

**AN EVALUATION OF THE RETENTION AND CAREER MANAGEMENT POLICY  
FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE WITH  
SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

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## DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this study to my late father, Gbenga Omotoye who passed away in October 2003 and my grandmother, Thandi Motlhagodi, who passed away in July 2005. Their profound value of education has encouraged me to strive as far as I have in completing the study. May your souls rest in peace.

- *Ad astra per aspera- To the stars through difficulties.*

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## ABSTRACT

The discipline of Human Resource Management is regarded as one of the fundamental pillars of organisational theory. The employees of an institution are considered to be the most important assets that an institution possesses, primarily because they determine the success or failure of the institution in question. Employee attraction and retention is known to scholars of the discipline as one of the prominent challenges that constantly confront institutions, both public and private. As labour markets become more globalised, the phenomenon of employee mobility surges, which results in these public and private institutions needing to develop and implement measures that would assist them in attracting skilled personnel, whilst also ensuring that they have the ability to retain such personnel. The war for talent continues to grow in the contemporary world as institutions strive to adapt the ever-changing *milieu* in which they operate.

This study examines the underlying factors of career and retention management practices in the Department of Local Government and Housing by virtue of evaluating the Career and Retention Management Policy that the Department has in place as a means of addressing its turnover and retention challenges. Furthermore, the study recommends possible solutions and strategies for improving the current interventionist policy of the Department.

The literature study indicated that employee turnover is detrimental to the ability of an institution to deliver goods and services, particularly if *dysfunctional turnover* occurs. Some of the causes, costs and types of turnover were conceptualised, in addition to the discussions on career and retention management. The study highlighted that the establishment of effective career development and management systems in the workplace is imperative, particularly as employees continuously seek personal and career growth opportunities. The failure to develop such systems may result in employees seeking these opportunities elsewhere, which would consequently deter the Department or any other institution from attaining its goals and objectives.

The empirical study of this dissertation investigated possible reasons or factors why senior managers of the Department of Local Government and Housing may want to leave the Department and seek employment elsewhere. In addition to this, an evaluation of the Career and Retention Management Policy would provide a perceptiveness for assessing the effectiveness of the Policy in terms of its capacity to reduce employee turnover, at the same time ensuring that the Department remains an attractive employer of choice. Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to forty senior managers; however twenty-one were completed and returned by the participants.

The analysis of the data revealed that the public service has the capability to retain critically skilled employees and that this is not necessarily brought about by the introduction of improved remuneration packages, but rather by placing an emphasis on career development because very often employees in the Department of Local Government and Housing are denied opportunities to climb the career ladder and this results in the Department's retention ability being challenged. Various gaps within the Policy were identified, predominantly its content, which was described by participants as ambiguous.

The study recommends possible solutions and strategies for addressing the challenges that were identified in the analysis. International best practices are utilised as a benchmark for establishing how other institutions have successfully formulated and implemented effective career development and management systems.



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AA:</b>	Affirmative Action
<b>ANC:</b>	African National Congress
<b>BNG:</b>	Breaking New Ground Policy
<b>CORE:</b>	Code of Remuneration
<b>DBSA:</b>	Development Bank of Southern Africa
<b>DG:</b>	Director-General
<b>DDG:</b>	Deputy Director-General
<b>DLGH:</b>	Department of Local Government and Housing
<b>DPSA:</b>	Department of Public Service and Administration
<b>EAPs:</b>	Employee Assistance Programmes
<b>GCIS:</b>	Government Communication Information System
<b>HoD:</b>	Head of Department
<b>HRD:</b>	Human Resource Development
<b>HRM:</b>	Human Resource Management
<b>NHRBC:</b>	National Home builders Regulatory Council
<b>OSD:</b>	Occupation Specific Dispensation
<b>PAS:</b>	Personnel Administration Standards
<b>PALAMA:</b>	Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy
<b>PMDS:</b>	Performance Management and Development System
<b>PPP:</b>	Public Private Partnership
<b>PSC:</b>	Public Service Commission
<b>PSTI:</b>	Public Service Training Institute
<b>RDP:</b>	Reconstruction and Development Programme
<b>SMS:</b>	Senior Management Service
<b>SALGA:</b>	South African Local Government Association
<b>SAMDI:</b>	South African Management Development Institute
<b>SARS:</b>	South African Revenue Service
<b>SHRM:</b>	Strategic Human Resource Management
<b>SITA:</b>	State Information Technology Agency

**SOEs:** State Owned Enterprises

**WPHRM:** White Paper on Human Resource Management



## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The main function of government is to deliver basic services to its citizens, primarily due to the fact that individuals are unable to provide for all their needs (Cloete, 1998: 3). In order for this duty to be carried out, certain resources are required because without these resources a government department cannot fulfil its mandate. The resources being referred to in this context are those of personnel or human resources. In 2000, the former minister of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), Mrs Fraiser-Moleketi announced the introduction of the Senior Management Service (SMS), as a strategy of addressing the incapability of some departments, particularly those which were incapacitated in translating policies into action.

According to the Public Service Commission (PSC, 2008) one of the challenges facing the South African Public Service is the recruitment, development and retention of competent managers. With the promulgation of the White Paper on Human Resource Management (WPHRM) of 1997, Human Resource Management became a key priority of the South African government.

Employees are an institution's most important resource, whether this institution is privately or publicly owned. The reason for the abovementioned is due to the fact that employees are there to carry out the functions of the institution, so that the institution can either; make a profit, in the case of private companies or deliver basic services to citizens or inhabitants of a particular territory, in the case of government institutions. Despite which sector of society is involved, the human resources of that sector remain a priority, in the sense that their knowledge is invaluable to the institution and should not be vulnerable to the phenomenon of labour turnover.

The post 1994 government had identified the importance of human resource management, in terms of the government first realising that major disparities existed particularly in the fragmented, unequal and undemocratic nature of the education and training system, which had profound effects on the development of the economy and society (ANC, 1994:58). This occurrence resulted in numerous policies being promulgated, such as; the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service of 1995, the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service of 1997, the White Paper on a New Employment Policy for the Public Service of 1997, the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995) and the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998).

The Department of Public Service and Administration has the key responsibility of ensuring that the human resource management system of government is functioning effectively and efficiently, that is, the DPSA has a mandate of ensuring that each government department has a set of employees who are skilled and competent enough to perform the duties that a job requires of them. The Department of Local Government and Housing (DLGH) currently has a Career Management and Retention Policy (2006) in place, which was designed as a mechanism that would facilitate the Department in making sure that the Department's employees, specifically its senior managers, as well as those that are deemed to possess scarce skills, are retained.

Reference is made to the Senior Management Service (SMS) of the Department, generally because there is a growing concern that senior managers in the Public Service are one of the important professional groups that add to the continually increasing levels of staff turnover in the public service, as a number of them leave the service due to different reasons, of which some of them will be highlighted explicitly in chapter five of the study.

High turnover levels of senior managers in government departments have negative implications on the delivery of services because often when managing

transitions, very few departments have an established system or approach to ensure that a smooth transition between heads of departments (HoDs) (PSC, 2008). The proposed research intends to evaluate the effectiveness of the existing Career Management and Retention Policy of the DLGH.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND

Staff retention and career management are two important facets of strategic human resource management (SHRM). According to Stahl (1983:57) the term career is an old but yet pleasant one because it is something that everyone who expects to work for a living would like to have. The Information Guide based on Managing Staff Retention for government departments (2006:12) states that, staff retention is regarded as an activity that focuses both on:

- attracting employees to join the organisation through focussed recruitment strategies; and
- keeping those who are already employed, especially those whose skills are crucial to the institution.

Staff retention also requires a management approach that takes all factors (both internal and external to the institution) into account. Such factors include; identifying current vacancies within the institution, identifying the most suitable person required to fill that vacancy and recruiting that person from a pool of other possible applicants. This recruitment process may occur internally (promotions and transfers) or externally (hiring).

In 2000, the Public Service Commission (PSC) published a Report on Career Management within the public service. At that particular period in time, career management was identified as a relatively new practice in the public service. It can be argued that government has made a considerable attempt in broadly implementing the teachings of career management theory into results-based

practices over the last couple of years. Furthermore, the PSC (2000: 6) identifies three important purposes of establishing good career management systems within the public service, namely:

- **assisting employees to improve their performance:** career management programmes strive to involve employees in setting their own goals and recognising their strengths and weaknesses. In assisting employees identify their strengths and weaknesses, institutional objectives can effectively be achieved because employees can be selected and placed in positions that would maximise their performance and work ethic.
- **clarifying available career options:** through career management programmes employees are informed of career options available within the institution. The importance of clarifying available career options cannot be underestimated because employees or rather newly hired employees who receive realistic job previews have greater job survival (Wanous, 1978: 188).
- **aligning aspirations of employees with organisational objectives:** career management programmes seek to improve the matching of jobs with the right employees. Wanous (1978: 188) states that in selecting employees, most institutions try to match the individual with the institution. This usually means the selection of those who the employer predicts will be good performers.

The current continental crisis in administration is well known and one of its causes is a major shortage of skills in senior and middle management ranks. Human resource development is a high priority (Mc Lennan and FitzGerald, 1991: 5). The democratic elections of 1994 earmarked a sense of hope for the citizens of South Africa, as a lot of expectations were advocated by the citizenry to the new ruling government. Government was thus tasked with the responsibility of meeting the scores of demands posed to them by citizens.

One of the major demands that were brought forward was the need for poverty alleviation. The creation of jobs was identified as a measure or a tool that would resolve the abovementioned problem and thus the ANC (1994:5) introduced the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which was essentially centred on a people driven process, importantly so because it identified people, with their aspirations and collective determination, as the most important resource, furthermore, the RDP focused on people's most immediate needs.

In terms of improving the human resource system of the public service, the government introduced a legislative framework that sought to transform the public service, particularly, from the old paradigm of personnel administration to human resource management. During the 1990s, legislation such as the; White Paper on Transforming the Public Service of 1995 and the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995) were formulated to curb capacity building and development challenges in the public service. In addition, in 1997 and 1998 affirmative action policies were also introduced as a means of addressing the injustices of the past. Such injustices comprised of: segregation in education, health, welfare, transport and employment. The ANC led government attempted to rectify these inequalities by adopting a more rapid approach to the transition to democracy, this was largely evident in the manner in which government filled public offices with unskilled, black individuals who were rewarded for their loyalties during the struggle against the oppressive apartheid government. This in itself posed a bigger challenge, primarily because the public service lacked a competent workforce that could effectively formulate and implement developmental policies.

