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EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE CULTURE IN MPUMALANGA, DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION

BY

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Abstract

In the past few years, the contribution of the performance culture to the overall success of the organisation has prompted interest to explore the concept. The purpose of this exploratory study was to determine facets that are perceived to be contributing to the performance culture and how employees in the Mpumalanga Department of Culture DCSR perceive such facets as causal factors to the performance of the organisation. This study is a qualitative descriptive study and semi semi-structures interviews were conducted. Eight participants were requested to take part. Two participants are from the head office and two from each of the three districts. All interviews were conducted face to face. Interviews were recorded on tape, transcribed and assessed according to themes. The overall findings of this study were that there are negative perceptions of performance culture as assessed according to the London School of Economics Eight Dimensions Performance Culture Model.

Declaration

I Bonginkosi Nelson Mtsweni, Student number 547083, declare that “Employee perceptions of performance culture in Mpumalanga, Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation” is own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Management (in the field of Public Management and Development Management) in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university.

_____

Bonginkosi Nelson Mtsweni

15 February 2016

Dedications

The paper is dedicated to my late father, Mr Joseph Shadrack Mtsweni and my mother Dolly Mtsweni, for their guidance in inculcating the sense of importance of education.

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List of Acronyms

- APP - Annual Performance Plan
- CIPD - Chartered Institute of Personnel Development
- DCSR - Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation
- EDP - Executive Development Programme
- HRD - Human Resource Development
- HRM - Human Resource Management
- KPA - Key Performance Area
- KPI - Key Performance Indicator
- MANCO - Management Committee
- MPAT - Management Performance Assessment Tool.
- NDP - National Development Plan
- PDP - Personal Development Plan
- PMDS - Performance Management and Development System
- SETA - Skills Education Training Authorities
- SMART - Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timebound

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the perceptions of the employees on the performance culture in the Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation (DCSR). It seeks to understand the employees' perceptions on the prevalent performance culture of the DCSR. This research report begins by outlining the purpose of the study. The problem statement articulates the rationale behind the study. The literature review begins with the exploration on the concept perception and thereafter employee perceptions and later the performance culture. On perception, other facets taken into consideration are the reasons why perceptions should be studied, how it is applicable to organisations and the implication of perception in the various organisations. On the other hand, eight factors contributing to high performance culture will be discussed. The relationship between employee perceptions and the performance culture concludes literature review. Semi structure interviews are employed in a selected unit of analysis. A descriptive account of the findings will be presented.

1.2 Background to the study

Since inception in 1996, the DCSR was expected to fulfil its mandate. Although the vision of the DCSR is to create a patriotic and socially cohesive society in the province and the country as a whole and the mission stresses excellence through stakeholder participation, the department has not been able to meet the service delivery targets. The department has not in terms of the DCSR Annual Report 1996/1997 to 2013/14 accomplished a clean audit as contemplated by the South African government for all government institutions. Various levels of government have a role to play in South Africa. Molefe, Roodt, and Shrunk (2010) contend that stakeholders are dissatisfied with the service delivery records of government institutions and further assert that there is "… emerging criticism of public bureaucracies, particularly the larger ones often indicate that governments are frequently slow, cumbersome, inefficient and ineffective, unresponsive and unaccountable and thus unable to deal with the pace of change."

Rosenthal and Masarech (2003) maintain that the need for a performance culture cannot be overemphasised, as it is required for the organisation success. Performance culture drives the performance of the organisation. The prevalence of the high performance culture entails facets such as recruitment and retaining best performers; decentralised and flat structures; emotional contract between the organisation and the employees, engagement of the employees; shared vision and shared values. All these together determine behaviours and attitudes in an organisation.

1.3 Problem Statement

The DCSR in Mpumalanga derives its mandate from Section 6, (1), Section 30, and Section 31, (1) (2) as well as part A of Schedule 5 of Constitution of South Africa. It is expected to provide services relating to sports, language, culture, libraries, recreation and museums in the province (Republic of South Africa: 1996). Despite the fact that the department has been in existence since the dawn of democracy, there seems to be challenges in the performance. However, DCSR has not been able to meet its service delivery targets. Therefore, there is a need to do a thorough research to find out the underlying problems for the challenges because the source of the problem is unknown. The identification of the underlying issues will assist with a turnaround process for the department.

1.4 Aim of the study

1.4.1 Objective of the study

The general aim of the study is to establish the employees' perceptions on performance culture in the DCSR. A semi-structured interview with eight employees' in the department had been conducted to identify perceptions.

1.4.2 Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What are the employees' perception performance culture in the Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation?

- What are the employees' perceptions on the factors affecting performance culture of the Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation?
- What measures could be applied to improve employees' perception with a view to advance the performance culture the Mpumalanga Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Panimalar and Kannan (2013) assert that employee perception is necessary for any organisation to perform. Furthermore, they contend that nothing can be done without perception and perception that is acceptable to all employees contributes to the doing of any task in the organisation. For the organisation to attain good output and successful results, employee perception is required.

The management of the department will be expected to come up with strategies to improve on those areas of performance culture that are identified and thus

require improvement. The study also contributes to the body of knowledge on employee perceptions on performance culture within the Public Service.

1.6 Theoretical Perspective

This research is theoretically underpinned by the concept of organisational performance management with specific emphasis on the role of played by organisational culture. This phenomenon is clarified by Richer (2007) in his contention that the performance culture was coined recently in government to prioritise performance. In order to enhance performance, government has focused on performance culture. In addition, in private companies, the bottom line is continued profitability and management is continuously worried about increasing revenues. If company leaders fail to meet expectations, company leaders are quick to act. Policies, systems and practices emanate from these expectations and interactions of managers and the workforce. Such practices culminate into organisational culture.

This research is based on the assumption that the employees' perceptions are drawn from their daily interaction with their environment. It also seeks to describe perceived actions to enhance the emphasis on good performance in the department.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Perception

2.1.1 The importance of perception

Panimalar and Kannan (2013) contend that for organisations to be effective there is a need for a perception that all employees accept and it is vital for the organisation in its endeavour to strive for better output. This assertion is supported by the fact that perception is important in organisations because it influences human behaviour. The manner in which people behave in an organisation is not based on reality but on what is perceived as reality. Elnaga (2012) maintains that there is a need for managers to have an understanding of how perception impacts on the work environment.

2.1.2 Reasons for studying perception

Langton, Robbins and Judge (2010) argue that -perceptions are studied to have an understanding as to how people derive attributions about events. The second reason is that what people see is not reality but what we call reality is the interpretation of what we see. Lastly, despite the attribution truth, the attribution process guides our behaviour. Vithessonthi (2005) also emphasises that perception has influence on how people see and understand the situations around them and their decision making process.

2.1.3 Perceptual errors and remedies

2.1.3.1 Attributions

According to Kumar (2003), it is through our perceptions of causality that we understand our environment. The process of making sense is called attributions. The belief on the cause of action or the event is called attribution. The manner in which we interpret our experiences is derived in our continuous attempt to do causal analysis with the view to understand our social world. Kumar (2003)

further contends that while attribution theory influenced perceptions, it has played a major role in recent years in leadership, motivation and in performance management. The manner in which supervisors behave towards their subordinates and the evaluation of employees' performance determines attribution.

2.1.3.2 Selective perception

Elnaga (2012) describes the fact that some people prioritise certain messages over others as selective perception. Furthermore, this situation can cause a bottleneck in terms of limiting the information in that once one message enters, others are then prevented from passing through.

2.1.3.3 Halo effect

Kumar (2003) describes halo effect as a perception derived from a single judgement based one characteristic like way of dress, nationality, level of education and many more. Halo effect can either be positive or negative.

2.1.3.4 Contrast Effect

According to Langton, et *al*. (2010), description of the contrast effect is that the individuals that a person has recently encountered make a person to engage in a process of comparing their views with her personal evaluation.

2.1.3.5 Projection

In instances where a person perceives his or her own characteristics as that of other people is called projection (Langton, *et al.,* 2010).

2.1.3.6 Stereotyping

Stereotyping entails a situation where persons who seem to be sharing similar characteristics are grouped together (Kumar, 1993). Elnaga (2012) contends that the process of stereotyping employed in a work environment can be productive only if its shortcomings can be recognised.

2.1.3.7 Prejudice

According to Elnaga (2012: 60), there are two types of prejudices. They are personal and group prejudice. Personal prejudice entails a situation where members of another group are viewed as threatening your interest. In this instance, the group may be constituted by race, ethnicity, work or age. Group prejudice has to do with conformity of a person to the norms of the group she has joined even if she does not have a reason to support their viewpoint.

2.1.4 Perception and its application in organisations

2.1.4.1 Employment Interview

The interview panel makes judgements based on perception that are in many instances inaccurate during the selection process. Members of the panel often perceive each individual differently and arrive at dissimilar conclusions. In some instances, the inaccuracies in perception result in compromising quality in the organisational labour (Kumar, 1993).

2.1.4.2 Performance Interview

Performance Management has an impact on an individual's career path in an organisation. The perceptual processes have a direct influence on the performance appraisal of an employee (Kumar, 1993).

2.1.4.3 Level of Effort

The judgement of the amount of effort in an organisation is vulnerable to be subjectively judged through biases (Kumar, 1993).

2.1.4.4 Loyalty

Distortions emanating from perception culminate in misjudgement in the employees' loyalty to the organisation (Kumar, 1993).

2.1.5 Factors that influence the perceptual process

According to Otara (2011), there are five factors that influence the perceptual process.

2.1.5.1 Habit

It is that behaviour that forms unconsciously and very slow and an individual becomes accustomed to it. The habit influences individuals to perceive situations and conditions differently (Otara, 2011).

2.1.5.2 Motivation

These are the factors that increases the stimuli related to the satisfaction of needs informed by previous experiences (Otara, 2011).

2.1.5.3 Learning

The perception process is also to a great extent influenced by the state of learning. The level of learning influences the person's perceptions. These factors necessitate that organisation put learning as a priority for better perception (Otara, 2011).

2.1.5.4 Specialisation

In specialisation, the perception is such that information not related to specialised area is disregarded; only an area of specialisation is focussed focused on (Otara, 2011:23).

2.1.5.5 Social Background

Socially developed employees have positive attitude towards work compared to the less developed employees.

