"

Cuming (1989: 45), in Swanepoel, Erasmus, van Wyk and Schenk (2011: 75), states that the status of any profession depends in large measure on its requirements and methods for entry into membership and on the existence of a code of professional conduct. This means that, in order to be called an HR(D) professional, one really has to be a professional person, involved in a particular profession (Swanepoel, et al, 2011:75). Cherrington (1983:26) in Swanepoel, et al (2011:75) describes profession to be characterised by the existence of a common body of knowledge, a procedure for certifying members of that profession, a set of standards of ethical conduct, and a communication system that can facilitate the exchange of ideas and self-regulation.

According to Swanepoel, et al (2011), there is no one common qualification that can be regarded as an entry into HR field. General social science studies in the fields of psychology or sociology, Swanepoel et al (2011) assert, help provide knowledge of human and behavioural processes in institutional contexts. Swanepoel, et al (2011) further state that disciplines such as industrial psychology, business economics, or business management as well as public administration, can provide an important foundation in the HRM field. Any credible tertiary educational institution such as for instance a university, technikon, technical college and other business/management educational school or centre can offer the qualification in the HR field (Swanepoel, et al, 2011). Furthermore, in addition to obtaining the necessary qualification, one must

also seek employment in the HR field in order to gain the relevant experience and to apply the theoretical knowledge gained through studies (Swanepoel, et al, 2011:75).

Wilensky (1964), in Mieg (2008), understood professionalisation as the sequence of seven steps:

a) a job becomes a full-time occupation;
b) establishing a training school;
c) establishing a university programme;
d) founding a local professional association;
e) founding a national professional association;
f) creation of a state license; and
g) creation of a code of ethics.

Wilensky (1964) further provides a splendid elaboration of the concept by describing some phenomena linked to professionalisation (Mieg, 2008) and these being:

(i) specific tasks which involve a high degree of uncertainty and require specialised knowledge;
(ii) a socially central value involved in these tasks, for instance, health or nature;
(iii) a growing body of academic knowledge;
(iv) a national professional association or an equivalent disciplinary organisation.

Wilensky (1964), in Mieg (2008), points out that there are professional identities and that such identity could be connected with:

a. the specific work or tasks (e.g. training and development),
b. the underlying value (‘‘organisation development specialist”),
c. the specific education (‘‘Industrial Psychologist’’), or
d. the professional profile which is propagated by the professional association (‘‘Master HRD Practitioner’’).

2.18. Professionalisation of HRD Practitioners

Swanepoel, et al (2011:74) assert that although, traditionally, HR specialists did not require formal qualifications and could become top-level managers through experience in administrative personnel departments, over the past two decades or so, HRM has become such a complex and demanding field of theory and practice

that true professionalism has come to be regarded as a major requirement for HR specialists. The HRM practice has evolved from being a mere administrative post to dealing with external factors such as changes in the workforce demographics, changes in values in society, economic pressures, globalising competition and corporate re-organisation (Swanepoel, et al, 2011:74). Apart from studying for the recognised qualifications Swanepoel, et al (2011:74) argues that it is important that the general public sector management experience is obtained in order to understand the type of work in which the institution's human resources are in involved. To be an HR professional does not only require a professional approach to HR practice, but also some form of official professional recognition (SABPP, 2013).

The study by the Certified Public Finance Administrators (CPFA)(2011) in the United Kingdom, puts a number of benefits that professionalisation brings to the individuals who hold a professional qualification; the public receive the service from government agencies and the employers in both private and public sector. CPFA (2011) count amongst these benefits that:

- individuals who acquire the qualification are assured that the price of entry meet defined standards of knowledge, skills and values, and that they will maintain and develop their professional competence throughout their careers.

- Society generally benefits from this state of affairs, with the expectation that members of the profession will act in the public interest rather than in their own or some other interest.

- Citizens and other stakeholders in public services may rightly expect that the service and other information will be accurate, up to date and produced in accordance with the highest international standards.

- The existence of a professional body, independent of sectional interests, and with properly trained members working in government, helps to ensure that governments may be held to account for their actions. Professionalisation lies at the heart of good governance.

- For the individual member of the profession, holding a recognised qualification facilitates movement within and between organisations in the public sector and, often, between the public sector and the private sector.

- It improves access to promotion and more technically complex and rewarding work (in job satisfaction if not always in financial terms).
- Employers can recruit individuals whose professional status can clearly demonstrate that they meet well-defined and internationally recognised competency levels.
- Continuous development - individuals reflecting on their experiences and engaging in a process of developing their skills - is a defining characteristic of professional practice.

According to the SABPP (2011) the foundation of their HR Competency Model is formed of four (4) Pillars of Professionalism, namely:

- **Duty to society:** HR professionals have a duty to society in delivering high quality HR work that has an impact on society.
- **Ethics:** HR professionalism should contribute to ethics in organisations and drive ethics in accordance with the SABPP HR Guide on Ethics.
- **Professionalism:** HR professionals should manage themselves professionally in acting and behaving like true professionals in the standard of HR work they deliver.
- **HR and Business knowledge:** HR professionals must have good HR and sound business knowledge if they want to be successful as professionals and strategic partners.

Source: SABPP (http://www.sabpp.co.za/about/our-projects/hr-competency-model/) (Retrieved 10 June 2014)

2.19. A case for a legal professionalisation and establishment of a professional body for the Public Service HRD practitioners

In conclusion, there is a same theme going throughout the Constitutional provisions, Office of the Public Service Commission (OPSC) and the Department of Public Service and Administration on the expectations of human resource management in the public service. The OPSC is specific on the elevation of status of the HRD practitioners. The need for building the theory to support the development of HRD as a practice, will contribute to a structured design for continual professional development. Finally, the assertion by the King Report to regulate HRM (&D), as a

way of enforcing a code of conduct, points to the challenges faced by the Public Service to enforce performance by the HRD practitioners, while also contributing to the legal recognition of the profession.

Zambia is the only country for which this research could find written evidence regarding the existence of national legislation regulating the practices of all persons involved in human resources management through an act of Parliament. In the case of Zambia, there is an Act titled *the Zambia Institute of Human Resources Management Act, 1997,* The purpose of this Act, according to the Zambian Government **was** to establish the Zambia Institute of Human Resources Management; to provide for its functions; to provide for its membership and organisation; and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing (Zambian Government, 1997).

The Act establishes a Zambian Institute of Human Resources Management and designates functions of the Institute (Zambian Government, 1997). According to the Zambian Government (1997) the functions of the Institute, as provided in the Act, are to:

a) carry out training of persons involved in human resources management;

b) raise the standard of human resources management as a means of increasing productivity and efficiency;

c) carry out research related to human resources management in Zambia;

d) publish a journal of the Institute, and collect, collate and publish other information of service and interests to the Institute;

e) encourage, uphold and improve the standards of training and professional ability of persons engaged in human resources management and industrial relations;

f) maintain close contact with technical colleges, universities, professional institutions, government departments, commercial institutions and similar international institutions so as to improve the quality resources management;

g) take proper action on all matters affecting the duties and responsibilities of its members.

For the purposes of this research the functions standing out from amongst the ones listed above are the training, the increase of productivity and efficiency which could

be a proxy for competency, research which could be a proxy for development of the practice. The upholding of standards and professional abilities of persons in human resource could be a link to legal professionalisation and possibly recognition in society and industry. Taking proper action on all matters affecting the duties and responsibilities of the members of the Institute refers to the code of conduct for human resource management professionals.

2.20. Conclusion

This chapter has revealed that human resource development is vital to the government being able to fulfil its role to its citizenry. HRD is critical in developing the capacity of the employees in order for them to undertake their responsibilities. The chapter also discussed the role of HRD practitioners as being critical in building the essential capacity of employees for them to be able to undertake their responsibilities. However, the literature questioned the competencies of HRD practitioners and their ability to fulfil their expected role. Also covered by the chapter was the impact and utility of HRD in the organisations, as well as various initiatives to create professional networks, and associations for HRD practitioners with the view to develop each other and recommendations for a common continuous professional development model.

The following chapter covers the research methodology applied in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the research methodology used to conduct the study is described, together with the philosophical foundation which shaped the direction of this research. The chapter also describes the research instrument which was used to collect, present, analyse and interpret data. As indicated in Chapter 1, an integrative research approach was used to collect, present, analyse and interpret data. As said in the introduction, the function of an HRD practitioner in the Public Service is to interpret the mandate of a government department, map out the functions to be performed, formulate competencies required to perform such functions, identify and acquire the existing skill, allocate it where required, develop it where deficiencies are identified and improve it where advancements are made to meet the current demands. Research methodology is a term which refers to the range of approaches used in research to gather data which are used as the basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction (Cohen, et al, 2001).

3.2. Research Approach

This evaluation for development of the HRD practitioner lands itself in the Critical Social Sciences (CSS), one of the three major approaches to social research that emphasises combating surface-level distortions, multiple levels of reality and value-based activism for human empowerment (Neuman, 2011: 108). CSS is a critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in material world to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves, (Neuman, 2011: 108). As we seek to answer the question on the elevation of status of HRD practitioners and the development of the practice, are the practitioners able to answer the questions of competence? On the other hand, is government able to invest in the regulatory structures to oversee the development of this practice?

3.3. Research Design

A research design is a plan or strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specify the selection of respondents, the data gathering

techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. The choice of research design is based on the researcher's assumptions, research skills and research practices, and influences the way in which she or he collects data (Creswell, 2008:70). There are three types of research designs, namely quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed research designs. The qualitative research design attempts to collect rich descriptive data in respect of a particular phenomenon or context with the intention of developing an understanding of what is being observed or studied (Creswell, 2008:50). The focus is on the quality and depth of information and not on the scope or breadth of the information provided as in quantitative research (Creswell, 2008:51). Quantitative research design is a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of the universe (or population) to generalise the findings to the universe that is being studied (Maree, et al, 2013). The mixed research method is defined as a procedure for collecting, analysing and mixing both qualitative and quantitative data at some stage of the research process within a single study, to understand a research problem more completely (Cresswell, 2008). Just as suggested by Greene (1989), Teddlie and Tashakkori, (2009) in Maree (2013: 263), when used in combination within a mixed methods approach, quantitative and qualitative methods complement each other and allow for a more complete analysis of the research situation. It allows for contextual interpretations, the use of multiple methods and flexibility in choosing the best strategies to address the research question (Maree, 2013). The mixed research researcher collects both numeric (numbers) data and text (word) data concurrently or in sequence, and chooses variables and units of analysis which are most appropriate for addressing the study's purpose and finding answers to the Research question (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) in Maree (2013: 262).

This study wanted to obtain a comprehensive and deep understanding of the perceptions of HRD practitioners on their profession. At the same time, the study also sought to be objective in generalising the findings which it would make. In order to understand both the rich descriptive and statistical data in respect of development of HRD practice, and the views of the practitioners and government on the professionalisation of the HRD Practice in the KwaZulu Natal Provincial Government, the study used a mixed research approach, that is both qualitative and quantitative research designs.

Consistent with the mixed research method, the study first surveyed the views of HRD practitioners towards professionalisation and the role of HRD, and then undertook in-depth interviews to learn about individual perspectives on the topic.

3.4. Population

A well-defined population was selected from individuals involved in the practice, and individuals responsible for the policy or development of HRD as a practice in KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government. A well-defined population is a target population or a set of elements that the research focuses upon and to which the results obtained by testing the sample should be generalised (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1994).

3.5. Sample Selection

As supported by Babbie (2005), because the aim of the study is to consider the views of the HRD practitioners about the status and development of their profession, the purposive procedure was used for the sampling of the population. Babbie (2005: 189) defines purposive sampling as a type of non-probability sampling in which the researcher selects the units to be observed on the basis of his/her own judgment about which ones will be the most useful or representative.

From the population of HRD practitioners and policymakers and professional bodies, a purposively sample was identified and this involved:

- HRD Practitioners from the Departments in KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration
- A Deputy Director-General for Policy, once responsible for Integrated Human Resource during the period 1998 -2005, therefore effectively becoming an author of the first generation ever of Public Service HRD Strategy post 1994.
- A former Deputy Director General for Human Resource Management and Development (HRM&D), effectively, an author of the Public Service HRD Strategic Framework (PS-HRDSF) being used in this research as a main policy document for reference.
- A former Chief Executive Officer at Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA).