The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service of 1997 was another critical legislative tool that was instigated by the democratic government. The WPHRM, 1997, was pioneered as an initiative that aimed to achieve a fundamental managerial shift from a centrally controlled, process-driven public service to a service which is representative of all the people of

South Africa and one that treats all public servants as a valuable resource. The WPHRM, 1997, places an emphasis on a shift from personnel administration to human resource management, as the document strongly attempts to promote the development of departmental/ provincial policies within the parameters defined by national policies. The purpose of promoting departmental policies within the parameters of the national boundaries is critical because it results in the creation of coherent policies that are aimed particularly at nation-building, which was recognised as central in addressing the massive divisions and inequalities that were left behind by apartheid (ANC, 1994:5).

These developmental attempts became evident in 1999 when the Department of Public Service and Administration established a training institution called the South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI). However, SAMDI struggled to rise above the Public Service Training Institute (PSTI) legacy due to internal leadership struggles and unresolved staffing changes (Mc Lennan and Orkin, 2009: 7). SAMDI was then renamed to the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA). PALAMA, which is a *sotho* word for climb or arise, was established with the mandate to capacitate and professionalise public administration (Mc Lennan and Orkin, 2009:4), as well as providing and coordinating the provision of training and management development interventions that lead to improved performance and service delivery in the Public Service (PALAMA, no date).

Another key statutory body that was established in terms of the Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993, was the Public Service Commission (PSC). The PSC was tasked with the directive of ensuring that matters 'relating to appointments, promoting efficiency and effectiveness in departments, establishing and monitoring a Code of Conduct for the public service, and introducing a programme of affirmative action and other appropriate techniques to eliminate historical inequities in employment' (ANC, 1994:126).

It can be deduced from Section 196 (4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, that the Public Service Commission plays a very important function as an independent and impartial body, which has an oversight role in monitoring the performance levels of government departments by promoting a professional and ethical environment and adding value to a public administration that is accountable, equitable, efficient, effective, and responsive to needs of citizens. Therefore, it can be argued that the PSC is one of the most influential statutory institutions within the public service in terms of ensuring that policies such as the Career and Retention Management Policy are implemented and continuously monitored so as to achieve effectiveness and efficiency.

It should be noted that, the Career and Retention Management Policy of the DLGH has a clear outline and purpose. Firstly, the Policy has identified that staff retention management is regarded as one of the top priorities of strategic planning. Secondly, the policy is strategic in that, it aligns both the psychological aspects of the employee and the operational aspects attached to the job (DLGH, 2006: 4). Lastly, the Policy recognises that in order for the Department to meet its objectives, senior and operational line managers need to work in partnership on staff retention management, particularly on issues relating to the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Career and Retention Management Policy. The challenge, nonetheless, is to evaluate how effective the Policy has been, in terms of meeting its main objectives.

The human resources of a department or government institution are the driving force of the operations of that particular department. This is supported by the WPHRM, 1997, which states that managing human resources effectively and strategically must be the cornerstone of the wider transformation of the Public Service. It is not a myth that the high turnover levels of senior managers and other scarce skills in the public service are impacting on service delivery. The Public Service Commission (PSC, 2008) states that a change in leadership has a negative impact on the operations of departments because it takes more or less

six months for a head of department to become accustomed to the environment of the department. The problem becomes bigger when the new HoD establishes new strategies and approaches, and as a result gains made by the previous HoD are not leveraged upon and the new HoD is sometimes unable to account for work or progress that took place during the previous period (Public Service Commission, 2008).

Career management is another important facet that needs to be focused on because if it is neglected, it can become a source of dissatisfaction particularly in the long run as potential and current employees try to establish a sustained career in the Public Service. The Public Service Commission's Annual Report (1998) states that an emphasis should be placed on career development practices to maximise human potential. In addition, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, requires that public administration complies with the principle of good human resource management.

Government faces a challenge in addressing the career and retention management issues that impact on departments. Moreover, the costs of training employees and not successfully retaining them can be regarded as a waste of public funds.

### **1.3 MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH**

The work done by government should be regarded as a privilege by those who perform it. Senior managers should be high level and committed professionals, who should concretise government's vision of a better life for all through effective implementation strategies and the efficient utilisation of resources.

The motivational basis for an individual's decision to work within the public service cannot be understood in a single comprehensive context. Perry and Wise (1994: 252) state that the term "motives" is used to mean the psychological



deficiencies or needs that an individual feels some compulsion to eliminate. They further categorise these motives into three components, namely; rational, norm-based, and affective. Rational motives involve actions grounded in individual utility maximisation. Secondly, norm-based motives refer to actions generated by efforts to conform to norms. Lastly, affective motives refer to triggers of behavior that are grounded in emotional responses to various social contexts. It is important to note that, despite the motivational method or tool an individual utilises as a justification to want to work in the public service, that individual has to appreciate the values and principles of the public service. In retrospect it could be argued that motives affect the quality and content of public outputs (Perry and Wise, 1994: 252).

Any democratic government has to create a public service ethos that envisages the principles of commitment, honesty, loyalty, integrity and selflessness. In South Africa, the post 1994 government has attempted to give the public service a transformation with the introduction of the *Batho Pele* (People first) principles.

The *Batho Pele* principles are initiatives that support the idea of modernising the Public Service (DPSA, 2008). The SMS is a programme of action that the government introduced to complement the *Batho Pele* incentive. Senior managers are recognised as leaders who are tasked with the responsibility of driving their respective departments forward. Mafunisa (2003:96) agrees to this statement by arguing that in South Africa, the roles of the senior public servant are clearly defined by the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation 103 of 1994) and related laws and policies. Such roles include; policy-making, liaison with political heads of their departments or ministries, representing the government in various forums, and implementing public policy in these structures.

Retention and career management are regarded as two important processes in human resource strategic planning because if they are not monitored effectively it can cost the department much more money if it loses senior managers or staff in

general, than it did in training those particular employees. This results in wastage of public expenditure because that money could have been invested in other important areas of concern. Job mobility in the public service will be discussed in the third chapter of the study.

However, the main challenge that confronts the DLGH is that it continues to lose its senior managers due to different reasons, which range from compensation and benefit preferences, employee health related matters, the impact of a continually changing public service (institutional environment), work-life balance, and work/development environment. Grobler *et al.* (2006: 225-226) also describe these components as variables valued by employees, which can be classified as unavoidable and avoidable. There is not much that the DLGH or any institution can do to solve the unavoidable reasons but attempts to address the avoidable reasons should be made.

Examples of unavoidable reasons include: the death of an employee or other personal reasons such as retirement, the employee's health or family relocation or any unforeseen natural attrition. Some examples of avoidable reasons, which will be further elaborated on in the proposal, include: financial considerations, work environment, career development, and leadership and management style (Career Management and Retention Policy, 2006: 8-9).

The importance of Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), also known as Employee Wellness Programmes, cannot be underestimated, particularly when a researcher is in the process of trying to conceptualise departmental phenomena, such as staff turnover. According to Hutchison and Vickerstaff (2003: 32) one of the reasons for the establishment of EAPs, was that reliable employees began demonstrating dissatisfaction with working conditions by changing jobs, refusing to cooperate, and threatening to unionise. In response to the challenge that was posed to institutions, management created programmes that would assist them in understanding the problems of their employees.

## 1.4 SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

Dubrin (1984:9) writes that the field of Personnel and Human Resource Management (PHRM), also referred to as personnel or human resource management, is a hybrid, similar in scope to human relations. PHRM differs from human relations primarily because it is concerned with the application of a wide variety of personnel techniques and the administration of laws relating to employer-employee relationships.

Important questions relating to the stability of the public service after political transformation were raised following the 1994 democratic elections. Mc Lennan and FitzGerald (1991: 7) questioned how prepared the public service, the public service leadership and the public service institutions were in the “New” South Africa. An emphasis was placed on the question of capacity, the *how* of training; how appropriate are the recruitment and training methods, the traditions and the ethos of the public administration departments to address the challenge of building a non-racial, democratic and economically successful society in South Africa?

Private businesses and government departments are constantly competing against each other in the search for talented personnel, who could fill vacant positions within their institutions; a practice that is commonly known as succession planning. Kotze and Roodt (2005: 48) are of the opinion that the war for talent is an international phenomenon. The demand for and retention of talent are not unique challenges to South African employers. However, in South Africa these challenges are aggravated by three additional factors, namely; the emigration of skilled people that has and still is taking place at an alarming rate. Secondly, there is a relative scarcity of specialist and managerial employees due to an oversupply of unskilled and an under-supply of skilled labour. Lastly, the national drive to address employment equity.

Wessels and Van Jaarsveldt (2007: 103) reiterate the fact that employees play a significant role in the operations of public institutions. Furthermore, the leadership echelons of these institutions are no exception. In fact, the management cadre of these institutions are usually regarded as crucial for the effective and efficient execution of public functions and the delivery of public services.

The Senior Management Service programme was launched in 2001, had a purpose of promoting better service delivery, specifically by improving governments' ability to recruit, retain and develop quality managers and professionals (DPSA, 2008). The need for an initiative such as the SMS is justified by Naidoo (2009: 3) who contends that the slow pace of service delivery by many South African public institutions suggests that such institutions have experienced crisis due to the lack of leadership at the top.

The South African government's decision to introduce the SMS framework was a key step in addressing a bigger problem, namely that of ensuring the sustainability of its employees. Attracting and retaining intellectual capital, a cadre of highly skilled, independent, internationally marketable and mobile individuals, is a critical feature of globalisation (Sutherland and Jordaan, 2004: 55). Since 1994, the South African government has introduced legislation, such as the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995) and the White Paper on Human Resource Management of 1997, as a means of capacitating those people tasked with the responsibility of delivering public services effectively and efficiently. Human resource management transformation became an important aspect that government sought to address because there was a realisation that an "institution is only as good as its people" (Sutherland and Jordaan, 2004: 55).

The financial impact of labour turnover is under-appreciated by institutions as the hidden nature of turnover of costs, such as loss of institutional memory, conceals its true magnitude (Sutherland and Jordaan, 2004: 55). This statement refers to the fact that the government allocated a sum of R28 million to the Public

Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) during the 2008-2009 financial period, in order to finance various organisational and staff development programmes. The reality, however, is that by fully training and developing employees, there is no guarantee that these individuals will remain within a department, moreover the public service. The question of loyalty and institutional commitment become factors that have to be considered because the cost of staff turnover can outweigh the value and principles of loyalty, on one hand, and on the other, turnover costs can result in public money being wasted on programmes that cannot pay dividends at the end of the day, in addition, Van Dijk (2005: 27) states that “creating a pool of sustainable managers would enable the Public Service to fill their key senior positions with internal employees instead of having to buy external skills.”