2.1.6 Implication of perception in organisations

2.1.6.1 Productivity

Kontakos (2007) opines that employees at a workplace may exhibit a degree of negative or positive behaviour in relation to the perceived fairness or unfairness. In instances where the perception is negative, employee change behaviour leading to decreased production and performance.

2.1.6.2 Absenteeism and turnover

According to Kontakos (2007), negative perceptions emanating from perceived unfair treatment may be able to lead to behaviour withdrawal culminating to high turnover or abnormal absenteeism.

2.1.6.3 Job Satisfaction

Perceived job satisfaction comes to the picture when there is fairness at the workplace (Kontakos, 2007). Some aspects of fairness include employee engagement, recognition of good performance and defined new job opportunities.

2.2 Perception and performance culture.

Panimalar and Kannan (2013) define “Employee Perception *as a “‘process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment*.” Panimalar and Kannan (2013) further state that to have successful results in an organisation, different perceptions are required to do things in different ways. They stress that without perception nothing can be done. Richer (2007) contends that Performance Culture is a concept coined a few years ago in government to “*describe a culture where performance is a recognised priority”.* In an organisation where performance culture prevails, employees know exactly what is expected of them to accomplish the goals. Richer (2007) further asserts that there is also a high level of emotional commitment by employees to attain the organisational goals. Without being monitored, employees are up to the task. The high performance culture does not automatically occur but it is a deliberate engagement by the leadership of the organisation to cultivate. Rice (2007) supports the notion that it is a fact that triumphant organisations endeavour to get their culture in the right place.

Perception manifests itself in attitudes and behaviours. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (2010) in the South African Report to the Sixth Commonwealth Forum of the Heads of African Public Service held on 13 -15 July 2009, emphasis is put on the fact that attitudes and the behaviour of the employees is to a great extent linked to the performance of the organisation. In order to enhance the performance of the organisation, focus should be on the change of such attitudes and behaviours. In the same report, focus is put on the fact that where there are relevant attitudes and behaviours, there is strong leadership and stability in the organisation. Rick (2011) contends that others share the view that there is a need for alignment between organisational behaviour and values to create a culture that culminates in high performance.

Getting culture right enhances the drive to high performance. Culture encompasses the values and the behaviours of the organisation. Successful

organisations aim at building institutions of excellence that complied and promote good governance and display operational brilliance. The Eight-Dimension Performance Culture Model as suggested by Risher (2007) is employed to explore the relationship between employee perception and the performance culture.

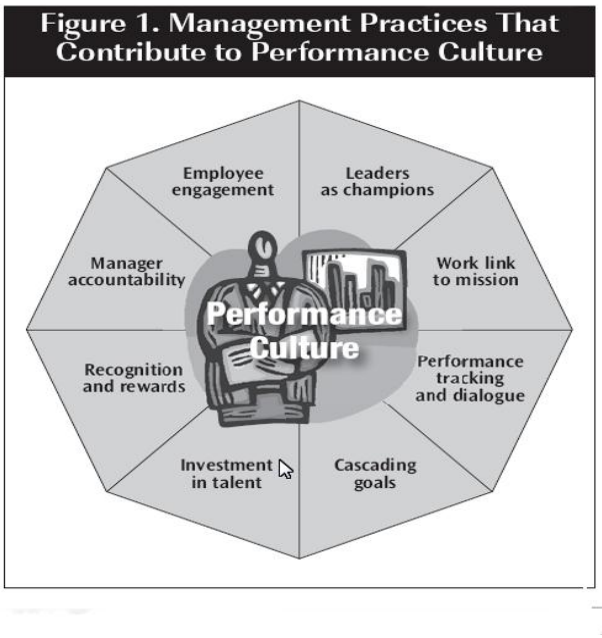


Figure 1. Management Practices That Contribute to Performance Culture (Adapted from Richer, 2007)

2.2.1 Employee Perception and Leaders as champions

Otara (2011) asserts that the effectiveness of working environment is shaped by the perception of the employees and the leadership of the organisation as it entails the manner in which experiences are interpreted. People do what they perceive will lead them to success. Otara (2011) goes further to maintain that one important skill is seldom forgotten that of leadership perception. It is a significant skill because the right perception results in effective leadership. Communication must be used to reinforce a positive perception in the employee perceptions. The ability to influence is viewed as strategic leadership. It entails identification of the direction the organisation envisage taking, ensuring that the organisational culture is aligned to the strategy. Rice (2007) suggests that strategic leaders further develop and communicate the vision of the organisation

with which members of the organisation are inspired to move towards a certain direction. However, the high performance culture does not automatically occur but it is a deliberate engagement by the leadership of the organisation to cultivate. It is that fact that triumphant organisations endeavours to get their culture in the right place. Span (2012) further elaborates that high performance culture has to be driven by the leadership in terms of its creation and maintenance. Committed leaders in successful organisations entrench a sense of purpose in their followership. The responsibility of the leaders in high performing organisations is their capacity to ensure that innovative ideas are put into action. These leaders with their skills have the ability to consolidate all facets contributing to compatibility between culture and strategy.

Lear (2004) opines that the process of inculcating the high performance culture begins with top management. The accounting officer and the top management's understanding of the importance of culture of high performance cannot be overemphasised. Even if there can be excellent proponents of best work culture at the bottom, it will be difficult to implement, in case the top management does not see the compelling reason to implement. The leadership is expected to be role models through behaviours.

2.2.2 Employee perception and work link on mission

The purpose of the organisation is created through a shared mission. The manner in which the work behaviour is organised gets its frame of reference from the mission of the organisation. Span (2002:02) contends that as the shared mission enhances organisational effectiveness, the 'vision and missions statements of organisations should be clearly defined, concise and powerful'. The mission of the organisation becomes the energizer only if the people own it. People must share the mission and commit to it.

Kopaneva (2013) argues that the life of the mission is in the hands of the workers even in authoritative environment where the mission is developed by the leader and brought down to coalface. The importance of how employees create a perception and interpret the mission impacts on the organisational

effectiveness. Employees often engage in behaviours that attempt to make meaning in their endeavour to understand the mission of the organisation when leaders emphasise the importance of the mission. Kopaneva (2013) further asserts that there are two ways the mission and vision of the organisation is perceived and understood. The first one is when leaders have developed the vision and mission, and present it to the employees and have them forming part of daily operations. The second instance relates to the interpretation of the mission and vision by the employees themselves and is applied in their workplace situations as well as in their interaction with colleagues.

A mission statement that is unknown to the people in the organisation cannot be shared. In support of this view, Span (2012) argues that a shared mission entails the inclusion of the people during its crafting, development and adoption. The participation of the people enables everyone in the organisation to identify with the mission. The shared mission becomes the driving force towards the high performance culture. Shared vision also clearly clarifies the direction the organisation envisages to pursue. There are organisations that do not have clear direction. Although most of these organisations have written visions and mission statements, even part of the management has no idea of these guiding principles. Shared mission embodies shared values.

People in an organisation come from different backgrounds. In order to bring together there is a need for a mission to guide the way of doing things. Haid et al.'s (2010) contribution on the discourse is that the process of the development of the mission of the organisation the collaborative approach is recommended to enable each every member of the organisation to contribute to the crafting, development and adoption of the mission. The inclusion of all members of the organisation in the process will enhance the adherence of employees to the agreed upon mission. In this instance, the envisaged direction will be shared, experienced and embraced by all within an organisation. The shared values bridge the gap between the differing values and entrenches a new culture in the organisation that could enhance organisational effectiveness.

2.2.3 Employee of Perception of Performance Tracking

In a study done by Beletskiy (2011), the process of performance appraisal was perceived as an opportunity to raise concerns by the disgruntled employees. This view implies that such a perception of the performance appraisal might have found its origin from the culture of the organisation or the distance between the employer and the follower. On the Key Performance Areas (KPAs) and the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), Beletskiy (2011) indicates that the perception is that the former and the latter are usually aligned to the employees' actual responsibilities. This incongruence to the day-to-day operations of the employees culminates to the process being perceived as irrelevant and contributing to the realisation of the organisation goals. The perception further makes the appraisal process seems like a formality. This notion of formality is justified by the fact that interest in appraisal becomes more serious just before the actual evaluation. Therefore, it is not seen as part of the day-to-day exercise.

As Span (2012) maintains, it thus defeats its purpose ,as these main intentions of the individual appraisal are to identify gaps in their performance with the view to assist them to reach their potential. During these performance appraisals, individuals are given feedback on their performance and interventions suggested on how these gaps in their performance can be bridged. It is not only the individuals' performance that is assessed. The whole organisations are also evaluated and assessed. Several tools as the balanced score card are utilised. The resultant gap analysis fed back to the organisation with view to take measure relating to the achievements of the organisational goals through aligning behaviours, processes and strategy.

2.2.4 Employee perception on cascading goals

Like in the process of shared vision, the development of goals should be done collaboratively. Goals are usually specific and reflective of the values of the organisation. In addition, goals are a vehicle through which the movement towards the vision is realised. In order to take the correct direction, the goals assist in further clarifying the exact course of action. This exercise entails development of individual and team goals. Rick (2011) further maintains that employees in an organisation are eager to be of part of the future. The inclusion in decision-making is the motivation that employees require is to be part of the ambition of the organisation.

Boedker *et al.* (2010) maintain that the participation of the employees in the decision making process ensures that knowledge is shared and is transmitted to all directions of the organisation. The responsibility of production services is then shared among the whole labour force. The employees will the view this access to the knowledge as the need to create commitment among them to put extra effort to contribute towards the attainment of the organisational goals. The sense of ownership and pride of being part of decision making process is the driving force towards the attainment of the organisational goals. New service ideas are developed due to the stimulus prompted by the participation in decision making. Autonomy emanating from trust by management that certain decisions can be taken prompts maximisation of the use employee skills.

2.2.5 Employee perception on investing on talent

Span (2012) maintains that the biggest assets of an organisation are its people. The endeavour to attain and sustain high performance culture relies on the manner an organisation recruit, train, socialise and retain people on the way of doing things. Therefore, it is vital that all employees are given a platform to contribute to the betterment of the cultural environment. In instances where employees' views are valued, the employees become motivated culminating into a committed workforce. Productivity improves to the highest level as the

workforce view the working environment as conducive. This culture confirms that the effectiveness of organisations depends on the level of satisfaction of its employees. Once employees have embraced the organisational culture, the execution of the strategy becomes simplified.