- An Executive Director at an Institution of Higher Learning; and
- A Chief Executive Officer at a Professional Body

3.6. Data Collection

In line with the mixed research design, the data collection was integrative, combining interviews (qualitative methods) and a survey design (posted questionnaires). The study also combines both primary and secondary data. The study employed a combination of data collection methods. One was the use of secondary data in the form of document reviews and the second was a survey involving questionnaires. Thirdly, using unstructured questions, targeted interviews were conducted with principal respondents considered as authorities in the subject of Human Resource Development and the professionalisation of practices.

In the case of secondary data, various documents, in particular, policy documents providing the basis for the implementation of HRD strategies in the public service were studied and analysed to locate the role of HRD practice and practitioners. These documents included the South African Constitution (1996), the White Paper on Public Service Education and Training, which specifically identified the need for the elevation of the importance and status of training and, in particular, trainers (DPSA, 1997). As mentioned in the introduction, the analysis of several attempts were made to mobilise the development of the HRD practice and professionalisation of the practitioners, therefore an analysis of the Public Sector Trainers Forum (PSTF) was done to assess its role and success in contributing to the professionalisation of HRD practitioners. The intentions of the Public Service HRD Strategic Framework (Vision 2015), in building an image of the HRD practitioners were also reviewed.

In terms of the research site, that is the KwaZulu-Natal Province, in particular the assessment of the Provincial Growth and Development Strategy (2011), as a strategic direction that the province is taking for its development, was done to establish if the HRD is building capacity within the province in order to execute the strategy.

A desktop review of information on the KwaZulu-Natal Public Service Trainers Academy was also conducted to establish whether the intentions of the Provincial

Growth and Development Strategy regarding the development of capacity (HRD) were being followed through, supported by a deliberate tangible action, such as investment in the necessary structures and systems.

A thorough review of a wide range literature on the research undertaken by various professionals in the HRD practice was undertaken. The literature ranged from the identity of the HRD as a standalone practice, from the broad field of human resource management, to the unique competencies of HRD, its unrivalled value proposition to the organisational performance, whether there is one particular entry qualification that is defined as a prerequisite for practicing as an HRD professional and, lastly, as the whole notion of professionalisation, as a concept and the process to setting up one such structure.

Secondly, using structured interviews, a set of questions were prepared in advance and sent to the sampled target of practitioners. The qualitative interviews aimed to see the world through the eyes of the participants, they were valuable sources of information, and attempts were to ensure that they were used correctly (Creswell, 2008: 87).

A purposive sampling of HRD practitioners and principal informants on the subject of HRD as a practice, and public service policy and position on legal professionalisation was done in the collection of data. This, as suggested by Cohen, et al (2001) was done in order to ensure that a sample that is satisfactory to the specific purpose of the study is constituted. Therefore the respondents would indicate distinctly their perceptions towards the professionalisation of the HRD practice.

3.7. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is usually based on an interpretative philosophy that is aimed at examining meaningful and symbolic content of qualitative data (Creswell, 2008: 99). In line with the questions the researcher wanted answered, i.e. the role of HRD practitioners, focusing on their perceptions, attitudes, understanding, knowledge, values, feelings, and their experiences, the study applied descriptive statistics to analyse data collected. Descriptive statistics is a collective name for a number of statistical methods that are used to organise and summarise data in a meaningful way (Maree, et al. 2013). Using a frequency distribution method of

analysis, the responses from participants were numerically counted and presented either in graphs, tables or in percentages as the data suited.

Once again as data from the survey questionnaires was analysed, it presented valuable statistical data about the trends and the orientation of the HRD practice, the number of years that the practitioners had spent studying towards their qualifications and the number of years in the field working as HRD practitioners. This had to be presented in statistical graphics, therefore the use of statistics to analyse data was employed in conjunction with qualitative instruments.

The hermeneutics was applied as a mode of analysis in this study (Maree, 2013). Hermeneutics, as a mode of analysis, suggests a way of understanding (or making meaning of) textual data. Ricour (1976), in Maree (2013), asserts that the hermeneutic data analysis process means that interpretation is aimed at deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning and therefore, in analysing the data the researcher is searching for and unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning of the text. Consistent with this assertion, the design of the questions asked respondents to describe their meaning of HRD, their meaning of the term professionalisation. It was to be expected that the perspectives might be different from one respondent to the next.

3.8. Validity and Reliability

One commonly used method of validation and verifying reliability in the quantitative design research is a process of triangulation. Triangulation is an idea that looks at something from multiple points of view in order to improve its accuracy (Neuman, 2011: 164). Using triangulation of measure, which involves taking a multiple measure of the same phenomenon (Neuman, 2011), a set of questionnaires were sent to the participants to complete.

3.9. Limitations

Despite permission having been granted by the senior administrative leadership of the province, no one was available to respond to the questionnaires for the survey and the interviews specifically within the Office of the Premier. It is therefore important to indicate this limitation of the study. The study then is based mostly on the respondents from the departments supported by the KZN OTP, secondary data

on the review of relevant documents, the interviews with the principal informants in the field of HRD practice extending beyond the Office of the Premier but within the province. It is the considered view of this researcher that this limitation does not have a significant adverse impact on the findings of the study because the intention of the study is not to get the perception of the senior management on professionalisation of the HRD practitioners, but the perception of the HRD practitioners themselves.

It is also important to mention that during the research, it was found that there are only two (2) HRD practitioners within the Office of the Premier responsible for the internal department as a corporate entity. Therefore the population sample would not have been representative enough to conclude sufficiently on the perceptions of the practitioners in the province and beyond.

3.10. Conclusion

It is evident from the above that comprehensive sources were employed in the approach and triangulation to obtain the academic research perspective on the HRD practice, and the views of those who practice HRD regarding its recognition. The value of using the mixed method approach lay in its ability to provide both the objective and subjective perspectives of the HRD practitioners in respective of their trade, especially on professionalisation. Also revealed statistically were the role of HRD and the varied views of HRD practitioners on what exactly their core competencies are. The following chapter will cover the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data.

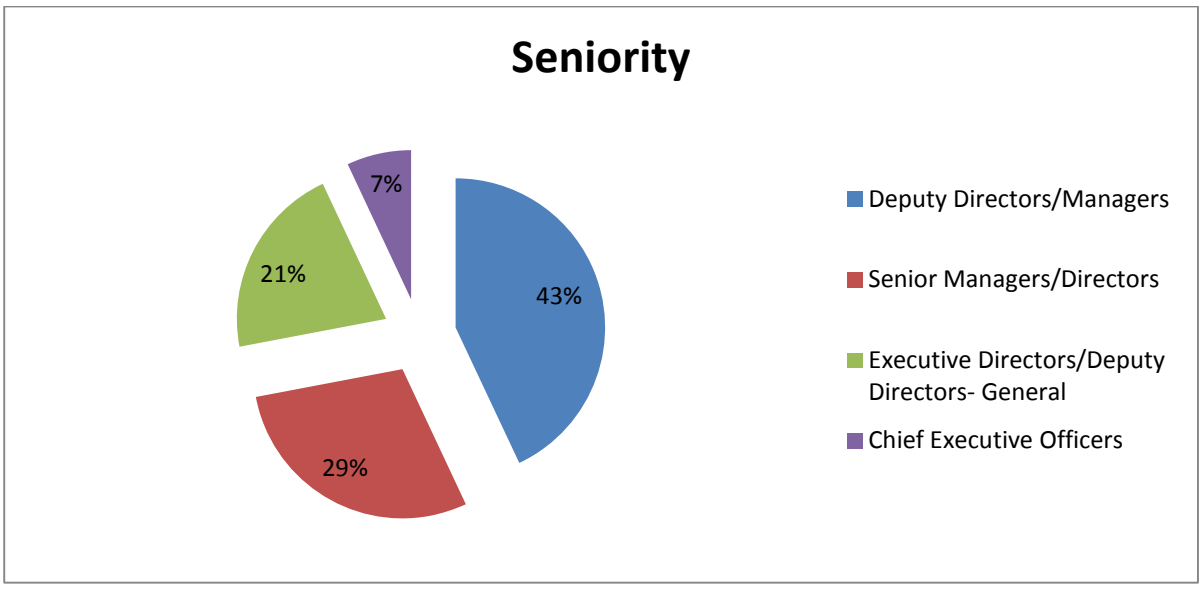
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

This section presents the data from the survey conducted using a questionnaire which was sent to a purposively selected sample of the population of HRD practitioners in the province of KwaZulu-Natal and interviews. The Chapter also presents the data from the interviews which were held with a purposefully selected sample of principal respondents in the field of HRD by virtue of them being either policy makers and/or occupying important positions in their organisations.

In order to validate the opinions of the respondents, the research sought to use the seniority of each of the respondents in their respective employment as proxy to the veracity of their professional views. The graph in Table 1 below indicates the seniority of the respondents:

FIGURE 2: Seniority of respondents



The above graph indicates seniority of respondents in both surveys and interviews.

As can be seen from the above graphic representation, the spread of the respondents was adequately across senior practitioners and representative of the target population. The views of the respondents can comfortably be used to make a fair generalisation on the topic of the research.

The category of Senior Managers/Directors represents respondents who are heading HRD Directorates at their respective departments in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government. Lastly, the category of Deputy-Directors/Deputy Managers comprises respondents of "the HRD practitioners" who daily plan and implement HRD activities. As it can be seen, they comprised the biggest portion of the respondents who participated in this research project.

In terms of the Public Service Salary Levels, there are sixteen (16) salary levels from entry to the highest level (Directors-General). Immediately below the Director-General level is that of a Deputy Director-General (DDG), the level at which 21% of the respondents for this research operates. Deputy Managers/Deputy-Directors are found between levels 09-12 which are considered as specialists in the areas in which they operate and constitute the middle management band of the public service. This layer of management is considered the heart of the public service. The rationale behind this exposition is to locate the authority of the opinions of the respondents on the topic of this research.

4.2. Surveys

To carry out the survey, a questionnaire in line with the main and secondary research questions was developed and sent to the targeted, purposively selected sample of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government HRD practitioners. The main research question was:

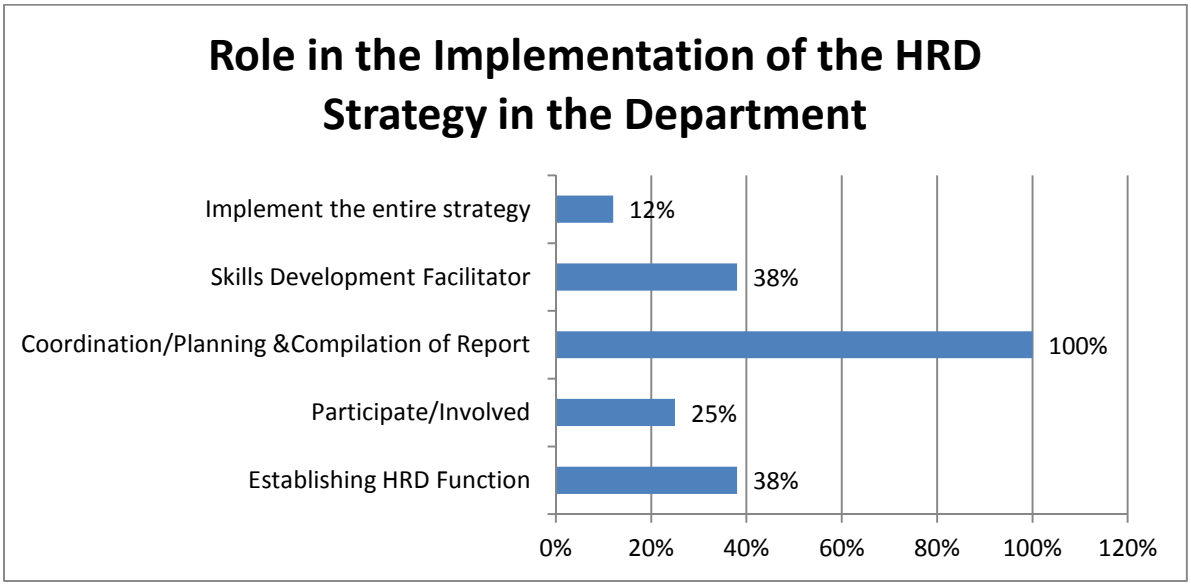
To solicit the views of HRD practitioners of the HRD practitioners and other principal role-players in the HRD practice on:

- Whether the implementation of the Public Service HRD strategies since 2001 to date, has contributed towards assisting HRD Practitioners to advance their practice, professional standing and conduct
- To establish whether legal professionalisation of HRD Practice can contribute to the recognition of the HRD Practitioners in the Public Service
- To establish if there is a universal agreement on the minimum core competencies that HRD practitioners should possess

The following is a synthesis of responses to the questionnaires received from the respondents, together with each question asked in the questionnaire. A total of eighteen (16) questionnaires were distributed via an e-mail to the purposively sampled population. A total of eight (8) were received back from the respondents. Their responses are summarised as follows:

4.2.1. If your department has been implementing Public Service HRD strategies since 2001, describe you role in this, and how did this contribute to your growth as an HRD practitioner?