As a result the DPSA, with the guidance of the White Paper on Human Resource Management of 1997, has given government departments a mandate of establishing policy frameworks that would promote good HRM practices within those departments. The DPSA, aimed to solve problems relating to career and retention management in the public service, therefore, it introduced the Career and Retention Management Policy (2006), which departments at all spheres had to adopt.

The DLGH adopted this guide and established it as a Departmental Policy. The preamble of the policy comprehensively describes the purposes of the policy, objectives of the policy and the legislative framework that supports the policy. Despite all of these seemingly good formalities of the policy, the DLGH reported that it had 55% vacancy rate. Furthermore, the Department reports that its institutional capacity is impacted on by persisting problems, such as high turnover rates in scarce occupations and problems in recruiting and retaining skilled senior personnel, poor levels of performance and skills among senior staff, leading to inadequate service delivery, insufficient attention to training and

development and nurturing a sustainable senior executive corps (Citizens Report, 2008/2009: 65).

The top (senior) leadership approach that the SMS was designed to address, has not been evident in the DLGH, arguably because of the '*ineffectivity*' of the Career and Retention Management Policy. The Policy is failing to attain its pre-established mandates and if it continues to do so, the impact of turnover will be adverse, particularly on service delivery. This is supported by a report issued by the PSC (2008) based on the implications of turnover for the public service, which states that when a new HoD establishes new strategies and approaches, the gains made by the previous HoD are not leveraged upon and the new HoD is sometimes unable to account for work or progress that took place during the previous period.

Maintaining a pool of talented leaders has become an important human resource precedence, not only in South Africa, but globally as well. New Zealand is an example of a country that also became aware of this, when its public service established a similar project to that of the SMS. The Senior Leadership and Management Development Programme (SLMDP) aims to ensure that the public service infrastructure is able to address the career aspirations of talented future leaders and senior managers. The programme also responds to the likelihood that there will be increased demand for skilled leaders and senior managers over the next ten years in New Zealand (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2003: xii).

The vast number of literature that has been provided by scholars in the discipline of Human Resource Management, specifically focusing on the issues of career and retention management in both the private sector and public service, have brought about the realisation that although a sound theoretical base, that recognises a broad range of problems and solutions pertaining to career and retention management exists within the discipline, a challenge to the discipline subsists with specific reference to the Career and Retention Management Policy

of the Department of Local Government and Housing. The DLGH has adopted this Policy from the national sphere of government; therefore, the broad design and outline of the policy are not founded on the grounds of what the Department can achieve practically. The Policy explicitly states that Human Resource practitioners and line managers are responsible for managing staff retention, as well as, monitoring and evaluating the Policy. However, Cloete, *et al.* (2006: 39) argue that the relationship between the structure and the policy should always be taken into account. In other words could the scope of responsibility not be too much for human resource and line managers, particularly if top management support itself is minimal?

The role of monitoring and evaluating policy may not be something that, line managers for instance are competent in performing. Cloete, *et al.* (2006: 39) further state that merely changing the structure of governmental institutions will not bring about dramatic changes to the policy and that is why the relationship between the policy and the DLGH should be one that is institutionally-orientated, it should have a specific purpose to the DLGH.

There is a need to evaluate the effectiveness or impact that the Policy has made in retaining the senior managers of the Department. The proposed research will contribute to the discipline of Human Resource Management by critically evaluating how much of an impact a government policy such as the Career and Retention Management Policy has in retaining public service senior management officials. Furthermore, the study will recommend possible solutions and/or strategies for addressing the challenges that are currently confronting the Policy. The constant loss of skilled employees in the public service has a detrimental effect on the ability of any public institution to deliver services to the communities that they serve; the necessity of addressing this challenge cannot be undermined.

## 1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT

An emphasis has been placed on the fact that employees are an institution's most important asset. The ability of government to retain its senior management employees, as well as those employees deemed to be in possession of highly scarce skills, has become one of the major challenges confronting government in the post-1994 democratic era. According to the Commonwealth Secretariat (2003: xii) maintaining a pool of talented leaders and senior managers is an important part of ensuring that the right kind of capability exists within the public service to meet challenges of the future.

This research seeks to address the confrontation posed by the career and retention management dilemma that exists within the South African public service. Specific reference is made to the extent to which the Career and Management Policy in the Department of Local Government and Housing is able to address career and retention challenges within the Department.

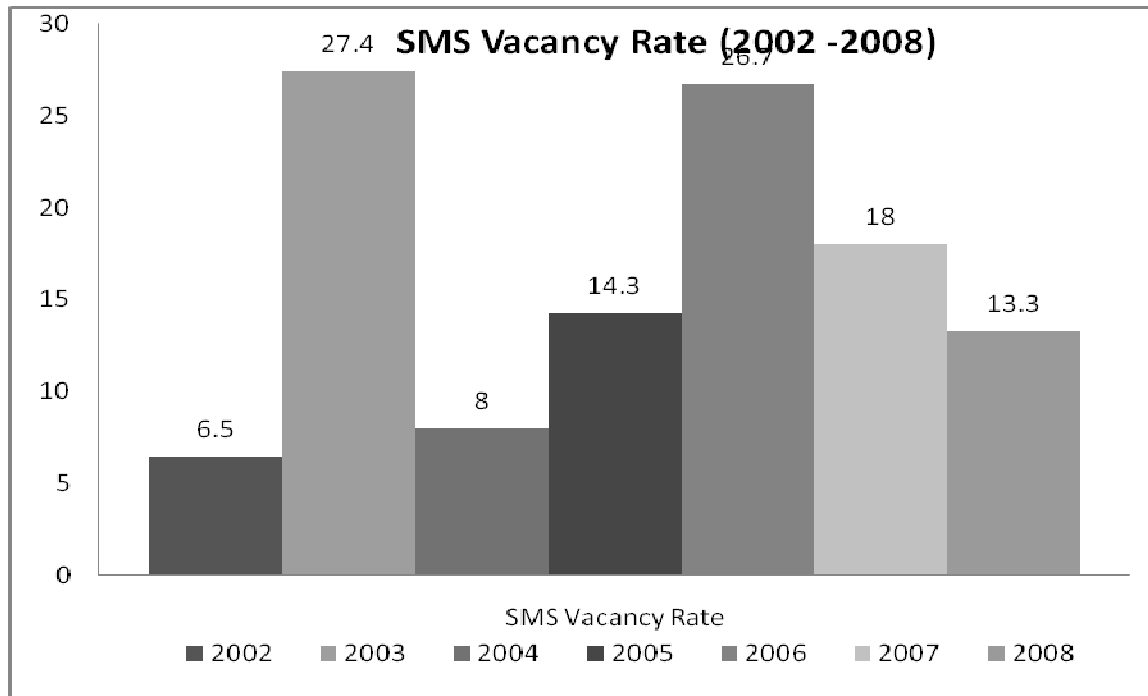
According to the Report on Career Management in the Public Service, as conducted by the Public Service Commission (2000:10), prior to 1994, HRM practices in the public service did not place any emphasis on the development and implementation of career management programmes or practices. In some cases the career development of lower level workers was neglected. The Department of Local Government and Housing, currently has a Career and Retention Management Policy in place, which was promulgated in order to address the problems of sustaining its senior managers. Furthermore, the Department faces an equally daunting task of trying to attract sufficiently trained staff to the Department.

Sheoraj (2007:106) is of the opinion that political leadership is the prime mover in bringing about alignment between capacity-building efforts of the public administration system and national development goals. Without effective and



determined leadership, it is difficult to revitalize public administration in any country.

**Figure 1.1: The SMS Vacancy rate in Limpopo Province (2002-2008)**



**Source: Office of the Limpopo province premier, 2008.**

From the above graph, it can be deduced that the senior management vacancy rate figures in the Limpopo Province have been rather inconsistent between 2002 and 2008. The high vacancy rate in 2003 was related to the non-filling of posts, whereas, in 2006 it was related to the recent restructuring process within departments. It is evident that the ability of government departments to fill vacant posts is still a major challenge, which in turn spills over to the department not being able to deliver services because there are no people to direct and coordinate those efforts. The Citizen's Report (2008-2009:65) of the DLGH, identifies that the Department has a 55% vacancy rate. That is, out of a total of one thousand three hundred and seventy eight (1378) posts, categorised as critical occupations, only seven hundred and fifty four (754) of those posts were filled between 1 April 2008 and 31 March 2009.

During a mid-term review conference of the Limpopo Province Senior Management Service in 2007, the Limpopo Province Premier, Sello Moloto, stated that another challenge that was crippling the SMS capacity of the Province was the question of conflict of interest or self-dealing. Senior Managers were managing their own private businesses during departmental working hours (Limpopo Provincial Government, 2007).

The Career Management and Retention Policy (2006: 8-9) of the DLGH, identifies some possible reasons as to why the Department struggles to retain its employees, these are categorised as either unavoidable or avoidable:

i) Unavoidable reasons:

- As the term states, these reasons are beyond the control of the department and therefore not much can be done about resolving those challenges. Examples of this category include; the death of the employee, personal reasons such as retirement, the employee's health or family relocation.

ii) Avoidable reasons:

- Financial considerations: the public service remuneration system is perceived as inflexible and not competitive enough to attract and keep talented staff.
- Work environment: poor work environment leads to employees being unhappy at work and makes other job options attractive to them.
- Career development: despite the level of 'seniority' that an individual may possess within a department, that individual will always want to grow in their work and will continually search for opportunities for growth.
- Resistance to change: government departments undergo change, be it minor or major. On the other hand, some managers are not willing to accommodate the change process; therefore they decide to leave the

department because a conflict exists between the interests of the employee and the interests of the institution.

- Leadership or management style: very often employees might want to leave a department if they believe that the leadership of the department is stifling their opportunities of growth. For example, if a chief director has an autocratic leadership style; his or her deputy may not feel comfortable serving under that leadership and may then decide to vacate the department.

There are gaps within the Career and Retention Management Policy (2006). The Policy does not comprehensively state any monitoring and evaluation practices that are put in place to ensure that the Policy would be translated into an action oriented programme. Although the Policy does identify the groups of people responsible for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Policy, it is evident that there is a need to evaluate how effectively these groups of people are performing the monitoring and evaluating function because the Department is failing to retain its employees, predominantly its SMS employees.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF RESEARCH**

The research identifies the importance of evaluating a vital strategic human resource instrument of a department. The Career and Retention Management Policy, of the DLGH exists to serve as a guide that aims to assist the Department in attracting and retaining talented employees. Despite the Policy comprising clear objectives, staff turnover is a setback. The research intends to evaluate how effective the Policy of the Department is by identifying the various factors and challenges of career and retention practices within the Department, as well as analysing the impact that these challenges have on the Policy.