In a study done by the CIPD (2010) employees' perception on talent management was that workers are of the view that the ownership of their careers and the management of their development is their own responsibility. Albeit that is the case, the senior management support and the sponsorship for talent initiatives are viewed as important. In the same study, there are several lessons on perceived talent management that have been drawn like the fact the employees value coaching and mentoring more than formal training; there is an increased perceived value of the talent development programme resulting from the organisation having a selection process; the organisation benefits out of top employees finish the talent programme and the perceptions of the talent programme are also affected by inconsistent support across line functions.

Blackmore and Marenghi (2009) contend that it is the responsibility of the organisation to identify the skills gaps and risks relating to the talent. The review of talent in the organisation assists in the assessment of the recruitment process, staff transfer and in the succession plan. In order to properly manage talent, it should be clearly understood where talent gaps are and put measures in place to address them.

2.2.6 Employee Perceptions on Recognition and rewards

Zakaria, Hussin, Noordin, Sawal and Zakaria (2011) contend that communication and complexity are two characteristics of reward practice on which employees' perceptions depends. A clear communication on the distribution rewards is a transparent way of informing employees on the distribution of rewards. The perceived uncertainties make the incentive system ineffective. A clear articulation of the link between the reward system and realisation of the objectives of the organisation must be clarified. The importance of positive perception cannot be overemphasised. Span's (2012) assertion is that excellent performance must be rewarded. Organisations have to create

incentive programmes to recognise the human capital. Incentives and rewards have the propensity to motivate further and result in continued excellent results. It is not only monetary rewards that motivate people. The fact that an individual is valued and appreciated serves as a motivator. Leadership is expected to understand its employees' needs in term of motivation and satisfaction. Inclusion of employees' programmes for capacity building could be one reward that is appreciated by the subordinates.

Rick (2011) advocates for accountability and results be linked to incentives. An objective criterion is used by the managers in the engagement of employee in the process of allocation of rewards.

2.2.7 Perceived Manager Accountability

Kontakos (2007) contends that the reliability and the predictability of behaviour of the manager as perceived by the employee determine the level of trust. Trust is built from integrity and it is important that the relationship between the managers be built on trust as it has an impact on the employees' performance. In addition, in instances where trust is improved there is a perception of reduced employment threat. Kontakos (2007) further asserts that improved productivity and morale result from perceived taking care of the employees by the management. Stephen, Dowdy, Van Reenen and Rippin (2005) argue that management skill, style and methods are factors contributing to good management rather that the number of hours put on the work. Organisations that have characteristics of better managed institutions indicate that manager's work smarter rather than harder. Some of the facets that contribute to smarter management are introduction of best practices, fostering adaptability, involvement of staff in decision making and the flexible working environment.

2.2.8 Perception in Employee engagement

Alfes Truss, Soanne, Rees and Gatenby (2010) contend that employee engagement entails the work meaningfulness; voice being heard; the work environment being supportive; the person fitting in the job; the immediate supervisor style of management and the vision and communication of senior management.

Kontakos (2007) argues that the engagement levels are greatly affected by the perception of the employees. In order to increase the level of employment engagement the employees' perception of support they receive from the organisation should be strengthened. Saks as quoted Kontakos (2007) adds to this assertion by emphasising the importance of perception in that perception forms at the beginning of the employer employee during the application phase. Thomas Harburg, and Dutra (2007) contend that one aspect of perception that needs to be managed is employees' perception of diversity. Involvement of employees in decision making increases the sense of ownership and improves perception. Employees feel emotionally connected to the organisation. Changing the way people think is the route the leadership should take to inculcate the culture of high performance. Rice (2007) supports the notion that a culture of emotional connection enhances organisational effectiveness in that employees identify with the organisation. Feeling emotionally part of the organisation increases commitment to the results and culminates to the realisation of the goals of the organisation. Emotional connection creates an organisational climate conducive for effective performance.

Josserand, Teo, and Clog's (2006) assertion that "It would also appear that history weighs heavily when trying to change the characteristics of well-established roles and routines..." In post-bureaucracy, discourse indicates that there is much effort to eliminate the entrenched past routines. Employees are in favour of a flat structure as it expedite decision making. The fact that the decisions are taken at the local level increases the turnaround time enhances organisational effectiveness. The culture of devolvement of power structure to lower organisational structure through decentralisation of the organisation functions and activities increases the pace at the workplace.

Employee engagement in high performance culture also promotes risk taking and innovation. This environment makes the employees to be free to come up with new ideas. It is not only the top leadership that has to bring ideas to the organisation the culture prevalent. The subordinates have the opportunity to contribute (Rice, 2007). This assertion is enhanced by Wirth's (2006) view that one of the barriers for high performance is the negative attitude towards risk

taking and change. Leadership of organisations are sceptical of change because of comfort zones in the status quo. With the emergence of the knowledge economy and the easy access to best practices culminating in continuous improvements to the organisation effectiveness is frustrated. While change is important for the organisational renewal, Thomas, et *al*. (2007) warns that organisations must know exactly which of the current practices and habits in their high performance culture should be preserved from those that must be jettisoned.

Internally generated information is taken seriously. In case there is a need from the opinions advanced by the workforce new workplace processes can be implemented. The employees appreciate their innovative ideas being implemented. For such ideas to be accepted organisations put in place procedures to be followed with the view assess and respond to the proposed ideas (Boedker *et al*., 2010).

Chapter 3

Research methodology and data collection

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted qualitative descriptive research approach. The reason for the choice of this design is informed by Sandelowski's (2000) assertion where the method is described as the most appropriate and amenable in finding answers relevant to questions from policy makers. Bryman (2012) describes qualitative research strategy as an approach that in the process of collecting and analysing data puts more emphasis on words rather than quantification of data. This strategy enables the researcher to capture the impressions held by the participants of their experiences in DCSR. This method is appropriate for this specific study because it uses the naturalistic and inductive way in its endeavour to understand the phenomenon. The world of the participants is understood as they articulate the phenomenon in their own words**.**

3.2 Research Method

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with individuals in the department. Employees of the Mpumalanga DCSR are the unit of analysis for this study. With the semi-structured interviews, the researcher was able to probe and venture to other topics as they come. Follow-up questions were also asked for further clarification. A tape recorder will be utilised with the consent of the interviewee.

3.3 Selection of the relevant site and participants

Elliot and Timulak (2005) emphasise the fact that the qualitative research endeavours to sample as broad as possible and makes sure it captures important aspects in a deep interview. The discourse is that whether the number is eight or 100, the depth of the interview is important in qualitative descriptive research. Bryman (2012) contends that the generic purposive sampling method will be employed. In this type of sampling, criteria for the selection of individuals are construed priori. The research question informs the criteria to be employed in the sampling. In the generic purposive sampling, individuals are identified based on the cases to be addressed in the research question. The researcher

will select people to be interviewed based on their appropriateness in relation to the research question. This notion is echoed by Leedy and Ormrod (2005) who object to be selected for the topic under investigation are those that yield most of the information. Based on the former assertion, only officials in middle cohort were identified as participants.

The Public Service structure has level 1 to Level 16. The eight participants were from level 6 to 12. The number of participants was eight, two from head office and two from each of the three District Offices. Four of the participants were male and the other four female. Although programmes were not in the criterion, participants were identified from the four programmes of the department. This was done to be as inclusive and representative as possible. All the participants are the permanent employees of the department. In selecting participants, the employees willing to participate in face-to-face interviews were also considered. In order to ensure that participants understand the department, only employees with more than five years were selected. The study purposely omitted employees at the senior management level as the researcher is of the opinion that their participation will be bias as the study of performance culture focuses mainly on management practices for which they are responsible. It is because of the in-depth nature of the investigation that a small selective sample was used.

3.4 Data collection

A qualitative study was employed. Semi-structured interviewees were conducted. In order to ensure that the interviews are productive, suggestions made by Leedy and Ormrod (2005) such as ensuring that in conversations, questions asked are related to the research question and not drifting to the wrong direction; making sure that participants chosen are representative of the population; conduct interviews at a quiet place without distractions; get prior consent from the participant to be interviewed and further explain the nature of the study and the use of the results; make sure that information is gained without revealing the researchers' perspective; be practical when asking questions, responses be recorded verbatim; all responses should be treated as perception rather facts and the researcher should reveal her reaction to responses.

The researcher developed eight open-ended questions related to the main research questions and the themes identified in the literature review. Eight interviews of the estimated length of between 20 to 30 minutes were conducted. Participants received invitations to participate in person. Furthermore, participants were asked the same questions although not in the same order. The estimated length of the interview depended on responses of the individual participant. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with all the participants. A tape recorder was used for recording of the interview. The recording ensured that the responses of the participants were captured as they are. Consent was requested participant for the interview to be recorded. Most importantly, participants were assured confidentiality of the content of the interview.

Laforest (2009) argues that semi-structured interviews are preferred because they make the interviewer appear competent as they are prepared in advance; the Interviewees are able to freely express their views; two-way communications is encouraged; enables the researcher to obtain both answers and reasons for the responses and provides an opportunity for reliable and competent data.

3.5 Reliability

Lacey and Luff (2001) contend that in order to indicate to the reader that that the methods used are consistent and are reproducible consideration of facets such as the description of the data analysis approach and procedure employed in the study; justification of their appropriateness in the study; a clearly documented way of themes generation from the data and the reference to previous studies and external data to test the final analysis to be appropriate are employed.

3.6 Validity

The validity of the findings will be judged based on the analysis being consistent with that of other researchers; the level of representation of all relevant views and the utilisation of the original data in the final analysis (Lacey and Luff 2001).

3.7 Limitation of the Study

The results of a qualitative study are not necessarily generalised to the whole population. The researcher is an employee of the DSCR that is the subject of the

study. Therefore, the fact that the researcher is an employee of the department provides an opportunity for more insight it also could contribute to some form of bias. As the employee of the department, the researcher is familiar with participants. Consequently, some participants expressed some fear of reprisal about their expressed views.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The interviewees were informed of the confidentiality of the information and records; anonymity of their identity; voluntary informed consent; that there will be no harm to the participant and further that permission will be sought for the study.