Figure 3: Role of the Respondents in the Implementation of HRD Strategy in their departments



In constructing the graph above, the researcher took a key word from each of the responses from the respondents. Some respondents used more than one term to describe the roles they had played in the implementation of their respective departmental HRD strategies. Therefore the numbers indicated in each bar on the graph does not have to add up to a hundred (100%), the number of responses received, but the numbers indicate how many times a role was mentioned by respondents. For example, all respondents indicated that they are also responsible for the role of Coordination, HRD Planning and Compilation of Reports.

All respondents indicated that their departments have been implementing the HRD strategy since 2001, although not all of them were already in the employ of the said organisations. 25% indicated that their departments only started implementing the

HRD strategies in 2005 and 2007 respectively, while one indicated that he has been with the organisation since 2001 and has been actively involved in the implementation of his departmental HRD strategy. Only 12% of respondents indicated that they were responsible for ensuring that the entire departmental HRD strategy implementation is followed from initiation to reporting. Three respondents indicated that their roles include being a Skills Development Facilitator. 38% of respondents indicated they have established the HRD functions in their departments from scratch, while 25% indicated they are involved and participate. These latter 25% could be in a department where there are senior officials responsible for strategic leadership of HRD in their departments.

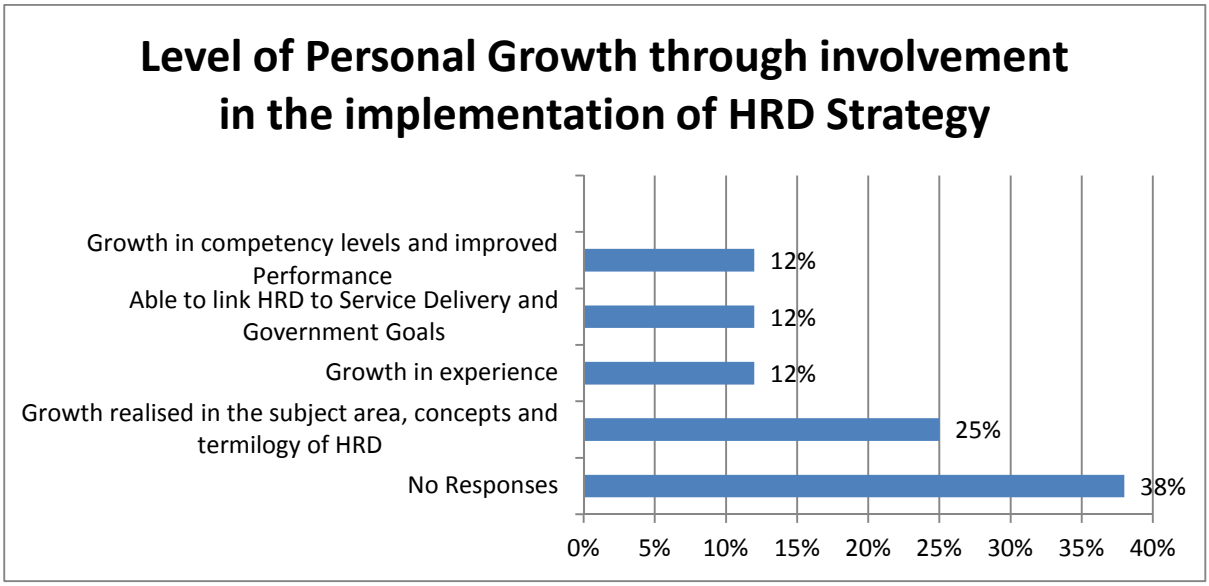
The graph below shows responses to the second part of question 1 above on the views of the respondents on whether their involvement in the implementation of their departmental HRD strategies, had led to personal growth.

As can be seen, surprisingly 38% respondents did not provide any answers to the question, while 12% respondents indicated that there was no growth experienced due to resistance from line function managers and from the leadership of the department which could not allocate budget for the HRD function. This can be deduced that they have been denied an opportunity to experience the implementation of the strategy. It can be inferred that they could have grown as HRD professionals in the process.

Appearing in the next page is a graph depicting levels of personal growth experienced by HRD practitioners through their involvement in the implementation of HRD strategy within their respective departments.

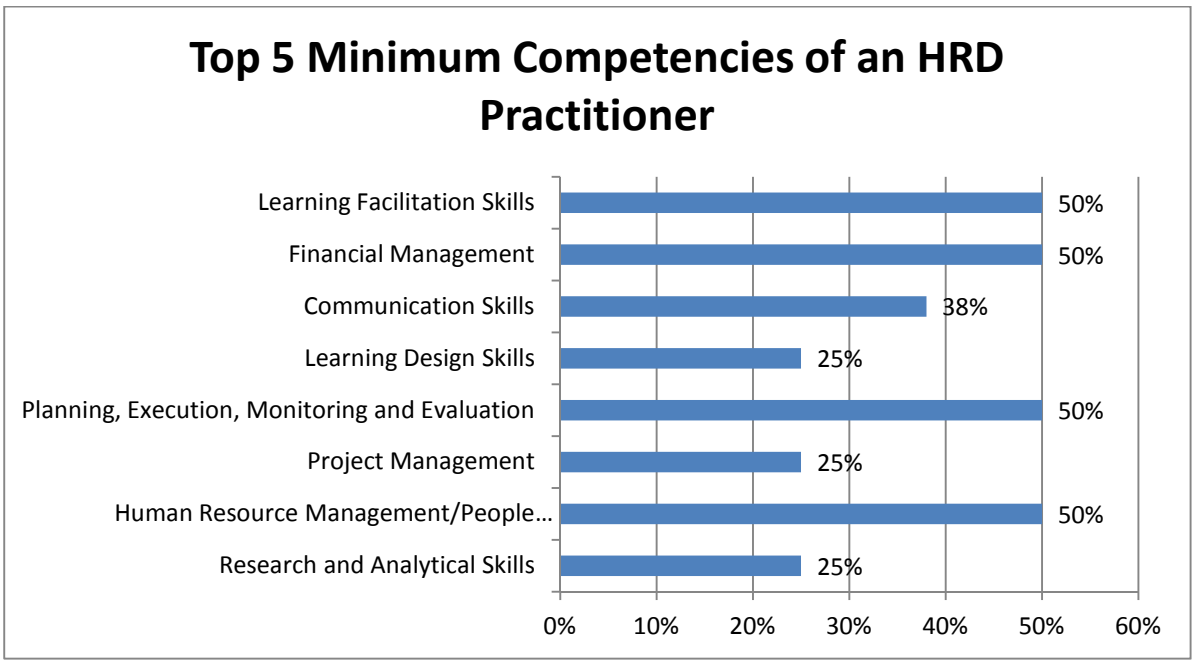
One the next page appears the graph indicating level of growth as experienced by respondents through their involvement in the implementation of the HRD strategies in their respective departments.

Figure 4: Level of Personal Growth gained through involvement in the implementation of HRD Strategy



4.2.2. Mention 5 competencies that you think should be minimum competencies for all HRD practitioners.

Figure 5: Top 5 Minimum Competencies of an HRD Practitioners



The competencies indicated in the graph above were summarised and synthesized.

From the graph above, Human Resource Management/People Management and Empowerment, Planning, Execution, Monitoring and Evaluation, Financial Management and Learning Facilitation were the top four (4) competencies identified

by at least half or 50% of respondents. These were followed by Communication which was mentioned by 38% of the respondents. Project management, research and analytical skills as well as learning design skills were mentioned by a quarter (15%) of respondents each. It must be noted that these competencies were mentioned by respondents but were not provided by the researcher for the respondents to pick and rank.

4.2.3. What is your opinion on the legal professionalisation of the HRD practice?

On the question of legal professionalisation, 38% respondents used the words "it is long overdue"… that the HRD practice be professionalized legally". The rest of the respondents responded with an overwhelming affirmative to the legal professionalisation. One respondent felt strongly about the current status of HRD which in her view is seen as "…..*a free for all and a dumping ground for society's less gifted, who have nothing else to do".* Drawing similarities to the education, two respondents expressed a wish that HRD could be professionalised like educators, as an example where educators are expected to .....*behave in a way that enhances the dignity and status of the teaching profession and that does not bring the profession into disrepute".* Furthermore, according to this respondent, the professionalisation should be accompanied by a strict regime enforcing that HRD practitioners, like educators, "k*eep abreast of educational trends and developments"* and *"promotes the ongoing development of teaching as a profession; and accepts that he or she has a professional obligation towards the education and induction into the profession of new members of the teaching profession".*

Two respondents agreed with the notion of legal professionalisation, but differ on the separation of HRD and Human Resource Management. One respondent asserts that "*It is time [that] HRD practitioners are recognised as [HRD demands more than the other HR practices as recruitment, conditions of service, etc]."* On the other hand, one respondent, likewise, felt that the idea of legal professionalisation is overdue, but the [*HRD]* should "*not to be separated from the current professional bodies, as this would not benefit the public service".*

Figure 6: Terms and Benefits associated with legal professionalisation

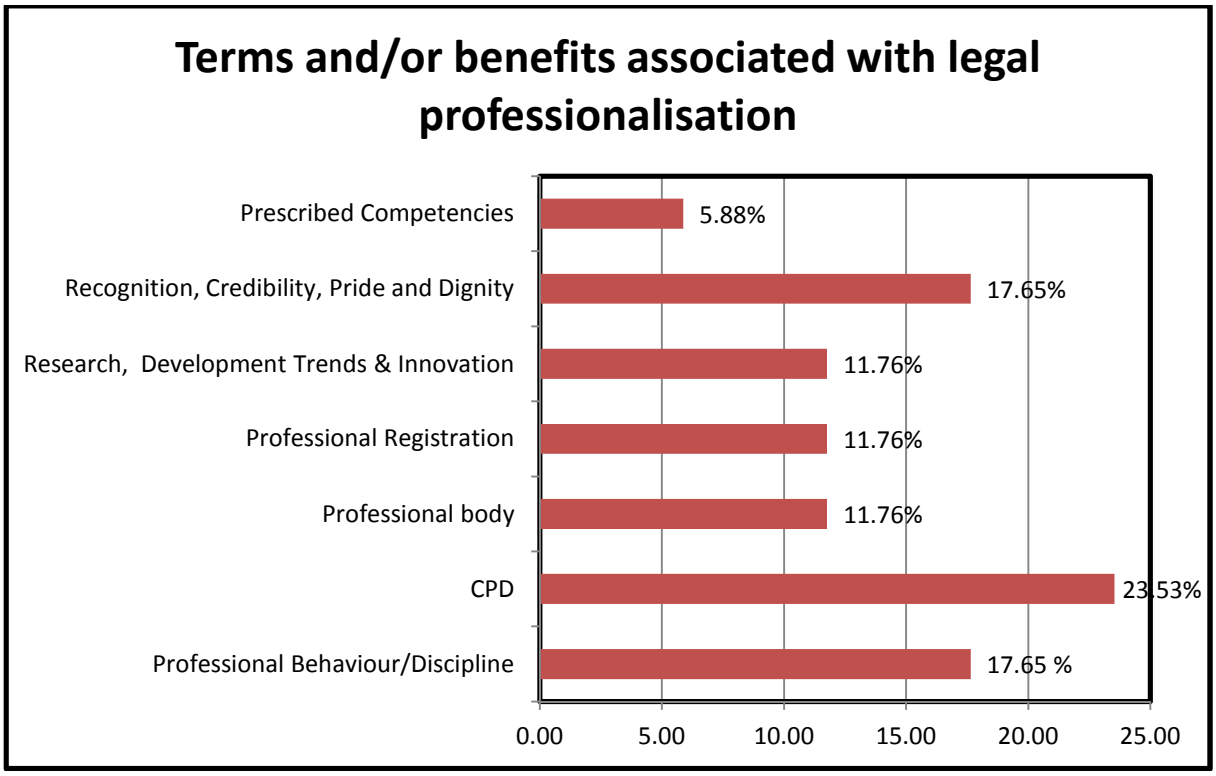


Figure 6 above summarises the terms and benefits which the respondents in the study raised as their opinions and potential value which legal professionalisation of HRD would add to the practice and what it would require for such legal professionalisation to enforce. The method used to construct this graph was to analyse the response from of the participants. Keywords that stood out and across most of the participant's responses were recorded, and then plotted in the graph using percentages. In some cases, synonymous terms were clustered into one, such as "Professional Behaviour and Discipline". Such terms as recognition, credibility, pride and dignity of HRD practitioners for being in the occupation and for their initiatives would be increased, so did the participants respond to the question.