The research will illustrate, on a smaller scale, just how much or how little effort needs to be exerted by human resource units within government departments in

the processes of retention and career management. The focus of the research is based on a single confined example of a bigger general problem that has and still is confronting the public service at present. This problem relates to that of managing staff and ensuring that there is a constant supply of qualified and experienced individuals with leadership and management skills. Van Dijk (2005: 201) is of the opinion that by creating a sustainable pool of qualified and experienced managers, the achievement of equitable representation of designated groups in middle and senior management echelons will be obtained.

A vast number of literature is available based on public service human resource management practices, with emphasis on; training, skills development, capacity building and so forth, however, there is not much being done practically (not just through the formulation of policies) by departments. Government needs to address some of the critical HRM challenges facing departments, instead of engaging in constant restructuring of government management development institutions, changing leadership and shifting mandates (Mc Lennan and Orkin 2009: 1).

## **1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The main objective of the research is to investigate the impact of the Career and Retention Management Policy on the turnover rate of SMS within the Department of Local Government and Housing. The effectiveness of the Policy in reducing staff turnover at top management level is questioned because seemingly, the Department continues to have a skills shortage for job posts that are considered to be critical to the Department such as (Citizens Report 2008-2009: 65):

Engineering:

- Civil engineering technicians: number of posts; 9. number of posts filled; 0

- Engineering Sciences related: number of posts; 2.  
number of posts filled; 0
- Engineers and related Professionals: number of posts; 190. number  
of posts filled; 46

#### Human Resource Management (HRM):

- HRM & Organisational development & related professionals:  
number of posts; 12. number of posts filled; 6
- HRM Clerks: number of posts; 48. number of posts filled; 25
- HRM related: number of posts; 59. number of posts filled; 43

#### Senior Management Service (SMS):

- Number of posts; 27
- Number of posts filled; 16

#### Administrative Policy and related officers:

- Number of posts; 50
- Number of posts filled; 1

The occupations discussed above, are identified in the research as critical because they are important units of analysis particularly in terms of service delivery (in the case of engineering). The HRM, SMS and administrative policy occupations are categorised by the study as critical in terms of the role they play in implementing strategic policies of the Department, specifically the Career and Retention Management Policy. It is evident from some of the vacancy rates discussed above that even though theoretically there is an instrument or mechanism in place that is geared towards curbing that problem, the phenomenon of turnover persists.

The DLGH sees itself as an employer of choice, this study intends to determine how justified that statement is by analysing the problems that exist in the

relationship between the Career and Retention Management Policy as well as the turnover of critically skilled employees such as senior managers, i.e. just how effectively is this Departmental Policy being implemented? The research will investigate this question by exploring some of the possible challenges of staff retention and career development within the Department of Local Government and Housing, whether monitoring and evaluating mechanisms supporting these two key human resource management components exist.

The importance of monitoring and evaluating policy documents is highlighted by Cloete (2006, 247), who asserts that the use of policy-analytic research method or technique to measure performance programmes so that the continuous change in activities can be determined with the view to improving effectivity, especially their impact on the conditions they are supposed to change, also the systematic measurement of performance in terms of specific policies. The aim of the research is, therefore, to evaluate the challenges imposed on the Career and Retention Management Policy of the DLGH that hinder the Policy from meeting its primary objectives. Strategies and other possible solutions will be made to a policy that supposedly has 'teeth but cannot bite'.

## **1.8 RESEARCH METHODS**

There are two types of research methodologies and those are quantitative and qualitative research. Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 29) describe quantitative research as a process whereby the researcher assigns numbers to observations. By counting and measuring objects, data is produced.

Qualitative research is described as "research which produces descriptive data—generally people's own written or spoken words. Usually no numbers or counts are assigned to observations" (Brynard and Hanekom, 1997: 29). Qualitative research is descriptive in nature and can be associated with the human or social sciences, as opposed to the research methods used in the natural sciences.

Public Human Resource Management, as a field of Public Administration, is a social phenomenon and can therefore be allied with qualitative research. As stated earlier the main objective of the study is to evaluate the impact of the Career and Retention Management Policy that is in place within the DLGH.

The effectiveness of the Policy can only be explained through descriptive theoretical research as opposed to a quantified basis. The problems associated with senior staff retention need to be described, explained and interpreted which is the role of qualitative methodology. However, although the study adopts a primarily qualitative approach, features of quantitative analysis do exist and these are evident in the fifth chapter of the study. Du Plessis and Majam (2010:464) refer to this approach as mixed method research and describe this approach as a process that provides more comprehensive evidence for studying a research problem than either quantitative or qualitative research alone. Researchers are given permission to use all the data collection tools available, rather than being restricted to the types of data collection typically associated with qualitative or quantitative research.

Some of the advantages of using such a research method are that; firstly, mixed method research can add insight and understanding that might be overlooked when only a single method is used. Secondly, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative research produces a more complete knowledge base necessary to inform theory and practice. Lastly, mixed methods research can answer a broader and more complete range of research questions because the researcher is not confined to a single method or approach.

Kumar (2005:3) states that anything that becomes a means of collecting information for your study is called a research tool or a research instrument. These include observation forms, interview schedules, questionnaires and interview guides.

In order for this evaluation to be made, as well as for reliable and valid information to be collected, various instruments or research tools will be used, namely; a review of relevant literature and official documents, questionnaires (self administered) which will be distributed electronically to senior managers in the targeted department as well as the managers involved in monitoring and evaluating the Policy.

The questionnaire will enable respondents to provide information regarding several issues, such as; the general perception of the policy itself, the rate at which vacant posts deemed to be critical or scarce are filled, how much of an impact staff turnover has on the delivery of services and how often monitoring and evaluation of policies, particularly the Career and Retention Management Policy is done. Chapter five of the study will extensively discuss career and retention practices within the Department by analysing the results of completed self-administered questionnaires.

## **1.9 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLE SIZES**

Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 43) state that in research methodology, a researcher is faced with the dilemma of selecting from the larger group (the population) a small group or portion for study purposes, but which is still representative of the large group. The small group or portion selected from the population is called a sample.

Burger and Silima (2006: 657) state that the most important reason for sampling is feasibility. That it is often too costly and impractical to study an entire population and researchers make use of sampling to save time and resources. The Department of Local Government and Housing has an estimated total number of forty-five (45) permanent Senior Management posts.



The researcher intends on utilising the random sampling method to select a total number of forty (40) senior managers that would be willing to participate in the study. The selection of participants is not limited to a particular gender or age group.

## 1.10 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS AND TERMS

The following section will define the key concepts that are used throughout the study. The concepts used are Public Administration and public administration, Public Service, Senior Management Service, Human Resource Management, Retention Management and Career Management.

### 1.10.1 Public Administration and public administration

Public Administration as a scientific discipline is primarily concerned with the implementation of government policy. Public Administration is a university subject in which the operation of public administration, that is, the field of operation or sphere of activity is studied (Botes, *et al.* 1992: 257).

Schwella (1991: 25) defines public administration as a complicated and dynamic societal phenomenon consisting of a system of structures and processes operating within society, as an environment. Public administration is also known as the activities performed to create and run public institutions; therefore, this professional activity should be geared towards the philosophical ideal of striving for the values of the good society through effective, efficient and productive action (Schwella, 1991: 25).

Botes, *et al.* (1992: 257) are of the opinion that public administration is concerned with the public; moreover, public administration is a human activity meaning that it is an activity for the people by the people. Personnel provision and utilisation are one of the generic functions of public administration. Du Toit and Van der

Walt (1997: 15) state that administrative process involves performing other functions for making personnel available to and placing them in suitable positions and developing them. Provision is made for this at national level by means of an Act (Public Service Act) and the establishment of the Public Service Commission.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, highlights in section 195 the important role that public administration should play by being “broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation”. If staffing, “that is, the whole body of bringing in and training the staff and maintaining favourable conditions of work” is identified as a functional element of public administration, then it could be argued for the purpose of the research that retention and career management fall, indefinitely, within the scope of staffing and thus constitute a “*means of administration*” (Harmon and Mayer, 1986).

### 1.10.2 Public Service

A Public Service can be described as the arena in which public administration occurs. The South African Public Service is defined in section 197 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and it states that within public administration there is a public service for the Republic, which must function, and be structured, in terms of national legislation, and which must loyally execute the lawful policies of the government of the day.

Public service is often used as a synonym for government service embracing all those who work in the public sector but more significantly, the public service is a concept, an attitude, a sense of duty and even a sense of public morality (Perry and Wise, 1994: 252).

Section 8 of the Public Service Act, 1994, further states that the public service is composed of people who are either employed permanently or temporarily within the national or provincial departments of government. Therefore, it could be mentioned that the Department of Local Government and Housing falls within the definition or scope of the Public Service. It is an entity that operates within the domain of the Public Service.

The Department has a mandate of accelerating the delivery of Integrated sustainable human settlements, and giving support to municipalities to ensure that sustainable development local governance become a buzz word that is associated with the Department (DLGH 2008: 6). The Department is divided into two ministries; namely Local Government and Housing. In addition, under these two units are programmes with sub-programmes. Chapter four of the study will provide a comprehensive environmental analysis of the Department.

According to the DLGH (2008: 6) the Department's vision is to ensure sustainable developmental local governance and integrated human settlement. While its mission is to establish, support, capacitate and monitor sustainable developmental local governance through the creation of an environment within which housing development takes place, the creation of a framework for provincial planning, coordination of provincial disaster management and integrated urban and rural development.

The vision, mission and objectives of the Department need to be aligned to the HRM efforts of the Department. The right people need to be identified, selected and recruited if these departmental values are to be achieved. Moreover, any department or organisation in general should strive towards ensuring that effective succession planning and retention methods are put in place, so as to decrease staff turnover levels.

### 1.10.3 Senior Management Service (SMS)

Effective, efficient and improved service delivery has always been one of government's main objectives. In July 1999, the DPSA introduced a new management framework that sought to strengthen the management capacity of departments, as well as, one that would continuously audit the progress achieved by the departments.

For the purposes of the study, the term Senior Managers refers to the country's top six grades as identified by Maphunye (2001: 312) namely; Director-Generals, Deputy Director Generals, Chief Director, Director, Deputy Director and Assistant Director.

Chapter 4 of the Public Service Regulations, 2001 endorses the establishment of the SMS. Firstly through principles, to ensure the effective management of each department falling under his or her control, or to execute specialist functions, an executing authority shall create an appropriate number of posts at senior management level. Secondly composition, which entails: employees who immediately before 1 January 2001 were remunerated on grade 13 and higher, the number of members of the SMS per Department and their functions shall be determined by the executing authority through the processes of planning and work organisation, and the grading of SMS posts shall be determined through the job evaluation system determined by the minister.