Permission was sought and obtained from the Accounting Officer of the DCSR in the Mpumalanga Province prior to conducting research in the institution. Each individual interviewed was formally requested to be part of the study and be assured of his or her rights in participating in the interview. The participants consented through signing consent letters to be part of the study.

3.9 Analysis

In the analysis of data, several stages as articulated by Lacey and Luff (2001) were employed.

3.9.1 Transcription

As a tape recorder was used during the interviews, it will be appropriate to transcribe the information. The researcher transcribed all the eight interviews. Doing own transcription also reduced mistakes in technical terms, spelling, names and acronyms as the researcher is familiar with the environment.

3.9.2 Organising data

The data were reviewed to get rid of items that will hinder the confidentiality of the participant in terms gender, names and any other identifying items. Data will be then be organised into sections and be numbered. Data were organised such that their original source is not lost. Large texts are broken down small paragraphs.

3.9.3 Familiarisation

In this stage, the researcher ensured the he is familiar with data by listening to the tapes and reading the data. The fact that the researcher did his own transcription assisted him to have greater familiarity and gain more insight.

3.9.4 Coding

This research uses priori concepts emanating from the literature. Concepts from the literature had been used as headings during the process of coding.

3.9.5 Themes

The likelihood is that concepts identified earlier in the research emerge as the themes from the data.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

The findings of this study emerges as six main themes on perceptions, namely; leadership, shared vision and mission, goal orientation, employee engagement, people management and the performance management and how these factors influence employee perception on the performance culture.

4.1 Leadership

In dealing with the aspect of leadership the research is centred on a range of subthemes that highlight this concept. Interviewees were requested give an account of their perceptions in relation to leaders inspiring them to move towards a certain direction, the leadership style of the department and leaders leading by example.

Leadership inspiring employees

All participants with the exception of two responded in the negative when asked whether the leadership in the department inspired employees. Two of those responded negatively are of the opinion that there is some form of dictatorship in the department. They are of the view that there are no consultations amongst the leadership itself to an extent that there is too much fear. Perceptions of dictatorship are echoed by a disgruntled interviewee by saying that:

> "*I think leadership must engage all employees than to use iron fist as others are leading without teaching the employees of what it is that is expected of them. Some employees do not know what is expected of them"* (Interviewee 3).

Three Interviewees have a strong view that the leadership itself is lost and does not have direction. These sentiments were substantiated in one articulation that

> "*I don't think they are very specific and are planning. Its only haphazard things that happen in the Department. Meaning if there is a program they can just get you by the corridor and give it to you to do it. It does not happen that they seat you down"* (Interviewee 5).

These views were also echoed by another interviewee in that:

> "Some *information that one cannot access you get it on the passages or by hearsays. You will hear about certain information from the managers whether program managers or whoever in the department so in the corridors. You will hear gossips maybe one will take it as true reflection of what is happening in the department whereas maybe it is not like that if we were transparent enough the leaders or the leaders were transparent enough I think things were going to be better and one would see herself being far with the information or whatever is happening in the department"* (Interviewee 8).

One interviewee indicated that there is some inspiring by the leadership. However, there is some work to be done. The employee had the following to say on what the leadership should do to give direction:

> "*When we come back from our strategic planning sessions go down and communicate the information to our employee. Ensure that we align our goals to the operational plan and explain each and every detail on what we are trying to do as the Department. Even a cleaner at a lower level must understand that the department wants to understand 1, 2, and 3. So that is not happening at this stage. Only a few managers are doing that we need to make sure that all managers cascade the information at the lower level*"(Interviewee 4).

Adding more effort by the leadership to inspire employees is also supported by the view that:

> "*not in all cases are official aware of what is expected of them. Some of them don't. And when somebody come to them and says you should have been going this direction. I believe that leaders could explain it more and leaders should interact more. Leadership should have interaction with officials. It doesn't happen. So that they the leadership could not be seen as a monster instead of someone moving towards a certain goal*" (Interviewee 7).

Only two interviewees think that leadership inspire employees. Reasons attributed are that the department convenes strategic planning meeting quarterly wherein all

managers engage in discussions on medium-term strategic framework and annual performance plans. The view is that employees that are not part of the strategic plan are given direction through the processes of performance management and development system. That being the case, the interviewee further indicated that the challenge emerges when there is reprioritisation in the department that it is not shared because it is given through a short notice and it is expected to be implemented on the ground.

The leadership style of the department

Only one interviewee has a favourable experience of the leadership style of the department and believes that the style is reasonably effective with a use of both the autocratic and the democratic leadership styles applied in situations whenever necessary. This sentiment further indicates that the department adheres to principles of good governance in there are ruled laid down and the leadership is made to account on their action and further that the line function of the department is very clear and respected.

The rest of the interviewees think there is poor leadership and the system is autocratic. Now maybe this thing will stabilise gradually but now there is no direction. These unfavourable experiences are attributed to the fact that there is a perception that the leadership of the department are scared of raising their views and concerns as employees are being moved from one department to another (Interviewee 2). One interviewee summarised the situation as

> "*not satisfying because most information is not communicated properly. There is fear of management by the junior officials than respect"* (Interviewee 3).

One interviewee believes that about 70% of the employees in the department have an unfavourable view about the leadership style of the department. Furthermore, the system is such that persons with qualities are frustrated and culminate in succumbing to pull her down syndrome. To support this view one Interviewee lamented that:

"*It is not satisfactory because we have some leaders like you will compare yourself with such a manager you will find that maybe you are much better or apply things better than that person you will not understand how that person was appointed in that position because that manager will use his own style of leading people or doing things in the department. I don't think it appropriate*" (Interviewee 8).

Leaders leading by example

The interviewees gave mixed views on the leaders leading by example. One interviewee summed up the articulation in that:

"*to a certain extent yes. There are some managers where you can point and say these particular managers are giving a clear direction to their officials. However there is no evidence that all managers are doing that but other managers are doing it*" (Interviewee 4).

One participant's negative view speaks out that only 20% lead by example and are not and claims that it is the reason the department is not achieving its goals. The other unfavourable response claims that the failure of the leadership to lead by example frustrates employees, as they do not know exactly what to do and how things should be done.

The other positive responses from the employees are of the opinion that the leadership advises them on what is expected of them and they walk the talk.

4.2 Shared Vision, Mission

On shared vision and mission, the interviewees were probed on their experiences in terms of communication of the vision and mission by the leadership; on whether employees know the vision and mission; the involvement of officials in the crafting; development and the adoption of the vision; the meaning of the vision; the importance of the vision and mission of the Department and the application of the vision and mission at the workplace.

Communication of the vision and mission

All the interviewees are of the opinion that the vision is not adequately communicated to the employees of the department. The view is that the vision and

mission of the department is only shared at platforms such as strategic planning where only senior, middle and junior managers are invited to be part. Interviewees argue that if a survey could be done to determine the number of officials that are aware of the vision and mission of the department in the three district offices and the head office, only a small percentage will be able to articulate what the vision and the mission entails.

Although the department adopted a new vision and mission in 2015, several interviewees claimed to have known of the new one by incident. There is lamentation that:

> "*We have just discovered that we have a new mission last week so were not aware and we told that it has been gazetted (adopted) but it was for the first time we discovered that when we attended a (EDP) class. It was not only me I think 90% of the people who attended there"* (Interviewee 3).

Emphasis is put on the seriousness of this anomaly in that

"*Most of us there were assistant directors. If assistant directors are not aware then it's a disaster… We did not know that we have a new vision and mission"* (Interviewee 2).

The rest of the interviewees' concern is that although the junior and middle managers ended up being aware of the vision and mission of the department, this does not cascade in the proper way. As a result, the coalface remains blank on the changes.

Although the vision and the mission are revised every five years, interviewees feel the changes take place now and then. They rant that the knowledge of the vision and the mission is the privilege of the senior and the top management of the department.

Involvement of the employees in the crafting, development and adoption of the vision

There is consensus among the interviewees that in the crafting, development and the adoption of the new 2015-2019 vision and the mission the officials of the department were not involved in the process. The view is that the process was not

transparent as even in the strategic planning meeting officials were not given an opportunity to make input. The perception amongst interviewees is that only the Chief Directors and the Head of Department (Top management) were involved in the formulation of the new vision. Interviewees' sentiment is that the process could have unfolded with all officials given an opportunity to make inputs through the distribution of the draft documents before the strategic management planning session. Such exercise would have enabled all officials to make valuable contribution and be part of the process. One concerned voice sums up the involvement by saying:

> "*My view is that employees at the operational level may assist the department to move forwards because they work directly with our clients. So at this stage I think we not doing that*" (Interviewee 7).

One Interviewee laments that in their instance as a committee they learnt of the new vision when they were crafting a document to be submitted to a stakeholder. They were embarrassed, as they had to get assistance from a senior manager.

The meaning of the mission on the department

Almost all interviewees reported to be aware of the meaning of the vision of the department in that it is linked to the national prerogatives as articulated in the National Development Plan and the Medium Term Strategic Framework Outcome 14 that as a department dealing with the arts, culture, heritage, libraries and sport are focus area directed towards social cohesion and nation building. The ultimate vision is the integration of all people of the province towards a socially cohesive nation. It is on this articulation that one interviewee feels that all about:

> "*social cohesion bringing people of all races together. Our programmes should talk to social cohesion"* (Interviewee 2).

In the process of realising the meaning of the vision, interviewees suggested that there is a need to establish machinery that is capacitated on how to achieve that vision.

Only one indicated that the meaning of the vision is unclear and there is a need to be trained. The concern went further to indicate that if the meaning is not

understood at the level of management and supervisors, the challenge might be worse at the lower levels.

Application of the vision and mission at the workplace

When asked about the application of the vision and the mission of the department, different views emerged among the interviewees. Two interviewees indicated that the vision of the department is applied as it informs the work to be performed by the officials because it is the basis of the Annual Performance Plan. Included in the APP are the goals and objectives that are shared with the officials. Workshops are conducted with the officials to ensure that their activities are in tandem with the vision of the department. When officials do their jobs, they are guided by the strategic objective derived from the vision and translated to the Annual Performance Plan.