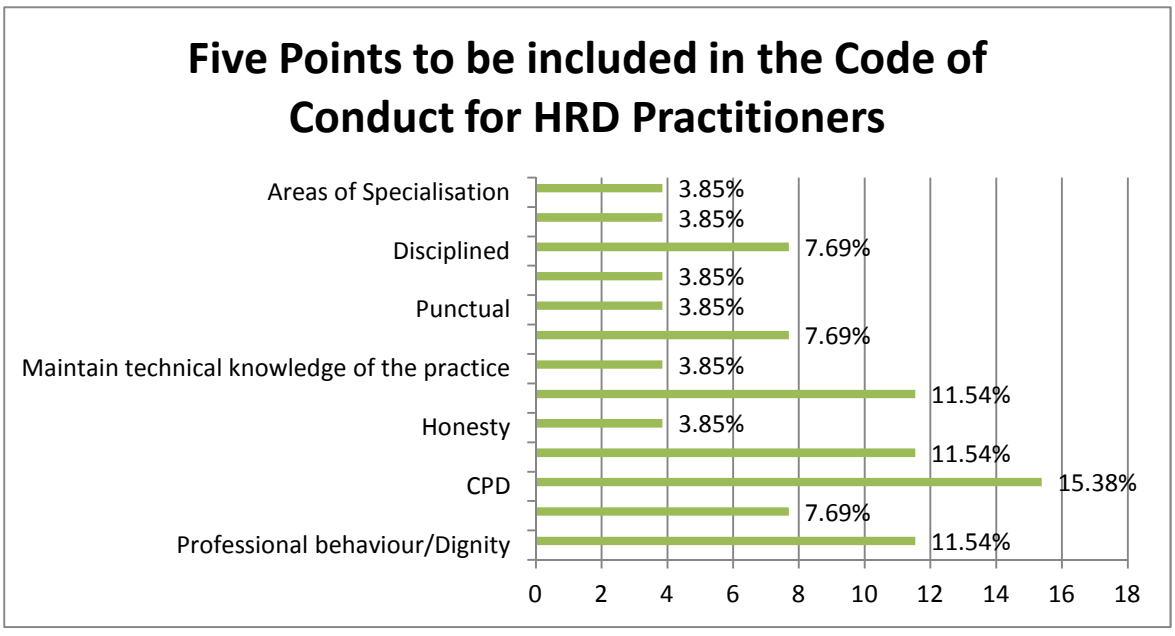
The highest benefit of legal professionalisation of the HRD practice, the respondents answered, is continuous professional development, which they rated as the highest at 23.5% amongst the benefits they identified. The respondents also rated recognition, credibility, pride and dignity and professional behaviour and discipline as the second most benefit of legal professionalisation at 17.6%.

4.2.4. Mention 5 points that you would wish should be included in the code of conduct for HRD practitioners.

On the question of the key points to constitute the Code of Conduct for HRD practitioners, the need for HRD practitioners to undergo continuous professional development, as shown in Figure 7 below, was mentioned most by respondents at 15.38%, followed by the requirement to uphold the laws governing the HRD practices, such as the Skills Development Act, 1998 and compliance with other policies of the state at 11.54%. On the same level of rating was Respect for trainees and Good Interpersonal relationships with others also at 11.54%. Professional behaviour and being dignified was ranked the third in level of importance. Being Disciplined and Presentable and maintaining an acceptable Dress Code as well as being Trustworthy, all together , ranked the fourth most important at 7.69%.

The other points suggested for the Code of Conduct, but mentioned only by 3.85% of the respondents, were punctuality, patriotism, honesty, technical knowledge of the HRD practice, and possessing a minimum entry qualification into the HRD practice.

Figure 7: Five Points to be included in the code of conduct for HRD practitioners



4.2.5. Is there a qualification that should be regarded as a prerequisite to enter the field of HRD practice? Motivate your recommendation.

The responses to this question were quite varied, ranging from specific qualification to suggestions that any qualification in the field of Human Resource Management, while others indicated the field of Public Administration and/or Management. The other variation was in the duration of the qualification, while others indicated that a three year diploma and/or a degree would be sufficient, others indicated that a certificate should be sufficient.

The following is the list of qualifications which were mentioned as suggestions for a prerequisite to enter the field of HRD practice:

TABLE 1: List of qualifications suggested as prerequisite to enter the field of HRD practice:

Qualification	***Specialisation***	***Type***	***Duration***
Human Resources Management	*Allied fields such as:* • *Organisational Development* • *Performance Management; and* • *Human Resource Planning.*	*Not mentioned*	*Not specified*
Human Resource Management	• *Facilitation,* • *Public Speaking and* • *Presentation Skills;*	*National Diploma or Degree*	*Not Specified*
Human Resource Management	*Should have a good understanding of all HRD Strategies*	*Degree/Diploma*	
Public Management & Human Resource Management	*Public Personnel Management*		*Three (3) years*
Human Resource Development	• *Facilitation and Presentation Skills,* • *Project management,*	*Degree or Diploma*	*Not Specified*

Qualification	*Specialisation*	*Type*	*Duration*

	• *Assessment,*
	• *Moderation and evaluation.*
	• *Other HR Modules like*
	  ○ *recruitment and*
	  ○ *Selection*		

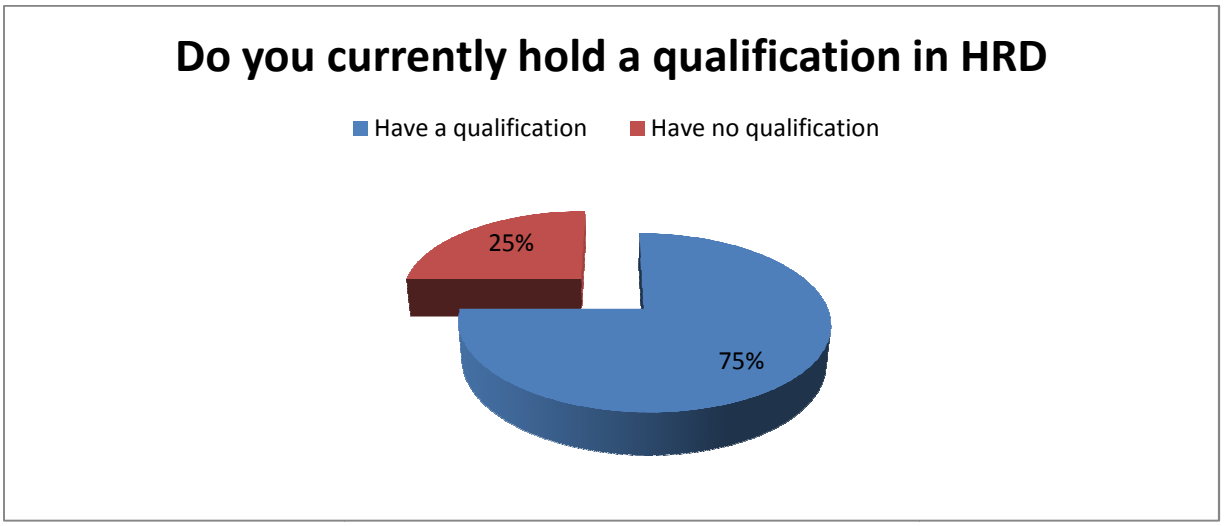
Any qualification or ETDP Certificate	• *Training, education or development as a major subject,* • *Skills development facilitation,*	*Certificate*	*Not Specified*
ETD Practice	*Not Specified*	*Certificate*	*Not Specified*
The System must prescribe norms and standards around qualification requirements.			

Source: Own

4.2.6. (a) Answer "Yes" or "No". Do you currently hold a formal qualification in Human Resource Development?

A 75% of respondents answered in the affirmative to possessing a formal qualification in HRD while a 25% stated they do not possess such qualification.

Figure 8: Status on the number of those who hold a formal qualification in HRD



4.2.6.(b) If answered "Yes", name the qualification title, NQF Level, number of years it took to complete it, year obtained and the institution from which obtained.

Below is a synthesis of qualifications in possession by the participants who responded positively to holding a formal qualification in HRD.

TABLE 2: Synthesis of qualifications in possession by the participants considered to be holding formal HRD Qualifications

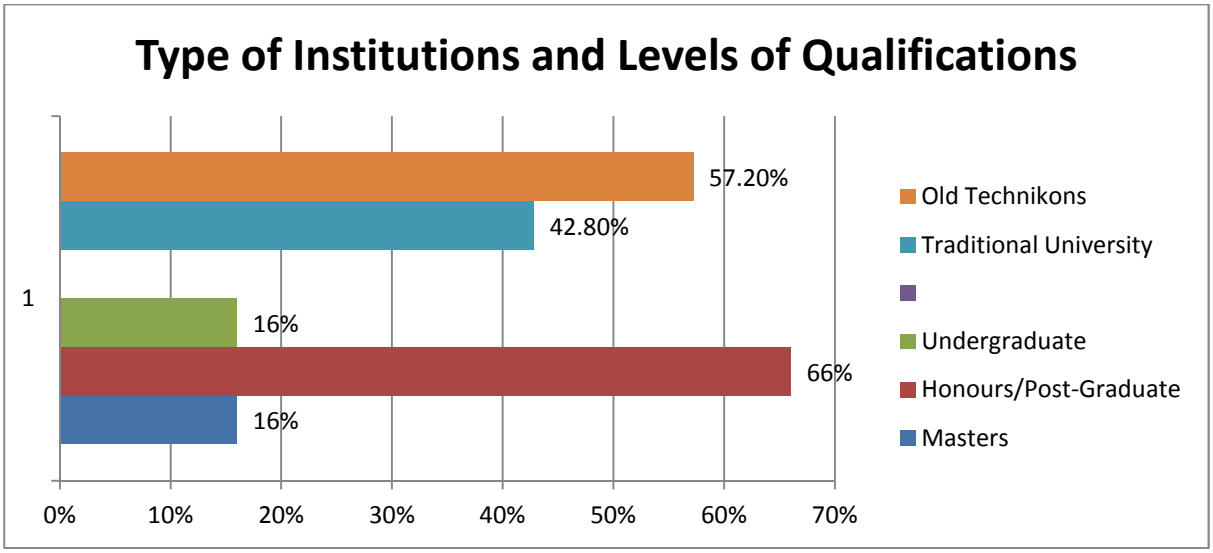
Qualification Title	*NQF Level*	*Duration of Study*	*Year Obtained*
Master of Science in Project Management with a Module on HRM	*8*	*4 years*	*1998*
B-Tech Degree in Human Resource Management and Public Management.	*6&7*	*6 years Combined*	*2011 Highest*
B-Tech: Public Management	*7*	*4 years*	*2001*
B Ed Honours: Education, Training and Development and National Certificate in Occupationally Directed in Education, Training and Development.	*7& 4*	*5 years Combined*	*2010 Highest*
National Diploma in Human Resource Management.	*6*	*3*	*1996*
Post Graduate Diploma in Adult Education, Training and Development	*7*	*2*	*1993*

The qualifications in possession by the respondents above are centred within the range of between Human Resource Management, Public Administration and Education, Training and Development. There was no pure HRD qualification reported. One respondent had her qualification at a Masters Level, while four other respondents indicated that their qualifications are at Honours/or Post-Graduate Levels and only one respondent reported to be in possession of an undergraduate level qualification. All qualifications were obtained from South African Institutions of higher learning, mostly located in KwaZulu-Natal, Durban in particular, and only two qualifications were obtained from institutions from outside the province, those being from University of Johannesburg and University of Cape Town.