According to the Public Service Regulations, 2001, the concept grade means the relative value of a particular job as reflected by the job weight, which is linked to a salary scale used in the public service. The SMS handbook was introduced in 2003.

The overall goal of the SMS initiative is to improve governments' ability to recruit, retain and develop quality managers and professionals (Department of Public Service and Administration). However, Maphunye (2001: 312-314) states that the term senior is contentious and that there is no consensus on who is 'senior' in the South African public service. The dispute regarding the definition of 'senior' was based on the view that some people held by believing that the most powerful (and therefore senior) positions were only those of chief-director upwards; but others understood senior to mean only those from directors and above. Such officials were said to have more power and authority to make effective decisions in their departments and ministries.

For the purposes of the research, the SMS are identified as that elite group of people in the DLGH, whose level of competence and influence is invaluable to the overall performance of the Department. Naidoo (2009: 3) explains that the slow pace of service delivery by many South African public service institutions suggests that such institutions have experienced crisis due to a lack of leadership at the top. From this statement, it can be deduced that the research attempts to clarify why such a crisis exists, especially because a Career and Retention Management Policy has been promulgated to curb staff turnover in government departments. The important role that the SMS plays in the public service cannot be undermined, therefore evaluating the reasons of staff turnover at a senior management level is critical if departments are to deliver services in an effective and efficient manner.

#### 1.10.4 Human Resource Management

As with many other concepts in the academic world, human resource management (HRM) has no universally accepted definition. Swanepoel *et al.* (2003: 8) argue that some experts agree that human resource management is the concept that has replaced concepts such as personnel administration or personnel management.

According to Jucius (1975:5) human resource management can be defined as the field of management which has to do with planning, organising, directing and controlling the functions of procuring, developing, maintaining, and utilising a labour force, such that the: objectives for which the institution is established are attained economically and effectively, objectives of all levels of personnel are served to the highest possible degree, and objectives of society are duly considered and served.

Van Dijk (2005: 202) on the other hand states that human resource management is defined as “the encompassing management function comprising all the different human resource functions”. Management is identified as one of the core generic functions of public administration. Swanepoel, *et al.* (2003:4) define Management as a field of study is complex and vast. It is concerned with the utilisation and mobilisation of all of the organisation’s resources. Therefore, Management in the context of the research refers to the management of human resources within the DLGH.

The DLGH commits itself to supporting the training and development of officials and office-bearers particularly the women and youth within the local government sphere in order to improve the capacity to deliver services (Citizens Report, 2008-2009: 56). The commitment that the Department advocates is part and parcel of a broader aim that the Strategic human resource plan of the DLGH seeks to achieve, that of training and development (T&D) of staff officials. Therefore, T&D is a critical component of HRM if successful capacity development of employees is to occur.

The Career Management and Retention Policy (2006) of the DLGH is another key element of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM) because it is primarily involved with the maintenance as well as the utilisation of employees.

### 1.10.5 Retention Management

Staff retention focuses on both attracting employees to join an institution through focused recruitment and selection strategies, and keeping those who are already employed, especially whose skills are crucial to the Department (DLGH, 2006: 4). A high turnover of staff, inevitably means that a department is failing to manage the retention of staff because staff turnover, simply refers to the rate at which employees of a department or organisation leave in order to seek employment elsewhere. Whereas retention management refers to the extent to which an institution can successfully convince its employees to remain within the particular institution in question.

### 1.10.6 Career Management

Career management is a process that individual employees are primarily responsible for, in seeking opportunities for development and promotion in line with their own career aspirations. Managers have a responsibility of supporting these aspirations by encouraging their staff to take advantage of various opportunities that are presented within the department.

The Department does not necessarily focus on long-term employment, but nevertheless, employees still need to be made aware that opportunities exist for career growth. These growth opportunities might not always be upwards though (DPSA, 2006: 27). Prior to 1994, the public service operated within the confines of a closed human resource system. The term 'closed' refers to the in-service training and public administration practices that occurred at the central and regional level, which were directly linked to promotion and career advancement (Mc Lennan and Orkin, 2009: 7).

The Department of Public Service and Administration has a role in assisting departments by providing the necessary platform for career pathing models to be developed through the establishment of the Code of Remuneration (CORE), which substituted the Personnel Administration Standards (PAS) that contained the salary structures of occupations (Public Service Commission, 2000: 10).

The Policy Statement on the Establishment of a Senior Management Service in the Public Service (DPSA, 2000) stipulates that senior managers will be managed more actively across the entire public service and that provision will be made in law for greater flexibility to redeploy senior managers based on operational requirements. However, the flexible allowance of senior management mobility across the public service to an extent impacts on service delivery, specifically when those vacant management posts are not filled immediately.

### **1.11 PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK OF THE RESEARCH**

The study will be divided into six chapters that will allow for the research to be carried out in a systematic and comprehensive manner. The preliminary framework presents a logical sequence that the study will follow based on its six chapters. Furthermore, by providing an outline of the study, the preliminary framework plays a vital role because it clarifies any possible misunderstandings that may arise from the arguments presented in the study.

Chapter one introduces the research topic and provides a justification or rationale of why the topic was selected. The chapter also describes and explains the methodology that the researcher utilises in undertaking the proposed research.

Chapter two provides an extensive outline of the relationship between Public Administration and Human Resource Management, particularly focusing on the elements of career and retention management.



Chapter three of the study comprehensively analyses the concepts of career and retention management. In addition employee turnover, as well as career management in the South African public service is discussed in this chapter.

Chapter four entails an internal and external environmental analysis of the Department. The internal analysis highlights various factors that play a role in ensuring that the Department's internal mechanisms function effectively and efficiently. These factors include; the programmes and sub-programmes of the Department, the vision, mission and goals of the Department, as well as the organisational structure of the institution. The external analysis refers to an analysis of the impact and/or influences that components external to the Department have on effective career and retention management. The external components are those that are political, economical or social in nature. Various role players are also identified and discussed in this chapter.

Chapter five will analyse the research findings. The results that are obtained from the self-administered questions, which are completed by research participants will systematically be analysed by the researcher. This chapter examines the challenges of career and retention management practices within the DLGH, by evaluating the perceptions, values and attitudes of senior managers towards such practices.

Chapter six of the study will recommend plausible recommendations and solutions that are identified from the research findings. This chapter will also summarise the main points, as well as conclude the study.

## **1.12 CONCLUSION**

This chapter comprehensively introduced the study by outlining the research topic, motivation of research, the problem statement, objectives of the research, survey of the available literature and research methods that the researcher

intends to exploit. Concepts that are used in the research are also clarified. The entire study is briefly explained in the preliminary framework of the study.

## **CHAPTER 2: THE DOMAIN OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION WITH REFERENCE TO A CAREER AND RETENTION MANAGEMENT POLICY**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter one of this study provided the background to the research. The purpose of providing the background is imperative, as it assists the researcher in explaining the process and importance of evaluating the Career and Retention Management Policy. This chapter explores the relationship between Public Administration and Public Human Resource Management. The relevance of determining the relationship between the two fields of study stems from the fact that Public Administration is an omnipresent discipline in a multi-disciplinary context, as it coincides with other academic disciplines such as; Public Policy, Financial Management, Human Resource Management, Intergovernmental Relations, Politics and Psychology.

The discipline of Public Administration is undoubtedly broad; therefore, analysing the discipline in terms of understanding the activities that are undertaken within the field would provide an outline for the relationship between Public Administration and Public Human Resource Management or Public Administration and any other field of study. Career and retention management are two important elements of human resource management. These two elements establish the main focus of the study; therefore it is imperative to understand the developments that have an impact on the field of human resource management, particularly as these developments are brought about by continuously changing domestic and global expectations. The twenty-first century has coerced governments across the globe to shift from the traditional platforms of functioning to the contemporary demands of the developmental state, which require governments to become more effective, efficient and economical in their operations, particularly in resource utilisation.

The developments and challenges that have occurred within the field of Public Administration, have resulted in scholars of Public Administration debating the need to re-think the traditional approaches to the field of study. The contemporary state's role as a provider of basic services to citizens has undeniably become more complex. This is due to the fact that as populations grow and citizen's demands increase, the resources that are required to satisfy these demands have become relatively scarce and as a result, some, if not most of the demands are not met, which consequently deprives citizens of their constitutional rights. The challenges associated with service delivery, are ultimately the challenges that are associated with public administration. Therefore, the importance of addressing these challenges requires scholars of Public Administration to review some of the traditional approaches that are comprised in the study of Public Administration. Chapter one, stipulated that the 1990s were popularly characterised by the introduction of various legislative frameworks; this indicates that the need for administrative reforms has been on the government's developmental agenda ever since the first democratic elections. These reforms resulted in the South African government adopting the more western approach by shifting away from the classical public administration tendencies, towards the modernised 'new' public management approach. The rationale behind this was to galvanise the manner in which the civil service operated because the intention was to strengthen its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as to improve the image of the entire service. The public administration versus public management debate is briefly discussed in the subsequent sections of the chapter.

The following chapter will explore the public administrative functions in depth. Particular emphasis will be focused on the generic functions of public administration. It was highlighted in the first chapter that human resource management is one of the seven generic functions of public administration. Therefore, for the purposes of this research an in-depth analysis on the field of Human Resource Management will be undertaken. The main functions of human

resource management, such as human resource planning, human resource procurement, human resource utilisation and human resource maintenance will be considered.

## **2.2 THE NATURE OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

Public Administration can broadly be described as the development, implementation and study of branches of government policy (Wikipedia encyclopaedia, 2009). According to Vieg (1946:3) it is the systematic ordering of affairs and the calculated use of resources, aimed at making those things happen which we want to happen. A general deduction regarding the abovementioned definition of Public Administration can be made. Firstly, by the discipline being described as a systematic ordering of affairs; an affair in this context refers to any concerns relating to the general public. These affairs or concerns broadly include: the provision of housing, education, health, sanitation and transport. Secondly, the calculated use of resources; refers to the availability of resources that seek to resolve public concerns or grievances. Examples of these resources could include: finances, information, technology and the provision of personnel (human resources), who are tasked with the responsibility of performing duties that are geared towards the accomplishment of organisational objectives.

The importance of the government utilising these resources effectively, efficiently and economically should not be underestimated, largely because these resources are limited. White (1954:58) supports this argument by stating “the objective of public administration is the most efficient utilisation of resources at the disposal of public officials and employees. These resources include not only current appropriations and material equipment in the form of public buildings, machinery, and highways, but also the human resources bound up in the hundreds of thousands of men and women who work for the state. In every direction, good administration seeks the elimination of waste, the conservation of

material and energy, and the most rapid and complete achievement of public purposes consistent with the economy and the welfare of the workers”.