The rest of the interviewees maintain that there were neither consultation nor communication about the vision and hence in their opinion it is not applied. The feeling is that the ideal situation is that the leadership of the department should come up with a plan to cascading it to all the employees at the grassroots level. Currently, there is a prevalent gap in terms of the application of the vision and mission by the employees.

The importance of the vision and mission of the Department

There is consensus on the importance of the vision and mission of the department. The importance of the vision and mission was described by all the interviewees to include the following:

- Ensure the alignment of the APP to the strategic objectives of the Department;
- Contributes to the realisation of the NDP;
- Give us direction and ensure that the Department is in line with its mandate as encapsulated in the Outcome 14 of the MTSF;
- Determines the deliverables of the Department;
- Defines the stakeholders; and

- Define resources required to delivers the mandate.

4.3 Goal Orientation

In this section, interviewees were asked whether they felt the department is making sure goals are known to employees; employees are involved in the formulation of goals and the departmental goals result in team and individual goals.

Making sure goals of the department are known

In response to the question on whether the management ensures that the goals of the department, all but one interviewee said: "*Yes, but* …" answer. Two interviewees contend that in the district office, it only happens through workshops only when officials from head office are invited to avail themselves. They opine that only 20% of the employees are aware of the goals of the department. (Interviewee 2, 3)

An interviewee argues that the prevalent feeling is that the

> *"cascading the strategic goals of the department or the objectives of the department the information in limited to the senior management up to middle management. There is some concerns that at the lower level employees are really not aware what the department is all about what they are working towards the holistic goals"* (Interviewee 4).

However, an interviewee with a positive experience contends that the reason that the goals are known is that being part of the management enabled her to be aware of the goals of the department. The goals are then cascaded to the 12 officials in the section under her supervision.

It is only one interviewee was unambiguously that asserted that:

> "the *goals of the Department are reflected in the Annual Performance Plan of the Department. Like I said those plans are shared. Managers have an obligation to share those plans. Those plans are shared. The officials are very clear in the Key Performance Areas and the Key Performance Indicators". What is it that they are doing day to day and where it is that they are moving and what is it that they are achieving in the communities that they are working "* (Interviewee 1)?

Involvement of employees in the formulation of goals

The response was unanimous among interviewees that it is the management that is only involved in the formulation of the goals of the department. The consensus is that only employees from the Assistant Director to the Head of Department are involved in the formulation of the goals of the department. From level one to level eight, officials are not part of the process. The majority of the officials are excluded from the process. The exclusion created a perception that the goals are imposed. One interviewee maintains that the situation is made worse by the fact that managers involved in the process do not cascade goals formulated at the strategic planning session to the coalface (Interviewee 7).

The general feeling is that the process should entail the distribution of draft documents to all employees of the department before the strategic planning. The inputs from the officials be consolidated and presented to the strategic planning session. As officials are at the grassroots and responsible for the implementation, their involvement in the formulation of the goals of the department will improve better understanding of what is required for each and every employee.

Departmental goals resulting in team and individual goals

When questioned whether departmental goals are translated into team and individual goals, there were mixed responses. Four interviewees indicated that the goals of the individuals are linked to the team goals and in line with goals of the department. In support of this view, several Interviewees indicated that in programme 2 and 4, all officials meet at the beginning of the financial year and discuss all the milestones of the team for that particular team (Interviewee 2, 6, 7, 8).

One interviewee further emphasised that:

> "*On departmental goals resulting in team and individual goals. Yes specifically because we work together even if you are in your (own) corner (in) your municipality, there is a specific group of things that you have to do to achieve the*

goals. We have team goals and individual you have to go out and do" Interviewee 7.

In opposing these views one interviewee strongly contends that:

"*Individually we are here to work. There is no team in the department. It is all about I. The current operation in the department it is all about it is for me and me myself only. The formulation of teams the issue of saying somebody will back me up is not there*" (Interviewee 5).

An interviewee agrees with this contention in:

"*that is where the disjuncture is. At this stage, we are looking at an individual not a team. As soon as we start looking at the team, we will able to assist the Department overall to achieve in terms of the objectives. So we are not only assisting an individual but we are also assisting the Department"* (Interviewee 4).

4.4 Employee Engagement

Employees' voices being heard

It is interesting to note that two interviewees believe that employees' voices are heard in the department. This interviewee opines that the employees are given a platform to air their views through their union representatives. Although this was not the case in the past, however, in the past four years employees have been made aware of their rights through the workshops conducted by the labour relations officer. Another interviewee reports that they make their voices to be heard through their shop stewards and therefore, supports this articulation.

The rest of the interviewees' assertion is that there is no or limited platform for employees to air their opinions. One interviewee's concern is that:

" *although decisions are taken collectively at the level of the strategic planning, top management changes the decisions of the majority and agreements are not implemented*" (Interviewee 2).

In support, another interviewee laments that although there were suggestion boxes where employees are encouraged to place their views, no one bothers to consider such suggestions (Interviewee 7).

Officials are left to survive on their own even when they need support on their physical and emotional well-being. Employee assistance programmes do not exist. Furthermore, staff meetings are not convened to create platforms for exchange of ideas. The thinking is that the decision process excludes employees and

> "*whenever there is something you hear things on the corridors also expresses the absence of the platform to communicate*. *Things are being implemented without any communication". You do not know even what you are expected to do*" (Interviewee 3).

Most of the interviewees believe that involvement in decision-making is privileged to those that have the opportunity to seat in management meetings. Employees at levels below the management level are not afforded the opportunity to make contributions in the decision making. Interviewee 5 believes only influential employees and those close to the management are listened to in the department. Another view also supports this narrative in that there is no open door policy in the department.

> "*Employees air their views among themselves. It is only those with guts that will walk into a senior manager's office and say what they think*" (Interviewee 7).

On the supportive environment

Employees in this instance were asked whether they feel the environment in which they operate is supportive to their day-to-day activities. There were mixed reactions from the interviewees. Interestingly, even those with positive responses still identified some challenges. Factors contributing in limiting the environment to be supportive were identified as follows:

- The moratorium on the appointment of the new staff in the funded vacant posts results in available human resources being overstretched. (Interviewee 1).

- Budgetary constraints emanating from the shrinking allocations in voted funds limits resource allocation and inhibit service delivery (Interviewee 1).
- Leadership style has led to fear of the unknown and resulted in employees being frustrated. Some employees report to the office and sit the whole doing nothing as they do not know what is expected of them (Interviewee 2,3,5).
- There are systems and policies in government designed with the intention to be positive. However, the implementation of these prescripts is a real challenge. A lot of improvement is required to assist the process. (Interviewee 4).
- Safety is another facet to be addressed. Some officials more especially field workers are expected to perform duties late in the evening far from home without being provided accommodation. In some instance have to travel long distance during the night thus putting their life at risk. (Interviewee 8).

These factors resulting in the working environment being perceived as being not support have a detrimental effect on performance. One interviewee captures the discontent as follows:

> "*People are now developing a thick skin saying you know what I am here because of my kids. And there is nothing that I can do I don't have another option. People are just frustrated. Like this morning when we got into the lift we were plus minus six in the lift somebody uttered that we are going into that devil environment again. It shows that people are not really happy*" (Interviewee 5).

On emotional attachment

When interviewees were asked about whether employees are emotionally attached to the department the response was positive to a certain extent. The positive response was accompanied about some concerns.

All interviewees, with the exception of one, opine that most of the employees are committed towards the realisation of the goals of the department. Their commitment is attributed to the fact that most of the employees have been with the department

for more than 50 years. These employees are even to prepared to work on weekends and after hours as the nature of the department requires that some of the activities and services be rendered outside normal working hours. One interviewee sums it up by saying:

> "*To do that you must be emotionally attached to the promotion of sport, to the promotion of recreation, to the promotion of cultural activities, to the promotion of arts and library activities"* (Interviewee 1).

The concern by the one of the interviewees is that lately, the department no longer cares about the employees' well-being and as such, the level of emotional attachment has deteriorated to an extent that work is just for putting something on the table (Interviewee 8).

4.5 Best employees being recruited, trained and retained

Recruitment

Although all the interviewees are of the view that there are systems in place to attract the best employees in terms of adverts being placed on national newspapers and are transparent, there seems to be perceived shortcomings in the processes leading to the selection of new officials to be appointed. Interviewees lamented about the following challenges:

- Appointment of persons with qualifications not adequately appropriate to skill required for the post (Interviewee 5).
- Cadre deployment culminates in employment of person without the requisite skills to implement the vision of the department (Interviewee 2).
- A single interview being used as criteria to determine the suitability of an individual for the advertised post. This practice disregards the prior knowledge and experience that the employees have accumulated over the years. Some applicants excel in the oral interview and lack practical experience. However, they will emerge victorious in the interviews and lack the know how in terms of the implementation (Interviewee 7).

Training

In terms of training, participants are unanimous are about the fact that the department has been excelling in the provision of bursaries for the employees. These bursaries are in line with formal studies in with the career path of the employee. However, there are anomalies in terms of skills programmes empower employees in their fields of operation. Some of the identified challenges include:

- Employees allege not to have been made aware of the criteria used to allocate bursaries (Interviewee 2, 3).
- The process as dictated by the PMDS policy of consolidation of all employees Personal Development Plan (PDP) into a Departmental Skills Development Plan that is in line with the skills gaps as identified during the performance review process is not in place. The Skills Development Committee to deal with these challenges has not been appointed (Interviewee 4).
- The amount allocated for training in the department in terms of the Skills Development Levy (SDL) is insufficient to address the training needs. It is the SETA grant that assists to augment funding for the training of the employees in the department (Interviewee 5).

Retention

All interviewees concur that there is no retention strategy in the department. The department has experienced a high turnover of employees in the form of resignations as they are attracted to greener pastures elsewhere. Interviewee 1 contends that despite the skills flight, there is only one counter offer he is aware of in the past 15 years. There is no willpower in the department to manage talent. One interviewee contends that the situation is so serious to such an extent that many employees suffer from burnout (Interviewee 3).

There is nothing like that in the department; instead people are being pushed away. It also makes people to be demoralised and leave the department.