Figure 9 below indicates the spread of institutions from which the reported qualifications were obtained and the levels of qualifications being possessed. This assessment was done to establish if there is a particular institution of learning that is preferred for the qualification in HRD. It was also done to establish the trend towards a certain level of study as acceptable level in order to better understand the theory and practice of the HRD practice.

Figure 9: The type of institutions from which respondents obtained their qualifications

Figure 9 shows that the earliest qualification by the respondents was obtained dating from 1993, and the latest, being a further study, was obtained in 2011. This assessment was done to establish if there is any form of continual professional development by the HRD practitioners.



4.2.6(c). If you answered No, name the qualification you hold currently, the qualification title, NQF Level, and number of years it took to complete it, the year obtained and institution.

TABLE 3: The synthesis of qualifications of those who indicated that they do not hold formal qualifications in HRD

Qualification Title	*NQF Level*	*Duration of Study*	*Year Obtained*
Master of Science (Business Education), Bachelor of Education, Bachelor of Pedagogy.	*7&6*		*2005*

Qualification Title	NQF Level	Duration of Study	Year Obtained
Post Graduate Diploma in Public Administration and Master of Public Administration. Human Resources (Module) were studied at Post graduate level.			*1995*

The respondents who indicated that they do not possess formal HRD qualifications mentioned the same qualifications as those indicated by some of the participants who had indicated that they possess formal qualifications in HRD. The level of study is also equally high, at Masters Level, while the lowest was also at undergraduate levels. From this category of respondents, it was revealed that one qualification was obtained at outside South Africa, which is in the United States of America.

4.2.7.(a) Answer "Yes" or "No". If you do not hold a formal qualification in Human Resource Development, are you studying towards obtaining one? If you answered Yes, name the qualification title, NQF Level you are studying towards, number of years it will take to complete it, the year of completion, and the institution from which the qualification is being studied at.

One of the two respondents, who indicated that they do not have a formal qualification in HRD, indicated that he/she is studying towards obtaining one. The respondent indicated that the nature of the study is unit standards (skills programme/short programme) at National Civil Service Training Academy (PALAMA) and this was the only respondent who indicated his/her plans to register with the South African Board of People Practice (SABPP), a non-statutory professional body for Human Resource Management in South Africa.

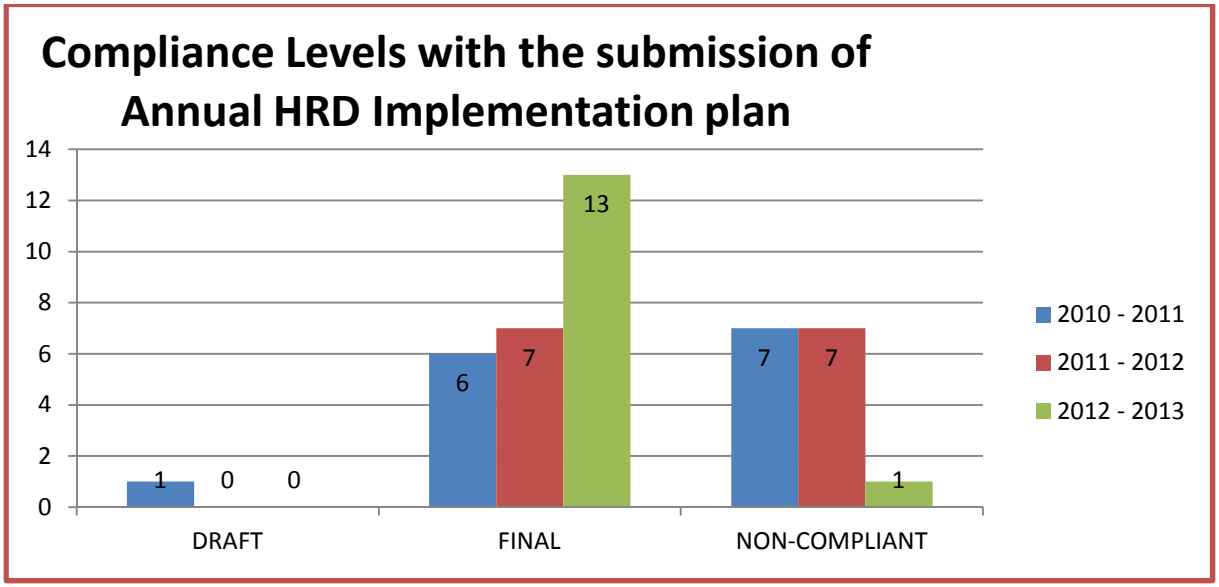
4.2.7 (b). If you answered No, what is your view about practicing in the HRD field without a minimum qualification?

Only one participant responded to this question, although the same participant had indicated to be in possession of a formal qualification in HRD. The participant's response was that "t*he situation explains the current state HRD practice; there are just too many under-qualified/unqualified people in this function, especially at management level."* The lack of response from the other participants to the question of practicing in the field of HRD without a minimum qualification can be attributed to

the first part of the question and the researcher acknowledges this as a limitation in the study.

Lastly, the research also looked at the level of compliance with the submission of the HRD implementation plan over a three (3) financial year period as a typical proxy indicator to adherence by HRD practitioners to the basic tasks which they are expected to perform as part of their work in terms of the PS-HRD Strategic Framework. The HRD Strategic Framework required departments to prepare and submit to the DPSA, an HRD implementation plan detailing how they implement the HRD targets in support of their departmental strategic objectives. They are to comply with this requirement on an annual basis.

Figure 10: Compliance Levels with the submission of Annul HRD Implementation Plans



Department are expected to prepare and submit a Draft plan by at least 31 March of each year, which is the end of the financial year in government. The Draft Plan entails indication of planned HRD interventions for the year, as having been submitted to the Head of the Department or delegated official for approval and signature. Once signed and approved, it becomes a Final and should be submitted to the DPSA no later than 31 May each year. The department can submit an approved, therefore final implementation plan once, without submitting a draft first on 31 March.

The interpretation of the above graph indicates that there fourteen (14) departments in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Administration. There has been steady improvement over the past three years in complying with the submission of Annual HRD Implementation Plans. The period 2010-2011, only one (1) department submitted a Draft Implementation, only six (6) departments submitted Final Plans, and half of departments did not comply at all. The following year, 2011-12, none of the departments submitted Draft Plans, with only half of the departments (7) submitting final documents while the remaining half remained non-compliant.

During the 2012-13 financial year, a remarkable improvement was recorded, even though it may have started worryingly, as there were no Draft Plans submitted at all, but it ended up with a majority of 13 departments out of 14 submitting their Final Plans. There is temptation to draw a correlation between these trends recorded above with the maturing HRD practice in the public service. Perhaps the same improvements recorded could also be linked to the deepening of the HRD practice and level of commitment among HRD practitioners in the public service where it is their job after all to prepare and submit these HRD implementation plans.

4.3. Interviews

As at the beginning of this chapter, the instruments used to collect data in this research were a combination of document analysis, literature review, questionnaire-based surveys and in-depth unstructured interviews. This is in line with a mixed research method. The following section of this chapter deals with the presentation of data from interviews. Once again, purposively sampled respondents were selected for these interviews.

The following questions were posed to the respondents:

4.3.1. What does professionalisation of HRD practitioners mean to you?

The responses received can be presented in **three main themes**. One part deals with ***individual technical competence*** whereby professionalisation deals with ensuring that the HRD practitioners have a sound understanding and appreciate the practicality of HRD as a practice. Once the HRD practitioner understands the centrality of HRD as a practice and a contributor to the strategic direction of the

organisation within which he/she operates, then such a practitioner could be deemed a professional. This would be being skilled adequately in practice HRD, before they are able to skill the next person and their organisations. The second part of the theme deals with ***Business Competency.*** This is the capacity to understand the organisation and its environment within which you operate. In this case, it will understand the public service and its main function and systems; in particular, understanding performance management, as one of HRD main activities is to improve individual and organisational performance.

One respondent stated categorically that *"applying performance management effectively provides an HRD Practitioner an opportunity to identify and link organisational performance gaps to individual employee skills gaps".* The third theme deals with ***Behavioural Competency.*** The areas that were clustered in this theme were the "induction", which the respondents mentioned that all HRD practitioners need to undergo in order to be grounded into the public service, understand its "ethos", "vision", "mission" and "broader plans of government". One respondent said *"once we reach a stage where HRD practitioners adopt a role of being "**change agents",** believing that all government programmes and the development and transformation agenda depends on the capable and professional public service, and they (HRD practitioners) are **CENTRAL** (as emphasised by the respondent) to delivering such capacity, then we can state that we are moving towards professionalisation".*

The CEO of SABPP submitted that it is very important to professionalise because the field of HR has advanced and developed over a decade. There is a need to set the boundaries and the context within which HR should operate. Professionalism across fields will ensure clearly defined competencies, a shared code of ethics, standards and practice. On the subject of the professionalisation of Public Service HRD practitioners, he submitted that organisational context is important; however there is has to be a distinction between a professional association and a professional body, as it were. The organising of practitioners along the sectoral lines could only be a professional association, but not stand as a professional body.

4.3.2. In your view, can exposure to working with HRD strategies over a period of time, contribute to the achievement of a level where a practitioner ends up developing a professional attitude and deeper level of commitment towards his/her practice? Please briefly elaborate on your answer.

There was generally an agreement that the exposure to the implementation of HRD Strategies is likely to contribute to the development of a professional attitude and commitment. According to most of the respondents, involvement in the implementation in real-life and the excitement arising from witnessing real-life transformation of individuals and the organisation as a result of one's involvement can get one hooked on the occupation and desire to do it better and grow personally. A caution, however, from most of the respondents was that such strategies must be well-framed, supported by adequate systems, resources and commitment from the top management, otherwise it can create despondency in an aspirant HRD practitioner. One respondent cautioned separating HRD from HRM, calling the separation "an artificial division". The reason cited is that *"HRD that does not respond to the job demands, is as good as not being there and that cannot be deemed professional".*

4.3.3. Can legal professionalisation of the HRD practice in the Public Service lead to an advancement of HRD practice and thus attain an enhanced status in society as an occupation? Please briefly elaborate on your answer.

The four respondents who answered this question differed in their opinions. Two however, agreed *"this can go some way as long as the kind of professionalism referred here is informed by the values and principles that should govern public administration in line with the Constitution and the Batho Pele principles and as long as the practice is not outside the HRM Context, otherwise the profession won't be responsive to the needs of the public service".*

The DDG for Policy's (*informal discussion, April 2014*) view is through the policy perspective in that mechanisms should be in place guided by a clear policy on who is an HRD practitioner and what set of competencies should HRD practitioners possess. The DDG for Policy further asserts that in order to keep the identified

competencies in check, there must be way of verifying that such competencies are in place, suggesting examinations administered by a legal structure of government.