Scholars of Public Administration agree that the discipline, like many human endeavours, is difficult to define. This is because public administration as a field of study is “so abstract and varied that it can only be described in vague, general, amorphous, and competing terms (Rosenbloom, 1993:4)”.

Caiden (1982:3) is of the opinion that “how people organise themselves as a public, as a *collectivity* in which they recognise mutual obligations and duties, to handle their common problems and achieve common goals constitutes the subject matter of public administration. Once people recognise that they can do better by pooling their resources and working together in the common or general interest instead of relying on personal abilities alone, even though some individual advantages may have to be sacrificed to share in communal benefits, they have to be organised as a *collectivity* and their common or mutual concerns have to be managed in some fashion”.

From the abovementioned statement, it is evident that the nature of public administration encompasses a complex social network involving the relations that exist amongst people. What is most significant and valuable about public administration is that citizens are served, in order to advance the common good. Public administrators are responsible for improving the public health, for maintaining public safety, for enhancing the quality of the environment, and myriad other tasks (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007:4).

### 2.2.1 Public Administration and public administration

Public Administration is a university subject in which the operation of public administration is studied, that is the field of operation or the sphere of activity. The multi-disciplinary approach that Public Administration is characterised by,

allows the discipline to share commonalities with other human science related disciplines, such as Political Science, Law, Economics and History. Therefore it could be argued that Public Administration is a discipline of the human sciences. The complex nature of human sciences is based on the fact that, human behaviour is unpredictable because people do not have the same needs and desires. Thornhill (2006:797) argues that the study of Public Administration focuses on the activities of the state, these activities relate to the functions for which the state accepts responsibility.

The primary function of the public administrator is to create an enabling environment in which basic services, such as; education, housing and transport can be delivered, and because resources for the provision of services are limited, the public administrator is tasked with the responsibility of planning and making decisions that are effectively, efficiently and economically driven.

The concept 'public' is defined by Baker (1972:12) as any institution or agency which is run, or directly or indirectly owned or primarily financed, by national or local government; all government departments, the administrative institutions of the courts of law, local authorities and other state owned enterprises (SOEs), notably those set up to run the nationalised industries, and other concerns of national or provincial scope. According to Baker (1972:12-13) the word administration is much more difficult to define than public. Administration has a Latin parent *administrare* which can mean assist as well as direct. Administer in various contexts seems to have affinities with minister, which can mean serve or servant. The concept is usually found more in the public sector than the private and, in general, carries an implication, not of ultimate sovereign control, but of directing and coordinating on behalf of other people or authorities. It is often connected with the notion of service.

In 1887, Woodrow Wilson wrote that "It is the object of administrative study to discover, first, what government can properly and successfully do, and, secondly,

how it can do these proper things with the utmost possible efficiency and at the least possible cost of either money or of energy (Wilson, 1887:11)”. This statement highlights the significance of why scholars of Public Administration are concerned with the activities that occur within the realm of the discipline. This concern also stems from the fact that public administration is an activity that impacts, in one way or another, on the lives of people. People, in this context, can either refer to the general public or the public administrators; the group of people that are actually responsible for the creation/ formulation of laws, as well as the implementation of such laws.

According to the Wikipedia Encyclopaedia, Wilson was more influential to the science of public administration, primarily because of the article entitled *The Study of Administration*, that he wrote in 1887, in which he advocated four concepts:

- Separation of politics and administration.
- Comparative analysis of political and private institutions or organisations.
- Improving efficiency with business-like practices and attitudes toward daily operations.
- Improving the effectiveness of public service through management and by training civil servants, merit-based assessment.

The separation of politics and administration has been the subject of lasting debate. The different perspectives regarding this dichotomy contribute to differentiating characteristics of the suggested generations of public administration. Baker (1972:13) distinguishes administration from policy in the political sense. Certainly administrative theory can be distinguished from political theory. Politics is concerned, throughout the sphere of government, with the whole business of deciding what to do and getting it done. Therefore, a policy is the process of making a decision regarding ‘what to do’, whereas, administration is ‘getting it done’. Administration is concerned with forms and structures,



functions, tasks and processes in public affairs. These are means, not ends, although they can greatly influence ends.

Rosenbloom (1993:5) supports this statement by mentioning that public administration is the continuously active, business part of government, concerned with carrying out the law, as made by legislative bodies and interpreted by the courts, through the processes of organisation and management.

The continuously changing environment in which administrative activities occur, has led scholars of the discipline of Public Administration to seek new ways of solving existing problems. The scientific nature of the discipline has assisted scholars in understanding the current developments that occur within the field. This is because literature, which has been proven to be valid, exists within the discipline, thus, the sharing of knowledge has resulted in the growth of Public Administration world-wide. Caiden (1982:2) states that public administration is “professional in every aspect such as with special training programmes, unique skills, dedicated career service, distinct body of knowledge and covers proliferating professions concerned with the health of society. Its practice is an art; its study is a science. It distinguishes between theory and practice, and between study and application. It borrows from and lends to other disciplines”.

The importance of understanding the multi-disciplined relationship of Public Administration cannot be underestimated; this is primarily due to the fact that Public Administration is referred to some authors as a field of study that has enabled scholars of the field to deal effectively with extremely complex and difficult problems and to maintain a balance between political and administrative concerns (Denhardt and Denhardt, 2007:12).

According to Denhardt and Denhardt (2007:11) the following core elements that have been established within the discipline, represent the mainstream view of the Old Public Administration:

- the focus of government is on the direct delivery of services through existing or through newly authorised agencies of government.
- public policy and administration are concerned with designing and implementing policies focused on a single, politically defined objective.
- public programs are best administered through hierarchical institutions, with managers largely exercising control from the top of the institution.
- the primary values of public institutions are efficiency and rationality.
- public institutions operate most efficiently as closed systems, thus citizen involvement is limited.
- the role of the public administrator is largely defined as planning, organising, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting, and budgeting (POSDCORB).

Jones (2003:10) describes Public Administration as a field of study that views administrators as those who are more likely to passively execute the will of their political masters. The following section will explicate the administrative functions that are carried out by public administrators.

## 2.2.2 Administrative functions of public administration

Cloete (1991:50) argues that South Africa, as is the case in every other state, has an intricate network of public institutions. These institutions exist to provide public goods and services for the maintenance of the state. For the creation, maintenance and operation of public institutions, a variety of activities, also known as functions or processes, have to be carried out. These activities/processes/functions are collectively known as public administration.

According to Cloete (1991:50) the activities performed in administrative executive institutions can be classified into four groups, namely:

- i) generic administrative and managerial,
- ii) auxiliary,
- iii) instrumental, and
- iv) functional, also referred to as line functions.

Du Toit, *et al.* (2001:13) argue that “it is unrealistic to think that any objective can be achieved by merely carrying out the generic enabling processes. To achieve an objective, the execution of the generic administrative processes must be complemented by the execution of auxiliary, instrumental and line functions”. The four types of administrative tasks will briefly be explored in the paragraphs below.

#### **i) Auxiliary functions**

Auxiliary functions can be described as those functions that support other functions being performed. They include processes such as data processing and undertaking research about the possible consequences of a decision. Examples of other auxiliary functions are to collect and retrieve data and to set up an information system (Du Toit, *et al.* 2001:14). According to the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000), the aim of the act is to “foster a culture of transparency and accountability in public and private bodies by giving effect to the right of access to information, and actively promote a society in which the people of South Africa have effective access to information to enable them more fully to exercise and protect all of their rights”.

## ii) Instrumental functions

Instrumental functions can be described as the processes that are instrumental to the execution of the generic administrative, auxiliary and line functions (Du Toit, *et al.* 2001:14). Examples of instrumental functions are provided by Cloete (1991:52), which are: decision-making, communication (writing, reading and speaking), conducting meetings, and negotiating. In the South African public service, an institutional body that plays an important role in providing strategic communication leadership and support to all government departments is the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS) (Government Communication and Information System, 2010). In addition, it can be argued that strategic communication support should not only be made available to government departments alone, but such an instrumental function should be made accessible to the most significant stakeholders of the public administration process, the citizens. A lack of communication between public officials and citizens, often results in misunderstandings, grievances and civil protests because if public officials do not communicate their plans of actions to their constituents, then these members of society may feel neglected from the overall service delivery mandate. Effective communication is also vital for good governance and leadership, as it allows officials, particularly senior officials to account for their actions.

## iii) Line functions

The result of carrying out the enabling, auxiliary and instrumental functions provides the framework within which government institutions and public servants must fulfil their responsibilities, i.e. the line functions. Legislation will determine the boundary within which government institutions and public servants must function (Du Toit, *et al.* 2001: 14).

According to Vieg (1946: 4-5) like other sciences the developing science of administration has many branches. All of them, however, stem from the same

systematic field of study; at its fullest range; public administration embraces every area and activity under the jurisdiction of public policy.

The abovementioned statement, although vague, is a reminder of the broad nature of the discipline of Public Administration. Du Toit and Van der Walt (1997:14-15) identify the traditional six generic functions that characterise public administration. These are: policy-making, organising, financing, personnel provision and utilisation, work procedures and control. However, a more recent argument regarding whether or not management should be included as a generic function exists. The argument is well-known in the South African context as the *North-South debate*, however, Dralle (2000:149) argues that despite the differences of the views and schools of thought that are held by representatives of both of these regions, there has been greater networking between the different universities, technikons and the public service in most provinces. The main proponents of this debate were Cloete who represented Pretoria University as the North and Erwin Schwella, who represented Stellenbosch University as the South. Simply stated, scholars from the North argued against the inclusion of management in the discipline of Public Administration because they firmly believed that management is a practice that originated from the private sector and would therefore not be applicable in the public sector. Nevertheless, according to Schwella (1991:25) the process approach that was conceptualised by Cloete suffered from serious relevancy problems. In particular the way in which it was used by traditionalist adherents was lacking as it did not sufficiently consider the needs of the society or the profession.

In contrast, advocates of the South disagreed with the views of the North by stating that the introduction of public management practices within the public sector would ensure greater levels of work efficiency, ethics, accountability and effectiveness with regards to the delivery of services. Advocates of the South are of the opinion that the work performed in public administration is predominantly management. The only way in which public administration can function effectively is by appointing business leaders to the public institutions (Hanekom and Thornhill, 1995:12). Nonetheless, the end result

was that scholars of the North included management in their curricula, while scholars of the South endured the existence of Public Administration (Thornhill, 2006:800).