One of the interviewees indicated that although there are serious challenges in retaining staff, the process of crafting the retention strategy has commenced. The processes of consultations on the draft retention strategy are under way. It is expected that once the retention strategy has been finalised, the number of employees leaving the department will be reduced.

4.6 Performance Management

KPA and KPIs aligned to the employees' actual responsibilities.

All the interviewees are of the view that there is a concerted effort to ensure that there is link in KPAs, KPIs. Annual Performance Plan that culminates in alignment with employees' actual responsibilities. The department convenes workshops at the beginning of the financial year in April of each year in attempt to assist the process to unfold. The process is usually having challenges such as the use of the appropriate language to capture the KPAs and the KPIs. The workshops are conducted by the HRD section that is not well conversant with the subject matter of all the programmes of the department. The absence of the senior managers for specific programme in the department as subject matter specialists in these workshops compromises the quality of these sessions.

One interviewee concern is that with the moratorium in the filling of the vacant posts and secondment of other officials who take responsibilities. The challenge manifests itself in employees' allocated functions not related to their field of specialisation. The additional tasks allocated to officially fill the gaps complicate the process of the

alignment of the KPAs and the KPIs to the actual responsibilities. Furthermore, the interviewee further alluded to instances where the officials are allocated responsibilities to do their own duties and also assist in work above their level of appointment. The shortage of manpower leads to certain employees' allocated responsibilities not related to their appointment. An example cited by one interviewee is employees employed as groundsmen but because of the shortage of drivers the department utilises them as drivers. The additional responsibility has then to be factored in to make the alignment fair.

Other concerns raised by the interviewees are that the lack of understanding of the vision and the mission creates difficulties in employees understanding their actual responsibilities, the restrictive nature in the manner in which the KPAs and KPIs are crafted and captures. Interviewees in the Sports section feel that there are responsibilities that are not in the APP and obviously excluded from the KPAs and the KPIs that they have to execute and such employees are not acknowledged as achievements during the assessments. There other concern is the allocation of responsibilities with no funding.

O**fficials given feedback during performance review**

There is no common understanding on the types of feedback to be given to the employees on the feedback on performance assessments. The PMDS policy requires that there be feedback during the quarterly performances reviews between the employee and the immediate supervisor. Most importantly, feedback is also expected from the first level quarterly moderation at the District or Chief Directorate level as well as annual feedback from the moderation body at departmental level.

Only two interviewees are aware of feedback being given to officials after the performance review. The perception is that feedback is given when employees are rewarded with incentives. One interviewee alleged that the only time employees are given feedback is when they are accused of failing to achieve as reflected in the auditor's report (Interviewee 2). Another interviewee substantiates this sentiment in that during the processes of MPAT, they were caused to provide evidence on acknowledgement of good performance and the means of verification on remedial action for under achievement and it emanated that such information is not recorded (Interviewee 4). This was an indication that feedback is not given to the employees

after the performance review. Lack of understanding of the process makes employees to put the blame by the HRD.

Two interviewees emphasised that the process requires the supervisor to give feedback to the employee during the performance review. During the review session, the supervisor should either acknowledge good performance or come up with remedial action in instances where targets have not been reached. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of the sectional heads to provide feedback to employees in their areas of responsibility.

Interventions on gaps identified during the assessment

Only one interviewee is aware of the interventions put in place to address gaps identified during the performance. In the view of this interviewee, it is rare that employees are not able to achieve what is expected of them. In an instance there are such employees, they are assisted in terms of the compilation of the performance assessment or such employees are encouraged to attend training in the fields identified as needing improvement (Interviewee 1). The interviewee further maintains that in instances where the situation is serious, a third party in the form of a colleague or a member of a union is requested to assist. One interviewee also suggested that interventions could also be in the form of peers assisting one another. Employees on the same level might not be at level the same level of development and experience. There are instances where one official excel in a certain aspect of work and in such cases those who have experience could be requested to assist those that lag behind to catch up.

The rest of the interviewees hold a different view in that after the review on what is achieved in relation to the expected output, there are no plans put in place to assist the employee to improve the performance. Although there are skills development programmes arranged by the department, attendance of these training programmes is not prioritised for the employees identified as poor performers (Interviewees 2-8). One interviewee reckons it is the responsibility of the senior managers to assist or assign employees who are subject matter specialists to intervene. The main challenge identified by the interviewees is that although the PMDS policy requires

that employees with challenges with achievement of their targets be assisted with interventions the focus is on incentives. Interviewee 8 lamented that:

> "*There are no feedbacks. If there was feedback the gap will be closed. The wrongs and the right will be corrected"* (Interviewee 8).

Challenges experienced during performance assessment

It is interesting that all interviewees concurred that there have negative experiences in the process employee performance assessments. Interviewees cited a number of challenges perceived with the performance assessments:

- During the quarterly performance review, in many instances the employee and the employer do not agree on the awarded rating for the performance under review (Interviewee 3);
- The perception is that the performance assessment is a process culminating to the monetary compensation. Employees are of the opinion that when they are performance review they are entitled to be awarded monetary compensation. (Interviewee 2,3,4,5);
- The feeling that the whole process is subjective. The system is sometimes perceived as plagued by ambiguity. It does not take cognisance of projects and work done allocated during the performance period under review. The system focus on tangible targets and disregards facets of emotional intelligences such as attitudes, empathy and others. (Interviewees 6,7,8);
- Inadequate time allocated for the performance between the employee and the supervisor. Performance reviews are done haphazardly to comply with submission deadlines (Interviewee 1);
- The management perception that the presence of the union representatives in the quarterly and the annual moderation of the performance assessment result in the moderation committee to be coerced into taking decisions that unfairly favour some employees (Interviewee 2);
- In adequate in service training on the performance assessments. (interviewee 2)
- The incongruence among the KPAs, the KPI, the standards of performance expected and the operational plans of the Department. The KPAs, KPIs and the standards are not SMART (Specific Measurable Attainable Realistic and

Timebound). This anomaly results in the employees being not exactly aware of what is expected from them. In instances where employees are not clear in terms of what is to be achieved the process becomes complicated during the performance review. The individual KPAs and KPIs are in line with the operational plan of the department. The linking of the individual KPAs and the KPIs to the operational plan cannot be overemphasised as each employee contributes to the teams outputs that have to be accomplished at the end of each quarter and annually. The rationale attributed to this linking is that if it is done in a correct manner it will ultimately contribute towards the department annual outputs (Interviewees 1,4);

- As employees are expected to receive two forms of feedback quarterly in the form of the performance review between the employee and the supervisor as well as from the quarterly moderation committee where sectional head constitute the committee, in cases where the supervisor is not the sectional head there are chances of the employee not getting the other feedback? (Interviewees 5,7,8);
- The process is also contaminated by the relationship between the employee and the supervisor. In some cases it is used by the supervisors to settle scores (Interviewee 3);
- The employees are required to provide evidence in black and white to support the achievements for the period under review. The difficulty is that in some instance it is unclear for the employees on the relevance and appropriateness of the evidence submitted. The employees are not apprised in advance of the evidence expected of them in advance (Interviewees 6,7,8); and
- The ability to express the achievement in English. Employees with the good command of the language are an advantage as they are able to articulate things that they have done. The language is also used to manipulate the system. The inability to use the language limits those as they are unable to relate the actual output clearly (Interviewee 7).

On rewarding excellent performance

The intention of the interview was to understand the views of the Interviewees on rewarding excellent performance in the Department. All the Interviewees agree that

rewarding excellent performance boost the morale of the employees. One interviewee clearly articulated the importance of rewarding by contending that:

> "*its one way where you can motivate staff to do their job and also to uplift their spirits however we saying it very important that we not focussing on money. Our retention strategy speaks of issues that letters of appreciation and so on. So it must not only be monetary terms. We need to show our appreciation to our employees. To a certain extent it has affected staff morale when we spoke I have indicated the element of objectivity*" (Interviewee 4).

It is interesting that all the interviewees identified challenges with the manner in which excellent performance is rewarded in the department.

There is a view that the implementation of the moderation of the ratings by the moderation body of the department was flawed in the initial years as the managers which are members of the committee had a shortcoming of not understanding the policy themselves (Interviewee1). The perception is that the committee was misinterpreting the policy because it summoned supervisors to justify rating of the employees under their supervision. This practice was unpopular with the employee and the moderation committee was dubbed a grilling committee. Such sessions were considered to be intimidating and unfair as the committee was constituted by the senior managers and the supervisors were junior and middle managers. The fact that some of these senior managers decide the fate of officials to qualify for the incentives in the fields they are not subject matter experts (Interviewee 5).

The other perception advanced is that the number of the employees to qualify to be rewarded for excellent performance is limited to a certain percentage because budgetary constraints. This view leads to the thinking that it is the reason why other employees are excluded (Interviewee 2). One interviewee went further to indicate that the view is accentuated by the fact that the employees known to be excelling in their respective fields have not qualified for the reward for excellent performance. It creates an impression that wrong people are rewarded. Interviewees are also of the opinion that the management of the department is not putting the effort to assist the deserving employees to have their paperwork correct so that they excellent performers receive what they deserve.

One interviewee strongly believes that employees rewarded for excellent performance are those who have supervisors that are “bullies” (Interviewee 5) as they are able to talk. Even if it is evident that the employees under their supervision are legible to be rewarded for excellent performance they force matters. Every year those employees are rewarded for excellent performance even though oversight institutions such as the audit reports and the MPAT reports indicate challenges in terms of performance. It is alleged that in this section about 95% of the employees are annually awarded incentive for excellent annually. In other sections, employees are frustrated and disillusioned by this anomaly as they have realised that other awarding of these incentives is no longer on individuals capabilities (Interviewee 5).This misnomer has confirmed the perception among the employees of the department that for individuals to qualify for incentives they have to be favourites of senior managements.

The other hiccup is that although some employees feel their performance is excellent and deserves to be rewarded in the type of work they do, they have not been guided properly on how motivate their excellent performance on paper. The manner in which they should provide the means of verification as evidence of their excellent performance has also been a challenge (Interviewee 6).

The focus of the department on rewarding excellent performance is on monetary benefit and takes place only once a year. The system does not recognise employees that excel in a specific at a particular time even if it could be in a form of letter or a pat on the back by the management. It encourages employees and boost morale if they could be recognised for excellent performance while it is still fresh. Employee will appreciate any form of appreciation even if it is not a financial reward (Interviewee 7).