Supporting the same argument is a Professor at the National School of Government. He asserts that there is no doubt that for the Public Service to become fully capable and efficient, it needs to be professional. It needs an Education, Training and Development Model that is supported by capable HRD practitioners who are continually subjected to examination of their competencies. However, a credible structure which sets examinations and award designations accordingly is essential to this (*Informal discussion, May 2014*).

4.3.4. Can legal professionalisation lead to recognition of the HRD function, by the executive management in public service departments, as an essential contributor to the achievement of public service organisational strategic objectives? Please briefly elaborate on your answer.

The former CEO of the PSETA argued that whether the profession is legalised or not, recognition will be determined by the manner in which practitioners demonstrated through actions that indeed, HRD is a strategic partner by ensuring that skills or competencies developed are relevant towards improved service delivery and advancing strategic objectives of departments. An Executive Director at a National Institution of Higher Learning agreed that this (legal professionalisation) may improve service delivery, since HRD is such an important function and executive management is not taking it seriously, perhaps if they are compelled by law, the HRD function will be granted its rightful place.

The CEO of SABPP disagreed with this notion, stating that the profession must first get its house in order, and then you can make the laws. According to him, there is a difference between regulation and self-governance. The CEO further argues that regulating HRD will not force the practitioners to be people oriented. He feels that sometimes HRD practitioners do not deliver on what is expected of them. If they can transform from within, they can be good without the laws.

He suggests that there should be open and proper research to prove that regulating the practice will deliver and be better recognised through legal enforcement that by its own transformation and contribution. He cited an example of Zambia as the only

country he is aware of to have legalised Human Resource Management, and, as a result, Zambian HRD practitioners are enjoying an improved stature in the country.

4.3.5. In your view, what would be five (5) minimum key competencies of a professional HRD Practitioner?

A list of competencies was suggested, and these included “Self-discipline, altruism, pleasant disposition, acceptable level of emotional maturity and a sense of responsible”.

The other response was that, “Firstly, there has to be a holistic understanding of the concept of Human Resource Management because HRD is a by-product of HRM”. Then one must be in a position to interpret the PDPs, WSP and the HRP so that he/she can have a sense of what skills or competencies are needed to respond to the work demands and have a clear understanding of various HRD Strategies, including Communications skills. Practitioners should also have a clear understanding of HRD related legislation, for instance, Skills Development Act and SAQA Act.

The CEO of SABPP listed a series of competences, including sound knowledge of the business (acumen), understanding the overall objective of the organisation or a department if in government. Customer service and/or service delivery, Organisational capabilities and dynamics, analytical (compiling reports, statistics and numbers, monitoring and evaluation, impact studies, functional skills, facilitation, design and presentation skills The HRD practitioner must be able to manage projects, have a clear plan before implementing an intervention. The practitioner must be able to communicate with all stakeholders. All these are competencies which the CEO believes should comprise a competency profile of a competent HRD practitioner.

4.3.6. In your view, what would be five (5) behavioural requirements that you would want to see as a minimum in a Code of Conduct for HRD Practitioner?

One respondent listed the following points as essential for the code of conduct for the HRD practitioners:

- **Character** (mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual);

- **Attitude** (a settled way of thinking /feeling about something);
- **Excellenc**e (being outstanding/good);
- **Competenc**y (proficiency, capacity);and
- **Conduct** (behaviour, demeanour).

The CEO of SABPP indicated that the Code of Conduct should be in two parts. One part should be behavioural, dealing with the basics of professionalism. There should be a manual documenting it. The professional must be able to meet deadlines for reports, handling of group dynamics, relationship management, sound ethics, translating Batho Pele ethos into the training room.

4.3.7. Is there a qualification that should be regarded as a prerequisite to enter the field of HRD practice? Motivate your recommendation.

A qualification along the lines of public and development management, because this will also expose one to other disciplines that are inter-related to HRD, one response was provided. The other response was that a basic qualification in administration (certificate, diploma or a degree) could be a consideration. The fact that the employee already has a basic academic/professional qualification will mean that reading; writing and comprehension skills have already been developed to an acceptable level. The employee will then already possess personal qualities such as self-discipline, critical thinking, intellectual stamina, commitment, etc. that is normally acquired during formal post-school studies.

The CEO also believed that a series of qualifications in Human Resource Management can prepare one for entry into the HRD practice, for as long such qualification has, built within it, learning outcomes that will enable one to develop the competencies he deems essential to be considered a competent HRD practitioner.

However, as a professional body and an Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) Body has been accredited by SAQA in terms of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act of 2008, SABPP has a list of qualifications and unit standards which they use to quality assure therefore he recommends as follows:

Table 4: List of SABPP Qualifications and Unit Standards

Qual ID	*Qualification Title*	*NQF Level*
49691	*FET Certificate: HR Management & Practices Support*	*4*
66069	*National Certificate: Generic Management: Skills Development Management*	*5*
49692	*National Diploma HR and Practices*	*5*
49793	*National Certificate : Productivity*	*5*
49794	*National Diploma : Productivity*	*5*
67511	*FET Certificate: Human Resources Management (non unit standard based)*	*4*

Skills Development Facilitating (SDF) Unit Standards

Unit Std ID	*Unit Standard Title*	*NQF Level*
15217	*Develop an organisational training and dev. plan*	*5*
15218	*Conduct an analysis to determine outcomes of learning for skills development and other purposes*	*6*
15221	*Provide information and advice regarding skills development and related issues*	*5*
252041	*Promote a learning culture in an organisation*	*5*
15227	*Conduct skills development admin in an organisation*	*4*
15228	*Advise on the establishment & implementation of a QMS for skills development practices in organisations*	*5*
15232	*Coordinate planned skills development interventions in an organisation*	*5*

Source: SABPP (www.sabpp.co.za)

4.3.8. Should there be a separate professional body for HRD Practitioners employed in the Public Service from those practicing elsewhere?

Yes, although the technical know-how ought to be the same, the values and principles that should inform HRD approaches in the Public Service are not the same as in the private sector. In support of this statement, a Deputy-Director General, formerly responsible for HRM&D stated that she believes that the case for an establishment of a professional body for HRD practitioners should not just be a general body, but in this question, should specifically be for the Public Service. She argues the Public Service is a special environment in that it is created and exists to serve the public not for profit and just the individual aggrandisement. The general public should have a mechanism available to them to hold to account those who have been appointed and render services on their behalf.

"No, there should be one professional body", one respondent answered. In the other professions there is one professional body regulating professions, whether the professional is working for government or in the private sector. The South African Council of Educators (SACE), a professional body for teachers in South Africa, is for all teachers – irrespective of whether they are employed by private or state sectors. The Health Professional Council of South Africa regulates all practitioners in the health sciences. This may even elevate the status and level of performance of practitioners in the Public Service. The professional body will set certain standards requirements in terms of Code of conduct, basic requirements for occupying certain positions, etc. The public servants will have to adhere to these standards and this may address some of the challenges currently causing the rot in the public service.

The CEO is also opposed to the notion of a separate Public Service professional body because the body of knowledge and technical competence have to remain the same.

4.3.9. Which of the following institutions would you consider ideal to serve as Professional Body for Public Service HRD Practitioners?

Office of Public Service Commission, the Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management (ASSADPAM) and South African Board of People Practices were mentioned as choices.

4.3.10. What form of Continual Professional Development (CPD) do you deem critical for Professional HRD Practitioners in the Public Service?

According to CEO of SABPP, the Competency Model which SABPP has proposed should be used as the basis for Continual Professional Development. One other response was that one ought not to be conversant only with HRD in the conventional ways but one ought to also learn about other approaches, such as mentoring, shadowing, peer review and so forth. The final response on the CPD was that latest global trends in technology and HRD are there to enhance efficiency. Regular feedback from clients may provide public servants with an idea of whether they are doing well or not. Reflective sessions, where HRD practitioners perform an objective evaluation of the performance of employees for purposes of development or remedial intervention are also essential.

4.4. Interpretation

This section will seek to interpret the data presented above as collected from the participants who had been purposefully sampled from a population of HRD practitioners in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government and other role-players in the field of HRD practice, including principal informants from professional bodies and senior officials of government departments responsible for policy making in the area of human resource development in the public service. The above data was analysed, synthesised in a tabular form, graphical presentation and text format as an attempt to make a meaning of the raw data from the participants. Neuman (2011:177) defines interpretation as meaning to assign significance or coherence meaning. Because this study employed a mixed research method, meaning combining the qualitative and quantitative research methods, likewise, the interpretation will combine styles of interpretation appropriate to mixed research methods.

In order to interpret data which was collected using surveys designs through the questionnaire that was sent to HRD practitioners in KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, a use of graphs with percentages and statistics, comparing different variables is used.

The interpretation of data collected using interviews which took a qualitative research method is in the form of text and to some extent, used direct quotes from the participants. As already indicated, the style is integrative.

The style of interpretation in this study is that of a second-order interpretation because the main investigation is to solicit views of HRD practitioners of the HRD practitioners and other principal role-players in the HRD practice about the impact of being involved in the implementation of HRD Strategies on their professionalisation and improvement of conduct, the contribution that legal professionalisation can have on their recognition, and minimum core competencies. As explained by Neuman (2011), second-order interpretation is a qualitative interpretation from the point of view of the researcher who conducted the study. Therefore the interpretation provided here means that the one which has been assigned by the researcher to the data collected and analysed in the above section.

It was also indicated in Chapter 4 on the research method of this report that, since the study investigated perceptions on the subject of HRD which is about humans, therefore a social science discipline, the theory underpinning this research is interpretive social science (ISS). ISS is a critical process of inquiry that goes beyond the surface of illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world to help people change conditions and to build a better world for themselves (Neuman, 2011: 108). In particular for this study, ISS is concerned about how people interact and get along with each other, which is critical for professionals relating to one another within a body of practice. In applying ISS, one of its varieties called hermeneutics theory, which suggests a way of understanding (or making meaning of) textual data is the one used in particular as the interpretation sought to establish an underlying message from the responses of the participants to the questions which posed to them during the study (Maree, 2013). Ricour (1976), in Maree (2013), asserts that the hermeneutic data analysis process means that interpretation is aimed at deciphering the hidden meaning in the apparent meaning and therefore, in analysing the data the researcher is searching for, unfolding the levels of meaning implied in the literal meaning of the text.

The interpretation was in the thematic format following the order of the research question together with the secondary questions. As opposed to the approach adopted in the analysis of the data where the data from surveys was dealt with

separately, the interpretation was integrative, especially for similar questions posed in the surveys and those posed during the interviews. The following themes have been identified together with the associated questions as they were posed in the survey question and during the interviews:

4.4.1. THEME 1: The Role of HRD practitioners and Growth through exposure to implementation of HRD Strategies within the departments.

Question One:

If your department has been implementing Public Service HRD strategies since 2001, describe you role in this, and how did this contribute to your growth as an HRD practitioner?

Interview Question Two:

In your view, can exposure to working with HRD strategies over a period of time, contribute to the achievement of a level where a practitioner ends up developing a professional attitude and a deeper level of commitment towards his/her practice? Please briefly elaborate on your answer.

Presented in figure 3, there is a general agreement amongst all HRD practitioners, policy makers and professional bodies that exposure to the real-life practice in implementing HRD strategies in the departments creates deeper awareness about the HRD practice amongst the practitioners. This awareness broadens the understanding of the practitioner in the role that they must be playing in the organisation. In this case, a combined 88% (implement the entire strategy = 12%; Establishing HRD function =38% and SDF 38%) and Planning HRD interventions at 100% can be interpreted to mean that HRD practitioners are beginning to see themselves beyond just coordinators of training, but engage themselves in the strategic role in departments.

This can begin to address the challenge of measuring the impact of HRD practitioners in the organisation raised by Short, et al (2002) which he said the HRD profession must overcome. Establishing a function (HRD) from scratch and implementing a strategy involves the systematic determination of the utility and the impact of HRD in the organisation productivity which Short, et al (2002) refers to in his quest to discover the future survival of HRD practice. The process it takes to establish a function in public service departments is so cumbersome that to have convinced the principals to have it established and funded must demonstrated great value and impact on the organisational performance in the future.