Hood (1995: 95-98) identifies seven key characteristics that represented the view from the South side of the debate. Some of these characteristics are: firstly, there would be a shift towards greater competition both between public sector institutions and the private sector. Secondly, there would be a move towards greater use within the public sector of management practices, which are broadly drawn from the private corporate sector. Thirdly, there would be a move towards greater stress on the discipline and parsimony in resource use and on active search for finding alternative, less costly ways to deliver public services. The fourth key characteristic is that there would be a move towards more hands on management (that is more active control of public institutions by visible top managers wielding discretionary power) as against the traditional Progressive Public Administration (PPA) style of hands off management in the public sector. The last key component or characteristic of the New Public Management approach is that there would be a move towards more explicit and measurable standards of performance for public sector institutions in terms of range, level and content of services to be provided, as against trust in professional standards and expertise across the public sector.

Scholars of the South can closely be associated with those who support a managerial approach to Public Administration. Such scholars take a businesslike approach and tend to minimise the distinctions between public and private administration. In their view, public administration is essentially the same as big business and ought to be run according to the same managerial principles and values (Rosenbloom, 1993:15).

Lane (1994:139) states that the “transition from a public administration approach to a public management approach appears to be the proper move in relation to increasing demands for efficiency in the public service. The rise of the management perspective reflects the growing salience of market values for the public service”.

The politics-administrative dichotomy argument is still as relevant in the twentieth century as it was when the idea first developed in the 1800s. Scholars such as Wessels and Pauw (1999:23) are of the opinion that the definition of public administration should exclude politics. The administration-politics dichotomy is based on the ideology of liberal democracy, which implies a desire for an impartial public service. Officials should keep the separation of politics and administration intact by refusing to have a political agenda in which politics is understood as power seeking.

Public management as a function of public administration did not sway away from the original functions of public administration, which were: policy-making, controlling, staffing, financial management, procedures, organising, but rather, it was in 1967 that a well-known and profound scholar of Public Administration, named Cloete, developed a model of Public Administration and such a model allowed for shifts in emphasis and for refinements in concepts. This is due to the fact that, it has become a trend in recent years for the institutions rendering public services to place an emphasis on the management functions.

According to Bouckaert and Pollitt, (2004:9) generic management studies tend to be fairly functional/instrumental in orientation: that is, management is about getting things done as quickly, cheaply and effectively as possible. From this statement, it can be deduced that the inclusion of management as a generic function of public administration was necessary on the basis that a management approach would be more effectual in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of government in delivering services. Such management functions could further be subdivided into: planning, leading, organising and control.

Botes (1988:126) mentions that from the viewpoint of the exponents of Business Economics and Management Schools, the administrative function is seen as a component that is subordinate to management. On the other hand, it could be argued that the functioning of a public manager revolves around the functions of both

administration and management. It is important; therefore that such a manager is well equipped with the mastery of both fields of the respective disciplines.

Klingner (1983:6) mentions that public administration includes the functions performed by administrative agencies at each sphere of government and related legislative and judicial activities. The system of checks and balances limits the powers of any sphere of government and also divides responsibilities, but coordination between spheres of government means that they share responsibilities; and a great variety of functional arrangements exist. The seven generic functions of Public Administration are briefly described below:

#### i) **Policy making**

Du Toit and Van der Walt (1997:14) describe policy-making as the umbrella process in terms of which, a series of functions are carried out to decide on a plan of action to achieve certain objectives.

Cloete (1991:79) states that in public administration, the policy process will always predominate. Yet there is still confusion about the meaning of policy. It should be stressed that policy is much more than a decision because to arrive at a policy, a series of decisions have to be taken.

Du Toit, *et al.* (2001:13) are of the opinion that in the determination of policy, the following actions are required:

- Investigating an issue that needs to be dealt with. For example, a perceived problem that needs to be resolved.
- deciding whether a policy is required to deal with the matter.
- Formulating a policy, for example, a policy for the restructuring of the public service (Single Public Service Bill, 2008).



Botes, *et al.* (1992:303-305) distinguish between three policy making processes, namely: planning, goal determination, and policy-making.

a) The planning of administration

Planning implies the existence of a plan. Planning is nothing more than systematically thinking. The end result of planning is a plan, which is nothing less than a carefully worked out programme of intended action. A plan remains a plan and does not imply a final guideline for action, because it must first be decided whether the plan will be accepted whether the plan will be accepted as a fixed guide for action or not. Planning is a thinking activity in which one uses imagination, farsightedness and deductive reasoning in order to visualise a desired state of affairs in the future, and determine the steps to be taken to achieve this.

b) Goal determination

Everyone pursues some goal; a desirable future state of affairs that one yearns for. One visualises activities, actions and behaviour that might attain that goal. Where the state is concerned, aims and institutions cannot be of a selfish or personal nature, but must serve the general interest and represent the collective ideals of the entire community. When government institutions determine aims for the future that are worth attaining, they have to bear the happiness and wellbeing of the community in mind.

c) Policy-making

Whereas aims describe the desired ideal which is worth attaining, policies are the systematic actions which should be taken to achieve them. It can be argued that policy making is the process of developing tools of action for addressing current or potential future concerns that affect the general well-being of citizens. Davids,

*et al.* (2009:54-55) argue that policies developed by the public sector serve to promote the political objectives and ideologies of the government of the day, reflecting its social and economic goals. Policies are realised through the design and delivery of public programmes and projects involving the delivery of public services, the production of goods, or transfers of resources to individuals, organisations or other spheres of government.

Before policies can be instilled, decisions have to be made. Mckevitt and Lawton (1994:66) are of the opinion that decisions made in the public domain are value laden. Decision-making is subject to public pressure and governed by politics. In these processes collective values are established. It is therefore a process, which in principle is open. Interests cannot be excluded. Management in the public domain cannot operate in an enclosed environment. Assumptions that public concern is limited or that political views are fixed cannot be made.

## ii) **Organising**

Organising entails establishing structures (institutions), each responsible for a particular functional area (for example health or education), and grouping certain functional activities (professional groups such as doctors, nurses and clerks) within specific structures (Du Toit and Van der Walt, 1997:14).

Cloete (1991:112) describes organising as a word used to refer to the activities/functions involved in creating and maintaining organisational units called institutions. Organising consists of classifying and grouping functions as well as allocating the groups of functions to institutions and workers in an orderly pattern so that everything the workers do will be aimed at achieving predetermined objectives.

Du Toit, *et al.* (2001:13) mention that actions like the division of functions and the creation of communication challenges must be undertaken. It could be argued

that grouping people and classifying them according to various functions would ensure coordination in the accomplishment of organisational objectives. Stahl (1978:447-448) distinguishes between two types of institutional specialists, namely; functional specialists and personnel generalists. The functional specialists are identified as those who are employed in very large departments. Organising is centred on several functional specialisations, for example: classification and pay administration, employment, placement, promotion, training and employee relations. Stahl (1978:448) further states that the drawbacks that are associated with the specialist approach include: firstly, supervisors being forced to identify which personnel speciality their problems or needs fall under and to deal with each speciality separately.

Secondly, the personnel or human resource management office tends to view problems in fragments, frequently failing to bring these problems together so that their interrelationships are understood and can be dealt with. Lastly, this approach, unless accompanied by rotation in assignments, narrows sharply the development of the individual personnel.

The second group of specialists comprises of the personnel generalists. This approach involves the organisation of the personnel office along the lines of the main functional subdivisions of the parent organisation. General personnel representatives in each unit handle all personnel matters for a given segment of the agency.

Thornhill (1985:46) defines organisation as the arrangement of work and of workers within an administrative unit. The definition provided by Thornhill (1985), although broad, encompasses a set of relationship amongst the people that work within the institution or organisation. It could be argued that the relationship is embedded in the fact that the accomplishment of tasks cannot be achieved if there is a lack of coordination between the tasks that have been set out and the people that have been given the responsibility of undertaking those duties.

### iii) **Financing**

Public financial management is the process that administers department finances. It entails, among other things, obtaining, spending and controlling public finances. At the national sphere if government provision is made for how money is obtained, how specific amounts can be spent by particular institutions for certain objectives and how spending should be controlled. In an individual department, this entails estimating the amounts needed to continue activities, spending voted amounts and controlling how money is spent (Du Toit and Van der Walt, 1997:14-15). In addition, Cloete (1991:133) states, “just as a person cannot initiate a business without money, a public institution also cannot work without money. However, all public institutions are dependent upon the citizens for their income”.

Rosenbloom (1993:273) is of the opinion that governmental budgets are currently an area of general concern and controversy. As governmental activity has consumed a greater proportion of society’s resources, considerable attention has been given to taxation and other sources of government revenues.

Pauw, *et al.* (2002:59) argue that all public institutions have at least one reason to exist. The existence of each can be justified by the outputs that they produce to meet the benefits or outcomes that the people or their governments desire. The undertaking of all activities requires resources. Resources cost money. The expenditure budget is, therefore, a result of the need for resources that will be used in producing outputs to satisfy prioritised needs.

Visser and Erasmus (2002:125) state that cash management is a crucial element of public sector financial management, constituting the framework on which the entire basis of public sector financial management relies and on which service delivery is dependent. Cash management relates to the management of all the

relevant processes and procedures applicable to revenue collection and the cash management operations of departments.

During the process of planning and budgeting, departments spend most of their efforts on the determination of objectives according to the programme structure and from each respective activity level. Costing is done according to the needs of each of these activity levels with the result that the total required expenditure is expressed in monetary terms (Visser and Erasmus, 2002:126).

#### iv) **Work procedures**

To ensure that everyone in a specific organisational unit co-operates in attaining the policy objective and does not waste time in the process, it is essential for specific work procedure to be laid down for each task (Cloete, 1991:174).

The determination of work procedures is an important generic function, mainly because it necessitates systematic co-ordination of tasks and other work procedures, this would ensure that everybody involved in the task knows their roles and responsibilities. Du Toit and Van der Walt (1997:15) describe procedure as a course of action that involves drafting specific instructions to be followed to carry out certain actions. These instructions are found in legislation and regulations arising from the legislative arena.

Work procedures and organising are two generic functions that complement each other in an effective manner because when tasks that need to be performed are identified, the people required to perform such tasks can also be identified. The primary objective is that tasks should be accomplished in an effective and efficient manner. Arguably, efficiency and effectiveness can only be achieved if work procedures and organisational systems are present.

## v) **Control/ Monitoring and Evaluating**

Controlling is exercised to ensure that all administrative and functional activities are carried out effectively and efficiently to achieve objectives (Du Toit and Van der Walt (1997:15). According to Cloete (1991:188) the exercise of control in the public sector can have one objective; namely to ensure that account is given in public for everything the authorities do or neglect to do. Visser and Erasmus (2002:277) state that internal control can be defined as an organisational measure implemented to prevent mismanagement and to improve the quality of management. Internal control not only refers to internal checks and audits but to the entire control and financial system established by management.