Chapter 5

Discussions

In Chapter two, the relationship between the employee perception and the performance culture were discussed in details. It was also indicated how the employee perception impact positively or negatively toward the performance of the organisation. The discussion went to an extent of exploring the relationship between the employee perception and the eight dimension of performance culture emanating from a study by the London School of Economics (Richer, 2007).

The previous chapter explored questions in relation to the dimension on the performance culture of the DCSR in Mpumalanga. The study sought to understand the employee perceptions on performance culture, factors that affect the performance culture in the department and what measure could improve employees' perceptions and culminate to improved performance culture.

In this chapter, the study confirms that the employees' perceptions about the performance culture in the not positive. Only one interviewee consistently reported positive experience, the rest of the interviewees indicated some form of negative experience with one or more facets of the performance culture.

5.1 Leadership

The fact that only two interviewees believe that the leadership style is effective and inspire them towards certain direction is a matter of concern. Inspired employees develop emotional attachment to the organisation. Changing the way people think is the route the leadership should take to inculcate the culture of high performance (Thomas, et *al*., 2007:01). Rice (2007: 2) supports the notion that a culture of emotional connection enhances organisational effectiveness in that employees identify with the organisation. Feeling emotionally part of the organisation increases commitment to the results and culminates in the realisation of the goals of the organisation. Emotional connection creates a healthy organisational climate for effective performance. One interviewee expresses the management style by saying that:

> "*I think our systems are very autocratic at this stage*" (Interviewee 4).

These views are echoed by another interviewee that as follows:

> "*the management of the Department (especially) the top management should have interactions with the officials. It doesn't happen*" (Interviewee 7).

Employees reckon although there is no single leadership style that can be singled out to say is the best, however, the manner in which employees are involved in the decision making process is important. Leadership must inspire the subordinates to have a compelling reason to optimally contribute to the realisation of the goals of the organisation. In order to succeed in this endeavour leadership must get a buy-in from the employees to operate swiftly. Leadership that limits worker participation is likely to face aggression and minimal contribution to the organisational goals.

Wirth (2006:03) supports this assertion by revealing that employees appreciate organisations that encourage them to think and make efforts to get their opinions. They become satisfied for their involvement in the decision making of the organisation. The employees' perceptions improve of their involvement in decision making boost their morale and contribute to the high performance culture. On leading by example Interviewee 5 summed up the feeling:

> *I don't think they lead by example because it really frustrates us as officials and even junior managers because you do not know exactly what is it you should do and how you should do it"* (Interviewee 5).

Employees felt that leaders are expected walk the talk and to talk the walk. The leader should have the ability to manage himself/herself. In pursuance of effective performance culture in an organisation, leadership should reflect best organisational practices. Leaders' contribution to effective performance culture is to be reflective of the vision and the core values of the organisation. Leaders performing below expectations endanger the morale of the employees and impacts negatively on the effectiveness of the organisation. Therefore, it is incumbent on the leadership to commit to behaviour beyond reproach that is geared towards high achievement. The subordinates adore and emulate excellent behaviour from the leadership.

The leadership in the department should take a cue from sentiments are articulated by Roebuck (1999: 26) who argues that leaders must be enthusiastic to provide the foundation for motivated teams. The matching of your words with your deeds cultivates

integrity that strengthens the trust between the leader and team members. Charlton (2000: 62) further suggested that in leading by example, leaders should identify their shortcoming and strength, show the way, take the initiative, be frank, trustworthy and take responsibility. This involves making a diagnosis of improper and unproductive actions and autonomously assumes accountability.

5.2 Shared Vision

In terms of the vision of the department, it is disturbing that only one interviewee thinks it is properly communicated as in any organisation to develop a sense of belonging to the organisation one should share the vision and mission of the organisation. One interviewee refers to the communication of the vision of the Department:

> "*No because currently we have changed the vision and it was only changed by two or three people and it was not cascaded to us officials*" (Interviewee 5).

Harvey and Brown (2001:433) contend that for a vision to be shared, management should acquire buy-in from the employees. Employees will associate themselves with a clear and challenging vision that has meaning for them and will improve service delivery. Moreover, employees who have participated in the formulation of the vision feel they have a stake in the outcome. The congruency of the employee purpose with the vision of the organisation cannot be overemphasized. Participation in the definition of the vision of the organisation builds trust between the management and the employees. The notion by the employees that they are just working for the organisation is detrimental to the attainment of the goals of the organisation. The vision and purpose of the individual should be cultivated such that it is congruent with that of the organisation. This will make members of staff build up a feeling of psychological ownership of the organisation leading to more significance, dedication and responsibility.

The majority of the interviewees' impression is that the fact that the vision has not been communicated might result in employees not having a clear direction. Although the department has a written vision and mission statements, even part of the management has no idea of what it entails. The department is run spontaneously without the leadership setting the direction and providing alignment of the workforce to the structure of the organisation. In this instance, the strategy is not well defined and therefore there is no culture of high performance. A vision gives the organisation a

long-term aim. It motivates and inspires the organisation and gives meaning to the team's day-to-day work. Team members should buy into the vision of the organisation and believe in it so as to enhance performance.

Roebuck (1999: 53) contends that it is often best to decide the vision and mission at a team level, as everyone will be more dedicated to achieve them. The team needs to be involved in making inputs on what to be achieved; when to be achieved, benefits of the vision, human resource requirements and changes in the organisational structure. Interviewees lamented the fact that they were involved in the crafting, development and the adoption of the vision of the department and therefore felt deprived of the opportunity to participate in such a vital exercise of their work. The organisation will also improve if the employees are skilled and involved. The success of the organisation depends on how the wishes of the employees of the organisation can be factored into the vision and mission of the organisation.

5.3 Employee Engagement

According to Boedker *et al*. (2010:52), employees are empowered through participation in the decision making process of the organisation. The participation of the employees in the decision making process ensures that knowledge is shared and transmitted to all directions of the organisation. The responsibility of production of services is then shared among the whole labour force. The employees will then view this access to the knowledge as the need to create commitment among them to put extra effort to contribute towards the attainment of the organisational goals. The sense of ownership and pride of being part of decision making process is the driving force towards the attainment of the organisational goals.

The experience of the interviewees is that decision making in the department predominantly involves the top management. The absence of management meeting for the middle managers, regular directorate meetings, staff meetings and sectional meetings are the manifestation of inadequate employee engagement. Only two interviewees felt that ad hoc meetings with the unions entail communication with the employees although they are also irregular and issues based. The inadequate inclusion of employees in decision making deprives the employees' empowerment opportunities. Empowerment gives employees the power to make decision about their work. Empowerment cultivates a good followership that ensures that the mandate of

the department is carried out with the required responsibility. This process also entails a greater openness of communication and improved conflict resolution that require members of the organisation to develop specialised skills.

It is the view of the interviewees that the participation of the employees in the decision making process will move the department from the tradition of them and us type of a feeling to one of shared vision and goals. Participation in decision making further enhances the common purpose as encapsulated in the vision of the department and also inculcates the feeling of psychological ownership leading to more interest, commitment and responsibility. The employees should be fully involved in the running of the organisation. This will bear fruits because people see that their ideas count resulting in them feeling important to the organisation and their dignity is raised. Employees feel duty bound to ensure the carrying out of decisions made by them and thus are enthused to maximise their efforts in endeavour to succeed.

Harvey and Brown (2001:240) also emphasise the fact that the involvement of employees in decision making should also entail the devolvement of power to the lower levels of the organisation with the intention to improve service delivery. Decentralisation of power to the lower levels of the organisation with clear delegation of powers is one of employee engagements that lead to people developing a sense of pride, self-respect and responsibility. This process makes employees more proactive and feels self-sufficient in helping the department in the attainment of goals. The management's support to this endeavour should create a supportive climate. Coupled with the delegation of duties is the responsibility to take risks as the decision making processes are pushed down to the lowest level of the organisation in pursuit of achievement of excellence by the organisation. This organisational culture culminates in the empowerment of the individual. Employees are encouraged in this set-up to take the initiative and responsibility at levels of the organisation.

In many organisations employee empowerment has become the cornerstone of improved quality of services rendered. Teams in the organisations are caused to come up with service standards and performance. Members of the team become self-regulated and monitor the quality of service in an attempt to ensure the attainment of the minimum standards set by consensus between the management and the respective

teams. There is notion that to increase productivity is by getting people involved and excited about their work (Harvey and Brown, 2001:240).

Another outcry by the interviewees relates to communication:

"*Things are being implemented without any communication*" (Interviewee 3).

The view is that there is irregular, unclear and unreliable communications among managers; workers that constitute poor communications. There is urgent need that the leadership establish a rapport between the employees and the employer. The existing allegation that things just happen without officials being properly informed about the changes necessitates that the communication attribute which is the vehicle to communicate between and among the employees needs to be treated as emergency. The attempt to transform to a high performance culture can be thwarted in case the organisation is not urgently coming with a strategy that promotes the desired communication work culture.

In an attempt to address the communication gaps in the department, Nelson's (1997:103) suggestions can be employed: Every team that submits a suggestion should be engaged by the managers with the view to explore the feasibility of the idea being implemented; create a climate of improvement by encouraging all employees' suggestions; whether they have big or small impact on the organisation; managers should personally speak with every team that submits a suggestion; make it clear that no employee would be penalised as a result of suggestions he or she has made; reward good suggestions by acknowledging them.

5.4 Determine and attain goals collaboratively

It is evident from the interviews that the practice in the department has not been of collaboratively determining and attaining goals with the employees. It emanated that the employees accessed the goals through the distribution of the APP and were not involved from the onset in the determination of such goals. One interviewee describes the status quo:

"A *lot of employees are excluded. Only the management is involved*" (Interviewee 4).

Taffinder (2000:34) recommends that leaders should not make a mistake of taking an impossible role of being the sole individual with the job of creating purpose for the organisation as if they have all the answers. Leaders involve others in extracting data, discussing the way forward and shaping the purpose. Such gesture has the benefit of engaging followers in defining their own future and reduces chances of resistance.