Also presented in Figure 4 is a level of growth the HRD practitioners reported to have experienced through their involvement and exposure to the implementation of HRD Strategies since 2001. The evidence that other respondents had either established HRD functions within their departments and were responsible for the implementation of the entire strategy, corroborates the view that HRD practice is beginning to be entrenched, and that the exposure to implementation at a strategic level, rather than mere transactional training, contributes to the growth of HRD practitioners in the public service departments, especially in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. This finding goes against Short, et al (2003) that HRD practice seems divorced from real-time problems in organisations, and that HRD practitioners see their work being completed by those of other professions, therefore considering HRD practice as a "fad".

It is also evident that the province, through the Office of the Premier, is committed to building the capacity of HRD practitioners. The decision to open a Provincial Public Service Training Academy which, according to KZN Provincial Government (2007), serves as a catalyst for change and acts to inspire new behaviour and stimulate growth.

The refreshing response, although it came from the fewest respondents, at 12%, the ability to link HRD to service delivery and Government Goals supports the utility and impact of the HRD on the organisation as a whole. Furthermore, it is a positioning as a (strategic) business partner which Erasmus, et al (2010) refers to when identifying the unique roles of HRD practitioners.

4.4.2. <u>THEME 2:</u> Competencies of HRD Practitioners.

<u>Question Two:</u>

Mention 5 competencies that you think should be minimum competencies for all HRD practitioners.

<u>Interview Question Five:</u>

In your view, what would be five (5) minimum key competencies of a professional HRD Practitioner?

Although the respondents were asked to identify five top competencies of the HRD practitioners, major differences between professional bodies are of concern.

TABLE 5: COMPARISON OF PERSPECTIVES ON HRD COMPETENCIES

No.	Research Findings	ASTD	SABPP	Researchers: Noe (2008) & Valkeavaara (1998)
1.	Learning Facilitation (1)	Change Management (A)	Leadership & Personal Credibility (i)	Business/ Management Skills (10)
2.	Financial Management (2)	Performance Improvement (B)	Organisation Capability (10)	Interpersonal Skills (3)
3.	Communication (3)	Knowledge Management	Solutions Creation & Implementation (ii)	Personal Skills(H)
4.	Learning Design (4)	Coaching (C)	Interpersonal & Communication Skills (3)	Intellectual Skills (8)
5.	Planning, Execution, M&E (5)	Integrated Talent Management (D)	Citizenship for the future (G)	Technical Skills (9)
6.	Project Management (6)	Managing Learning Programme (E)	Strategy (iii)	
7.	HRM & People Management (7)	Evaluating Learning Impact (5)	Talent Management (D)	
8.	Research & Analytical Skills (8)	Learning Technologies (F)	HR Governance, Risk & Compliance (7)	
9.	Individual Technical Skills (9)	Training Delivery (1)	Analytics & Measurement (8)	
10.	Business Knowledge (10)	Instructional Design	HR Service Delivery (iv)	
11.	Behavioural Competence (11)	Business Skills (10)	Duty to Society (v)	
12.		Interpersonal Skills (3)	Business Knowledge (10)	
13.		Global Mindset (G)	Professionalism (11)	
14.		Personal Skills(H)	Ethics(11)	
15.		Industry Knowledge(I)		
16.		Technology Literacy(J)		

Source: Own

The table above tries to track the frequency of each competency across the ASTD and SABPP Models as well as the work done by other researchers in the field of HRD. Ideally, a central tendency data analysis, using a mode, mean or median would have been applied in tracking the frequency of competencies as indicated by

respondents, however, this would be a very straight line graph, as each of the mentioned competencies appear only a few of times.

The numeric used, for example, in **Column 1** indicates competencies found by this study. If a number next a competency mentioned in **Column 1** appears in other columns on the right until the last, it means there is general agreement by all researchers whose material was consulted for this study that such competencies constitute the competency profile of HRD practitioners. **Column 2** indicates competencies according to ASTD, and an alphabet has been assigned to it, as an identifier. The same principle applies, if the similar competence identified by ASTD is found in other columns, it is marked with the corresponding alphabet. **Column 1** uses Numeric sequencing 1, 2, 3, and so forth, for the competencies found by this study. **Column 2** uses alphabets A, B, C and so forth. **Column 3** uses Roman figures i, ii, iii and so forth. Column 4 does not use any unique identifier since all competencies mentioned either in the findings of this study, ASTD or SABPP were also mentioned in this column.

This study finds that there is still no agreement on the precise core competencies of HRD practitioners. The assessment of the above table indicates that even the professional bodies do not necessarily agree on what constitute competencies of the practitioners over whom they hold a professional development oversight. As can be seen, the research found only 11 competencies, however the international professional body proposes 16, and the South African body identified 14, while the other international researchers could only identify 5. Furthermore, very few of the same competencies identified could be found across the sources identified above. However, the research found that there were some corresponding competencies found between those indicated by respondents in the research and those identified by the ASTD, although those identified by respondents were somewhat transactional, rather than strategic and globally posturing.

4.4.3. THEME 3: Recognition and Professionalisation of HRD Practice

Question Three:

What is your opinion on the legal professionalisation of the HRD practice?

Interview Question One:

What does professionalisation of HRD practitioners mean to you?

Interview Question eight:

Should there be a separate professional body for HRD Practitioners employed in the Public Service from those practising elsewhere?

Interview Question Nine:

Which institution would you consider ideal to serve as Professional Body for Public Service HRD Practitioners?

Supporting an argument for legal professionalisation is the King Report II, (2002) in Van Rensburg, Basson & Carrim (2011) that will enforce a code of conduct for improved performance, thereby contributing to the legal recognition of the profession. However, the lack of a common body of knowledge (Cherrington, 1983: 26 in Swanepoel, et al 2011: 75) and the creation of a sufficient body of knowledge as the basis for deepening the HRD practice as a profession (Lynham, 2000) seems to be more logical at this stage. Evidence to this is the example of no agreement on the core competencies of HRD practitioners. Short, et al (2003) states very clearly that building professional recognition will require HRD to construct a sound theory base and apply those theories in practice.

The findings of the study supported the same view considering the terms and benefits that professionalisation will bring to the HRD practice.

Figure 6 lists prescribed competencies, research, development trends and innovation, continuous professional development and professional behaviour and discipline. At least HRD practitioners in KwaZulu Natal share the same view on the development of their practice. However, considering the difference in the roles of HRD practitioners between those of Noe (2008) in Erasmus, et al (2010), namely learning strategist, business partner, project manager and professional specialist, are somewhat different to those identified by respondents in the research.

The respondents identified strategy implementation, skills development facilitation, planning, coordination, and reports compilation and establishing and managing the HRD function. While there may be similarities in functions when considered in a

broad sense, the fact that they are not precise means that the HRD practice still needs to establish a procedure for certifying members of the profession.

Perhaps the Public Sector Trainers Forum (PSTF) may be an ideal communication system which, as recommended by Cherrington (1983: 26) in Swanepoel, et. al (2011: 75), should be established to facilitate the exchange of ideas and self-regulation. The ideas to be exchanged here should be first identifying and defining the common body of knowledge and theory, the role of HRD practitioners, the common professional qualification for entry, the shared code of conduct. Thereafter, the system and structure to oversee the practice in the form of a professional body can be considered.

Clearly there is division of opinions on whether there should be a dedicated legal professional body for the public service and those practicing elsewhere. One reason for this could be the perception that HRD is still seen by some as part of the HRM as was the view of one respondent during the interviews. This view is supported by Meyer (2011). Defending HRD as an independent practice, is McGoldrick and Stewart (1996) in Pederson (2000) that HRD is broader as it encompass broader organisational aspects, of concern to an employer, rather than just utilisation, administration and remuneration matters which human resource management is all about. Once again this is an area of contradiction within the practice and practitioners.

4.4.4. <u>THEME 4:</u> Code of Conduct for Public Service HRD Practitioners

<u>Question Four:</u>

Mention 5 points that you would wish should be included in the code of conduct for HRD practitioners;

<u>Interview Question Six:</u>

In your view, what would be five (5) behavioural requirements that you would want to see as a minimum in a Code of Conduct for HRD Practitioner?

This is one area where there is a general consensus that there is a need for a code of conduct. Presented in Figure 7, respondents list on top of the list, the continual professional development (CPD) for the code of conduct. This can only be achieved if this is defined and accepted by all, as Meyer (2011) puts it that the competency model should be the basis for CPD. Therefore, such should be modelled against an

agreed body of knowledge, and certification procedure (Short, et al, 2003) theory (Lynham, 2000) and practice standards.

The code of conduct presents an opportunity for HRD practitioners to develop a high degree of certainty and specialised knowledge, socially central values and a body of academic knowledge (Wilensky, 1964, in Mieg, 2008). King Report II, (2002) in Van Rensburg, Basson & Carrim (2011) reported that regulating HR (M) will enforce codes of conduct for improved performance. Finally, there is a case where all practitioners, researchers and control bodies agree that legal professionalisation is necessary.

4.4.5. THEME 5: Common Professional entry academic qualification into the HRD Practice in the Public Service
Question Five: Is there a qualification that you would recommend to be a generic minimum qualification for any employee wishing to enter the field of HRD? Motivate your recommendation.
Interview Question Seven: Is there a qualification that should be regarded as a prerequisite to enter the field of HRD practice? Motivate your recommendation.
Question Six: Do you currently hold a formal qualification in Human Resource Development? **Yes/No**
Question Six (a): If answered Yes, name the qualification title, NQF Level, and number of years it took to complete it, the year obtained and the institution from which obtained.
Question Six (b): If you answered No, name the qualification you hold currently, name the qualification title, NQF Level, and number of years it took to complete it and the year obtained and institution.
Question Seven: If you do not hold a formal qualification in Human Resource Development, are you studying towards obtaining one? **Yes/No**
Question Seven (a): If you answered **Yes**, name the qualification title, NQF Level you are studying towards, and number of years it would take to complete it, the year of completion, and the institution.
Question Seven (b): If you answered **No**, what is your view about practicing in the HRD field without a minimum qualification?

Presented in **TABLE 1** is the confirmation that once again the HRD practitioners, the professional bodies and researcher cannot agree on one qualification that is considered as a universal entry into the HRD practice. The list of qualifications

indicated in this table is so diverse and varied. **FIGURE 8** presents a split of 75% for those who think they possess a formal qualification in HRD and a 25% of those who think they do not. However, the analysis of qualifications held by respondents in both categories shows that these qualifications are not too different and while others are completely identical, except that they are not titled HRD.

This notion goes against Wilensky (1964) in Mieg (2008), which for professionalisation, a university programme, a body of academic knowledge and specific education must be established. A list of qualifications and unit standards in **TABLE 4** which the SABPP recognise, seem to be a first step in the right direction, but they are still more human resource management oriented, rather than HRD. The argument that there is no common qualification that can be regarded as an entry into the HR field, and that general social science studies in the fields of psychology or sociology help provide knowledge of human behavioural processes in the institutional context (Swanepoel, 2011) does not help the course for development of HRD as a practice.

4.4.6. <u>THEME 6:</u> Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme for HRD practitioners in the Public Service

<u>Question Seven</u>

What form of Continual Professional Development (CPD) do you deem critical for Professional HRD Practitioners in the Public Service?

While all respondents had indicated that continual professional development is one key important benefit which professionalisation would bring to the HRD practice, however none of them, bar one, could define the content and the format this should be in. This could be pointing to the fact that, without a clearly defined body of knowledge (Short, et al, 2003), and theory (Lynham, 2010), or a (university) programme (Wilensky, 1964) in Mieg (2008), there cannot be a common qualification because the aforementioned components would inform the curriculum of the common qualification.

Perhaps the issue to identity for HRD as an independent field of theory practice, as argued by McGoldrick and Stewart (1996) in Pederson, (2000) and that the work of HRD depends on other fields to complete its purposes is the fundamental problem

preventing the profiling of the true character of HRD. Consequently this leads to failure to agree on a shared role of HRD practitioners, as well as disagreement on a set of core competencies, the curriculum of what has to be studied and a common holding frame of what is being studied (the common qualification). Should these components be decided and agreed on, then the basis for the continued professional development and the content would be defined empirically. Therefore Meyer (2011) has a logic point in that SABPP's Model for National Competency should provide a basis for continual professional development.