This notion is confirmed by the substantiation by Harvey and Brown (2001:343) that there should be joint participation of the employee and the supervisor in setting the goal. This arrangement attributes to employee keenness that is a crucial element in effective goal setting. Excitement and a positive feeling toward future accomplishment of goals are usually built on past successes of achievement of goals. The participation of employees in goal setting can lead to acceptance of goals. The process of goal formulation and attainment and formulation should translate into action plans developed managers in collaboration with the employees. During the period of performance, the managers provide support in the form of training or provision of additional resources. On completion of the goal, the managers should provide objective feedback on time. Feedback could either be negative or positive. In case of negative feedback, remedial steps are put in place to assist the employee to perform better like further training. Successful individuals in goal attainment feel competent. Achievement of success culminates to pride and higher performance and employees have a clearer role.

5.5 Regular Assessments and Feedback

Organisations with the high performance culture understand that for them to remain successful there has to be continuous measurement of results. Activities are measured against the desired performance. Organisations with high performance management manage individual performances of their employees. On performance and evaluations feedback, Flanagan and Finger (1999) stress that employees want feedback because it helps them to learn about themselves and their performance and the following guidelines should be considered. The fact that interviewees' views on this aspect are that although there are regular assessments there is, however, limited or no feedback at all. Even in few instances where there are claims that there was feedback, there is no means of verification to support the assertion. The failure of the supervisors to provide feedback to the employees contribute in making the process deficient as feedback contributes towards addressing gaps identified during the assessments

session. The feedback is expected to be constructive in that it provides an opportunity to assist the employees unable to reach their set objective for the specified period. Other interventions such as training, mentoring and coaching can be arranged to assist employees struggling with the attainment of the targets. Presently, employees that need assistance in their sphere of employment are found wanting.

5.6 Reward excellent performance

The perception indicates an outcry regarding the favouritism and biasness in the rewarding for excellent performance. The observation is that undeserving employees are also awarded monetary benefits for excellent performance. The fact that even employees in the sections identified by the oversight bodies as underperforming qualify for incentive bonuses is disturbing and indication of loopholes in the implementation of the current incentive scheme of the department.

Employees are not given an opportunity to satisfy their own needs and enabled to motivate themselves at work. Different people are motivated by different things. The only way to know is to be familiar with the employees in your team. It should never be assumed that the things that motivate you are the same things that motivate others. The interviewees moaned that the focus of rewarding excellent performance in the department is on monetary incentives. Other forms of rewards are not taken into consideration. Praise is a good motivator and should be given when someone has made an extra effort, achieved something new or special, helped you out, or in some other way deserves it. However, it is not that just because people are being paid to come to work and do their work because they are paid. It is satisfying to be praised by the manager you respect. It makes all the hard work worthwhile and managers should be encouraged to try and give it to their teams when appropriate. Subordinates appreciate receiving compliments from their boss in front of their colleagues or other public occasion.

5.7 Employ and retain the right people

Selection processes in some organisations are not clearly articulated on the type of skills and competencies required for a particular job. The job description and the job specification fail to clearly articulate the type of person required by the organisation to fill a particular void. Organisational cultural attributes are usually excluded from the job specification during the advertisement of the post. In some instances, the task of

selection of the best candidate to join the organisation is left to the officials at the lower level who might not be conversant with the organisational culture. Thomas, et *al*. (2007:02) put emphasis on the capacity to adapt is an importance of identifying suitable candidates for the job. It should also be mentioned that some organisations have in their employees inadequately skilled or under qualified. Such employees are a misfit to the organisation as their contribution to the development of high performance is limited by their limited capacity.

It is vital to note that the most important asset of any organisation is the human capital it possesses. The recruitment, training and the retention of employees contribute immensely on the success of the organisation. All interviewees were concerned about the high turnover in the department. Such loss also means the erosion of the organisational memory of the department. Although some of the employees can be replaced though the recruitment of new staff, the department lose on all the resources invested in building capacity in those leaving to other institutions.

Chapter 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

The main aim of this study was to establish employees' perceptions on the performance culture in the DCSR. In the literature review, the concepts of employee perception and the performance culture were defined. The London School of Economics eight dimensions model was employed to explore factors affecting the employee perception of the performance culture. The importance of the employees' perceptions on their organisational culture and how they affect the performances of the organisation were also investigated.

6.2 Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the employees have a negative perception on the facets affecting performance culture in the DCSR. Factors contributing to the negative perception as emerged in the findings include following:

- The exclusion of the majority of the employees in the development of the vision and the mission of the department;
- Leadership not giving clear direction to the organisation;
- Lack of buy in into decision taken by the organisation;
- No recruitment, training and retention strategy;
- Exclusion of employees in goal setting;
- Unfair awarding of incentive bonuses to undeserving employees; and
- No or inadequate feedback given to employees after performance assessments.

6.3 Recommendations

- In an endeavour to improve organisational performance, the leadership must improve communication and clarify roles and responsibilities for all the employees;
- The performance management system must be utilised to enhance organisational performance. Make certain that assessments of employee are objective and done consistently. Interventions relevant to address identified gaps are introduced in the form of coaching, mentoring and training;
- Involve employees in goal setting with the view increase a sense of belonging;
- Ensure that individual expectations are line the goals of the organisation;

- Develop a recruitment and retention strategy that is informed by the audited skills and competencies need to address the human capital requirement that assist the department to realise its vision; and
- Ensure that the implementation of the incentives for rewarding excellent performance is fair, transparent for the entire employees.

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APPENDIX A - PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

DCSR 2/2 **MEMORANDUM**

TO : MR. W. S. MNISI
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION

FROM : B. N. MTSWENI
REGIONAL HEAD

DATE : 09 OCTOBER 2015

SUBJECT : REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION BY B.N. MTSWENI FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSE

1. PURPOSE

The purpose is to request the Head of Department give permission to Mr B.N. Mtsweni to conduct research in the department as partial fulfilment for the degree Masters in Management in the field Public and Development Management at the University of Witwatersrand.

2. BACKGROUND

Mr.B.N. Mtsweni was granted a bursary to study Masters in Management in the field Public and Development Management at the University of Witwatersrand by the Department of Culture Sport and Recreation in July 2011. In order to fulfil the requirement sixteen (16) modules have to be completed as well as a Research Report. The applicant has already finished the coursework.

It is on the forgoing that the permission is sought to conduct research in the Department titled ‘Employees perceptions of performance culture within the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation in Mpumalanga’

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Head of Department approves that Mr B.N. Mtsweni conduct research in the Department as partial fulfilment for the degree Masters in Management in the field Public and Development Management at the University of Witwatersrand.

_____ _____

BN Mtsweni Date

Regional Head

Approved / Not Approved

_____

_____ _____

Mr. SW Mnisi Date
Head of Department

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APPENDIX B - Participant Consent Form

EMPLOYEES PERCEPTIONS OF PERFORMANCE CULTURE WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, SPORT AND RECREATION IN MPUMALANGA

I would like to invite you to participate in a research study on employees' perception of performance culture within the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation in Mpumalanga. My name is Bonginkosi Nelson Mtsweni and the data collected in this interview will help me fulfil the requirements for Masters in Management in the field of Public and Development Management at University of Witwatersrand.

Your participation in this study and your responses will keep confidential. Any reference to you will be by pseudonym. In instances that you are not comfortable in responding to a question you may skip the question. It is only the researcher and research supervisor will know who has participated in this study. If you choose to participate in this study it is encouraged you keep your participation confidential. There is no compensation associated with participation in this study beyond the general knowledge that you are assisting in furthering the knowledge related to this research topic.

I _____ hereby acknowledge that prior to the signing of this document the researcher has explained my rights, the requirements to this study, and potential risks involved in participating in this study. By signing below and providing my contact information I am indicating that I consent to participate in this study. I am the employee of the Department of Culture, Sport and Recreation and eligible to participate in this study.

You may withdraw from this study by notifying the researcher.

Name _____ Date _____

Signature_____ Contact No._____

Email Address_____

Thank you for participation

Bonginkosi Nelson Mtsweni Contact No 0845816996 Email bonginkosi@mpg.gov.za

APPENDIX C - THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The Semi Structured Interview Questions

1. Employee Perception on Leaders as champions

- What are your views in your leaders giving you direction in your work?
- Do you think your leaders effectively communicate the vision of the Department?
- In your view is the leadership inspiring employees towards to move towards a certain direction.
- Do you think the leadership leads by example?

2. Employee Perception on the vision and mission of the Department

- Do you think the employees know the mission of the Department?
- In your view are the employees of the Department included in the crafting, development and adoption of the mission?
- Do you think the vision and mission of the Department in applied in the workplace?
- What does the mission of the Department mean to you?
- Do all the employees share the mission of the Department?

- How important is do you feel the mission of the Department to your work

3. Employee Perception on Performance Tracking

- In your opinion are the Key Performance Areas and the Key Performance Indicators aligned to the employees' actual responsibilities.
- During the performance review are given feedback on your performance. If there are gaps identified are there interventions put in place to assist the employee.
- What are your thoughts concerning the performance review between the employer and the employee in the Department?
- What challenges are usually experiences in these reviews?
- In your view is there regular communication on expectations and feedback?
- How does the Department use the wealth of experience to develop others?

4. Employee Perception on Cascading Goals

- In your opinion how does the department make sure that goals are known and understood by all employees?
- In which way are the employees involved in the formulation of goals?

- In your opinion do departmental goals result in the formulation of the team and individual goals?

5. Employee Perception on Talent Management

- How do you think the Department makes sure that the best employees are recruited, developed and retained?
- In which way does the Department ensure that it attracts the best employees?
- In your view is the Department providing adequate training for talent development
- What measures does the Department employ to retain staff?

6. Employee Perception on Recognition and Rewards

- Tell me about your experience in rewarding excellent performance in the Department.
- How do you feel about the manner in which the Department implements the incentive and the reward scheme?
- In your opinion how has the manner in which excellent performance was rewarded affected staff morale?

7. Employee Perception on Manager Accountability

- How satisfied are you with the management style employed in the Department?
- Is the Department in your view employing good practice?
- Are employees involved in decision-making?

8. Employee Perception on Employee Engagement

- How well do you think employee voices are heard in the Department?
- In your view are employees emotionally attached to the Department?
- Do you consider the work environment to be supportive to the employees?