4.5. Conclusion

It is evident from the data and the responses received from various role players and in particular the HRD practitioners that there is interest in the practice and that many individuals have invested much passion in the HRD occupation. There is also a very diverse set of views on a number of issues pertaining to the development of HRD as practice. To some extent even the identity of the HRD practice from the broader field of HRM remains an issue to be clarified. It can be concluded that there is a diverse opinion on what the roles and competencies of HRD practitioners should be. The chapter also revealed that HRD practitioners have experienced varying levels of growth during their exposure to the implementation of HRD strategies in their respective departments within the province. Recognition and professionalisation of HRD practitioners is desired by practitioners, however theory and research challenges HRD practitioners to elevate their contribution to the overall organisational objective. The findings also revealed that there is no common entry professional qualification into the HRD practice which is recognised by practitioners, professional bodies and researchers. There is a general agreement that there has to be code of conduct for HRD practitioners, however, there is disagreement on points which should constitute such a code of conduct. Finally, on the issue of a common Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for HRD practitioners, there is a general agreement that this should be in place and it should follow an agreed competency framework or model for HRD practice.

The next chapter which is a final chapter of this report contains a conclusion and makes recommendations on the overall research.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

This Chapter deals with concluding remarks on the study, shares implications arising from the interpretation of data and makes recommendations. The Chapter begins by restating the purpose of the study, and then presents the concluding remarks in the same thematic format as followed in the interpretation of data.

To restate the purpose of this study, it is to solicit views of HRD practitioners of the HRD practitioners of the Provincial Government of KwaZulu-Natal on:

- whether the implementation of the Public Service HRD strategies since 2001 to date, has contributed towards assisting HRD Practitioners to advance their practice, professional standing and conduct.
- whether legal professionalisation of HRD Practice can contribute to the recognition of the HRD Practitioners in the Public Service.
- whether there is a universal agreement on the minimum core competencies that HRD practitioners should possess.

5.1. The Role of HRD practitioners and Growth through exposure to implementation of HRD Strategies within the departments.

As every analyst, the economists and government's own reports point to the shortage of skills amongst South Africans, especially in the public service, it can be expected that all strategies aimed at lifting up the skills profile of the public service will depend on the capabilities of the HRD practitioners in the public service departments to drive the successful implementation of such strategies.

But diverse views on the role of HRD practitioners and the different levels of exposure to implementation by the HRD practitioners in the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government do not support the intentions of the Public Service HRD Strategic Framework. As this seems to be an international phenomenon, it cannot the provincial government's only be intervention, but the South African Government as a whole that needs to take a deliberate decision to intervene in order see its own plans succeed.

This may include having to draw some lessons from the Zambian Government which legislated the HR practice at approximately the same time as the Public Service

HRD Strategic Framework was approved in 2007. This should include what exactly the HRD practitioners' functions should be in the departments and whether such functions should be transactional and administrative or be strategic. There should also be a distinction between human resource management (utilisation, remuneration and administration), and HRD (development, career development, performance, training, talent development and discipline).

5.2. Competencies of HRD Practitioners.

As the study found that there is also no agreement on the core competencies of HRD practitioners, it again points to the need for a central holding structure that will oversee the identification of core competencies, profile the HRD Occupation and facilitate the development a competency framework for the HRD practitioners. Without a common competency dictionary to direct practitioners' development, every individual practicing HRD in the public service may find themselves unguided in their career development.

5.3. Recognition and Professionalisation of HRD Practice

In the words of Cooper (1995), in CPFA (2011), who warns that "It is one thing for an occupational group to designate itself as a profession but quite another to attain public recognition of this status", what comes of the literature used in this study is that HRD practitioners need to establish themselves as key players in the development of organisational strategies, they should demonstrate how what they do correlates with productivity and welfare of the organisation (Russ-Eft & Preskill, 2001; Swanson & Holton, 1999 as cited in Short, et al, 2003). This may sound contradictory, but what is meant here is that the HRD practitioners need to play their part in lifting their standard of what they do in their departments, ceasing to be transactional, but strategic.

The PSTF as an association of public service practitioners needs to refocus its agenda, instead of focusing on conferences; it should begin to look at hard matters affecting HRD practice. The questions which were asked in this study can serve as a start towards the development agenda of HRD practitioners led by the PSTF. So, the legal professionalisation initiative by the state would be met with equally self-driven professionals, and performance. This initiative can even be driven on a small scale by HRD practitioners within the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, and leading

from the front and through their own conduct, seek to influence their colleagues beyond the province.

5.4. The Code of Conduct for Public Service HRD Practitioners

In proposing the code of conduct for HRD practitioners, the Public Service HRD Strategic Framework suggests the five points that Batho Pele performance indicators developed for HRD (DPSA, 2007). Having once expanded on the original eight Batho Pele Principles to end up with a KwaZulu-Natal customised ten principles; this could yet be another opportunity where the provincial HRD practitioners initiate their own code of conduct as an initiative that could grow beyond the province. This could start as an informal pledge, and then be grown further as the competency dictionary, and framework, structures and systems are put in place.

5.5. Common Professional entry academic qualification into the HRD Practice in the Public Service

The new approach adopted by National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act (2008), allowing for greater industry experts participation and increased recognition of professional bodies and their professional qualifications, presented an opportunity for many professional associations to present their cases for recognition. Since the NQF principle of identity, as quality assurance body, is served by having a distinct qualification, the HRD practitioners can combine to form a community of experts representing HRD practitioners in the public service sector to draw up a curriculum and qualification. This may be the start of a qualification matrix for the HRD practice which would be the basis for career – pathing and designations for specialisation in the field of HRD.

5.6. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme for HRD practitioners in the Public Service

Similar to the above recommendation, and as supported by Meyer (2011) that the competency model should serve as a basis for continuous professional development, perhaps the DPSA as a custodian for the competency dictionary for public service occupations should take a lead in this initiative.

As an overall conclusion, it is evident that the field of HRD has indeed evolved and is beginning to separate from the HRM to form its identity with its own theory and knowledge base, while at the same time mapping out a value-chain which defines its relationship to HRM and other fields. While the Public Service has had two generations of HRD strategies post 1994, the latest having identified the role of HRD practitioners in ensuring its successful implementation, thereby reaching the objectives of the strategic framework itself, this study has revealed that very little has been achieved in advancing the development of these practitioners in real terms. Instead, the general approach has been to relegate their roles to an administrative function, instead of being strategic partners.

The irony is that the objective of the HRD strategies has been to create a capable public service, but the practitioners who were expected to drive these strategies have remained incapacitated.

There are however opportunities to reverse this, and this lies with the HRD practitioners themselves to committing to organise themselves as a body of professionals who are driving the change they want to see and aligning themselves to add value within organisations in which they operate and the public service as a whole.

In support of Van Der Sluis (2007), who identified four major themes for future research in the HRD practice, this study proposes that further in-depth study, on the roles and competencies of HRD practitioners, recognition and professionalisation of HRD practitioners; common entry professional qualification into the HRD practice, the Code of Conduct for HRD practitioners; and Common Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for HRD practitioners should be undertaken.

This should focus in the public service, as it is a peculiar environment. This should be looking at the pertinent public service employment practices in relations to HRD Practice as a distinct occupation, and cross-applicability of HRD practice, to justify or not, the case for an exclusive public service professional body for HRD practitioners. This should crystallise the true characteristics like self-governance, a focus on gaining and developing knowledge, special skills, and ethical behaviour.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE 1

Research Topic:

Professionalisation of Human Resource Development (HRD) Practitioners in the Office of Premier of the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government.

Research Question

- Has the implementation of Human Resource Development Strategies in the Public Service, since 1997 to date, contributed towards assisting HRD practitioners to seek to advance their practice, improve professional standing and professional conduct? Specifically:
    - Can legal professionalisation of the HRD practice in the Public Service contribute to a level of commitment to the practice by the practitioners? and
    - Can legal professionalisation lead to recognition by the executive management, as an essential contributor to the achievement of public service organisational strategic objectives?

Questions:

Answer the following questions to the best of your ability, supporting your statements where required.

1. If your department has been implementing Public Service HRD strategies since 2001, describe you role in this, and how did contribute to your growth as an HRD practitioner?

2. Mention 5 competencies that you think should be minimum competencies for all HRD practitioners;

3. What is your opinion on the legal professionalisation of the HRD practice?

4. Mention 5 points that you would wish should be included in the code of conduct for HRD practitioners

5. Is there a qualification that you would recommend to be a generic minimum qualification for any employee wishing to enter the field of HRD? Motivate your recommendation.

6. Do you currently hold a formal qualification in Human Resource Development?

Yes/No

Yes		No	

(a) If answered Yes, name the qualification title, NQF Level, and number of years it took to complete it, the year obtained and the institution from which obtained.

Title of the Qualification	
NQF Level/Type of the Qualification	

Duration	
Year Obtained	
Name of Institution	

(b) If you answered No, name the qualification you hold currently, name the qualification title, NQF Level, and number of years it took to complete it and the year obtained and institution.

Title of the Qualification	
NQF Level/Type of the Qualification	
Duration	
Year Obtained	
Name of Institution	

7. If you do not hold a formal qualification in Human Resource Development, are you studying towards obtaining one?

Yes/No

Yes		No	

(a) If you answered Yes, name the qualification title, NQF Level you are studying towards, and number of years it would take to complete it, the year of completion, and the institution.

Title of the Qualification	
NQF Level/Type of the Qualification	
Duration	
Year Obtained	
Name of Institution	

(b) If you answered No, what is your view about practicing in the HRD field without a minimum qualification?

Thank you very much for your time

Please forward you completed questionnaire to the following details:

E-mail: ZKhuzwayo@dpsa.gov.za or

eFax: 086 219 7980

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE 2

1. The Questions

Questions below are informed by the above background as having been the intentions of the HRD Strategic Framework. As a way of background, the research proposal looks at benefits derived by the public from the conduct of some of the occupations within the Public Service which are already regulated. The benefits are then juxtaposed to the HRD practice. Therefore, the Research Proposal seeks:

- **To assess whether the implementation of the Public Service HRD strategies since 2001 to date has contributed towards assisting HRD Practitioners** to **advance their practice**, **professional standing** and **conduct.**
- **to establish whether legal professionalisation of HRD Practice would contribute to the recognition of the HRD Practitioners in the Public Service.**

In order to answer the above main questions, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions in depth, supporting your answers where necessary.

1. What does professionalisation of HRD practitioners mean to you?

2. In your view, can exposure to working with HRD strategies over a period of time, contribute to the achievement of a level where a practitioner ends up developing a professional attitude and a deeper level of commitment towards his/her practice? Please briefly elaborate on your answer.

3. Can legal professionalisation of the HRD practice in the Public Service lead to an advancement of HRD practice and thus attain an enhanced status in society as an occupation? Please briefly elaborate on your answer.

4. Can legal professionalisation lead to recognition of HRD function, by the executive management in public service departments, as an essential contributor to the achievement of public service organisational strategic objectives? Please briefly elaborate on your answer.

5. In your view, what would be five (5) minimum key competencies of a professional HRD Practitioner?

6. In your view, what would be five (5) behavioural requirements that you would want to see as a minimum in a Code of Conduct for HRD Practitioner?
7. Is there a qualification that should be regarded as a prerequisite to enter the field of HRD practice? Motivate your recommendation.

8. Should there be a separate professional body for HRD Practitioners employed in the Public Service from those practicing elsewhere?

9. Which of the following institutions would you consider ideal to serve as Professional Body for Public Service HRD Practitioners?

No.	Institution	✓
1.	SABPP	
2.	Office of Public Service Commission	
3.	Department of Public Service and Administration	
4.	Association of Southern African Schools and Departments of Public Administration and Management (ASSADPAM).	
5.	African Society for Training & Development (ASTD)	

10. What form of Continual Professional Development (CPD) do you deem critical for Professional HRD Practitioners in the Public Service?

Thank you very much for your time

Please forward you completed questionnaire to the following details:

E-mail: ZKhuzwayo@dpsa.gov.za