Two important control processes that are commonly practiced in the public service, especially with regards to public policy are monitoring and evaluation (M&E). Erasmus, *et al.* (2005:117) are of the opinion that an aspect of monitoring and evaluation that necessitates particular attention is that it requires standards against which results can be measured. Without these set standards, it is almost impossible to determine success or failure. A monitoring and evaluating effort that ends with matching objectives and seeking accomplishments is incomplete. It is important that monitoring and evaluating be incorporated with reporting.

Cloete (2006:247) declares that policy evaluation should be viewed as a judging process to compare explicit and implicit policy objectives with real or projected outcomes or results or impacts. In addition Mckevitt and Lawton (1994:62) argue that complex urban society depends upon a network of control. Society is grounded in a framework of regulation, upon which its functioning depends. Control derives from the public domain. Yet the public domain facilitates the achievement of collective aspirations. The public domain has to control, but also has to facilitate and enable.

From the above stated arguments, it can be deduced that the generic administrative control function plays a vital role, particularly in terms of providing accountability. The public administrator or manager has to ensure that the organisational objectives are achieved with the given resources. Therefore, the calculated use of resources (financial or human) is important because as it has been previously stated, these resources are limited. Monitoring and evaluation are two processes that can assist the manager in using limited resources efficiently and effectively.

#### vi) **Management**

“Generic management studies tend to be fairly functional/instrumental in orientation: management is about getting things done as quickly, cheaply and effectively as possible (Bouckaert and Pollitt, 2004:9)”. From this statement, it can be deduced that the inclusion of management as a generic function of public administration was necessary on the basis that a management approach would be more effectual in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of government in delivering services. Such management functions could further be subdivided into: planning, leading, organising and control.

The chapter earlier highlighted that authors such as Botes (1988:126) declare that from the viewpoint of the exponents of Business Economics and Management Schools, the administrative function is seen as somewhat subordinate to management. On the other hand, it could be argued that the functioning of a public manager revolves around the functions of both administration and management. It is important; therefore that such a manager is well equipped with the mastery of both fields of the respective disciplines.

From the abovementioned discussions on the generic administrative functions, it is evident that Public Administration is a multi-facet discipline. Knowledge of

other fields of study such as financial management, human resource management and policy management are important tools that the public manager must be well equipped with if he or she is to successfully address the challenges that the environment is constantly encountering.

## vii) **Human Resource Management and Administration**

As it was emphasised in the previous chapter, the human resources of any government department or private business are one of the most important assets to that particular institution. Schneier and Beatty (1978:5) argue that “the contemporary role of the human resource manager is an important one in any organisation; the responsibilities are broad and complex”. This statement advocates and highlights the importance of the human resource function from the organisational point of view. Strategic planning cannot neglect this function if institutional mandates are to be achieved.

Du Toit and Van der Walt (1997:15) are of the view that this administrative process involves performing several other functions for making personnel available to and placing them in suitable positions and developing them. Provision is made for this at the national sphere of government by means of an act (Public Service Act) and the establishment of the Department of Public Service and Administration. This activity in a particular department entails; recruiting, selecting, placing and using personnel meaningfully to maximise their productivity and commitment towards attaining the institution’s goals and objectives.

According to Cuming (1989:1) the human resource manager must see to it that employees are properly trained to cope with the demands of their jobs; otherwise they will feel inadequate, become increasingly frustrated and eventually leave. They will not be happy if their wages and working conditions are unsatisfactory: if they feel their pay is unjust, or if hours of work, holidays or the physical



environment around them are not what they should be- again they will try and improve on them elsewhere. The following section will explore the discipline of Human Resource Management. An emphasis will be placed on the functions that the human resource manager is expected to perform.

## **2.3 HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION**

For the purposes of this study, the sub-discipline that will be focused on is that of Human Resource Management because that is the scope within which career and retention management subsides. According to Qwabe and Pillay (2009:15) the human resource management strategy of the public Sector seeks to maximise people development, management and empowerment through quality skills development to accelerate transformation and service delivery that will benefit the people of South Africa.

Byars and Rue (2006:4) state that human resource management encompasses those activities designed to provide for and coordinate the human resources of an institution. The human resources of an institution represent one of its largest investments.

The human resource management function that the public manager is expected to perform is an important one, primarily because the public manager has to identify the most suitable person, who can fill a vacant post within the department. The phrase 'most suitable person' refers to the selection of the most competent individual, who the human resource manager deems capable of completing tasks and other duties that the job requires of them. Rosenbloom (1993:219) mentions that managerial public personnel administration seeks to maximise the values of efficiency, economy and effectiveness through the recruitment, selection, placement, pay and general treatment of public employees at work. The underlying assumption behind managerial public

personnel administration is that the public service should largely be a career service. Career growth and development through training should be emphasised.

### 2.3.1 The scope of human resource management

Cuming (1989:2) states that personnel management or what is commonly referred to as human resource management, is that part of management concerned with people at work, and with their relationship with the enterprise. Its aim is to bring together and to develop into an active organisation the men and women who make up an enterprise and, having regard for the well-being of the individual and of working groups, to enable them to make their best contribution to its success.

According to Cloete (1991:151) the operation of providing personnel and setting them to work, i.e. the staffing of public institutions, constitutes an extensive field of work and involves many separate activities. The staffing function is also known as the personnel function, personnel administration and personnel work. However, it can be argued that a paradigmatic shift has occurred from personnel administration to human resource management. The White Paper on Human Resource Management (WPHRM) of 1997 is an important legislative tool that was responsible for the paradigm shift. In chapter one, it was stated that the WPHRM, 1997, was introduced as an initiative that aimed to achieve a fundamental managerial shift from a centrally controlled, process-driven public service to a service which is representative of all the people of South Africa and one that treats all public servants as a valuable resource.

Byars and Rue (2006:4) mention that human resource functions refer to those tasks and duties performed at all spheres of government (national, provincial and local) to provide for and coordinate human resources. Human resource functions encompass a variety of activities that significantly influence all areas of an organisation. Human resource management as both a theory and as a discipline

encompasses numerous activities that are aimed at ensuring that the most suitable individuals are identified to fill vacant positions within the organisation. Some of the most critical functions of human resource management are discussed below.

### 2.3.1.1 *Organisational vision, mission and strategy*

The human resource manager is primarily responsible for communicating the institution's vision, mission and overall service delivery strategies to all the employees of the institution. Communicating these institutional values to employees is crucial because it will; ensure that the employees understand the mandate of the institution in accordance to the principles of service delivery. The necessity of this understanding is justified on the basis that it would give individual employees an opportunity to align their personal goals with those of the institution. Pearson (1991:5) describes a strategy as the determination of long-term goals and objectives of the institution and the adaptation of courses of action and allocation of resources necessary for carrying out these goals.

Pearson (1991:5) also states that institutions with sound policies should follow the practice of presenting their beliefs and values as explicit statements, which can be taken into account in daily management and in the development of strategy. Where policies go unarticulated, strategic development will be impaired or prevented. Personal and organisational values are the ultimate arbiters of ethical action.

David (2001:52) argues that it is important for ministers, deputy ministers and director generals in an institution to agree upon the basic vision for which the institution strives to achieve in the long term. A vision statement should answer the basic question, "*what do we want to become?*" A clear vision provides the foundation for developing a comprehensive mission statement. Many institutions have both a vision and mission statement, but the vision statement should be

established first and foremost. The vision statement of a public institution is derived from the core mandate of that particular institution because every public institution has the responsibility of uplifting the social well-being of every citizen of the country.

The essence of communicating the institution's vision, mission and strategy is also highlighted by David (2001:56), who states that a shared vision creates a commonality of interests that can lift workers out of the monotony of daily work and place them into a new world of opportunity and challenge.

The Provincial Department of Local Government and Housing's mission statement declares that the Department will establish, support and monitor sustainable developmental local governance through:

- coordinated and integrated development planning in all spheres of government.
- coordinated and targeted capacity building programme.
- the creation of an environment within which housing development takes place.
- coordination of disaster management.

The Department's vision statement is "sustainable developmental local governance and integrated human settlements. One can deduce from the Department's vision and mission statements that these two elements provide a directive and purpose for the Department to operate. The provision of houses to citizens is a constitutional right and the DLGH acknowledges this mandate".

### 2.3.1.2 *Human resource management planning*

Organisation planning comprises two critical human resource management processes, namely; job design and job analysis. According to McCormick (1978:85) the human problems in institutions are reflected to a substantial degree in terms of such criteria as job performance, absenteeism, labour turnover, grievances, job satisfaction, etc. These factors will ultimately determine how the tasks that need to be performed will be successfully completed. Grobler, *et al.* (2009:136) are of the opinion that the work that needs to be done in the institution and how it gets done matters to both employers and employees.

The important elements for supervisors and managers are: having work done properly that will lead to institutional goals being achieved, making sure that work is logically organised into jobs that can be compensated fairly, and having work that people are willing (even eager) to do. The factors significant to employees are: having a clear understanding of what is expected in the job, doing tasks they personally enjoy, being rewarded appropriately for their work, and having a sense that what they do is important and respected.

According to Grobler, *et al.* (2009:137) job design can be defined as the manipulation of the content, functions and relationships of jobs in a way that both accomplishes organisational goals and satisfies the personal needs of individual job-holders. Job design determines how work is performed and, therefore, greatly affects how an employee feels about a job, how much authority an employee has over the work, how much decision-making the employee performs on the job and how many tasks the employee should complete. Managers should realise that job design determines both their working relationship with their subordinates and the relationship among the employees themselves.

Pearson (1991:113) states that both efficiency and justice in selection depend crucially on the ability of human resource managers to describe fully and

accurately the nature and quality of work done in the institutions for which they are responsible. A professionally prepared job description is the essential basis for specifying the human qualities required, and the criteria for successful performance.

McCormick (1978:88) describes job analysis in terms of the behavioural understanding of the task requirements. The analysis tends to be focused on the human performance requirements and the skills and knowledge that need to be developed in order for people to be able to perform the task as described. Grobler, et al. (2009:150) define job analysis as the process by which management systematically investigates the tasks, duties and responsibilities of the jobs within an institution.

### 2.3.1.3 *Acquiring human resources*

As the concept states, human resource management procurement entails how the human resources (employees) are acquired from either the internal or external institutional environment. The following section will explore the functions of the human resource manager in obtaining the organisations most valued assets. Recruitment, selection, placement and induction are some of the critical functions that will be discussed.

#### i) Recruitment

Rosenbloom (1993:224) defines recruitment as the process of encouraging individuals to apply for government positions. It can be accomplished in a passive or active manner. The active approach to recruitment requires governments to publicise actively the benefits and virtues of a career in the public service. The deployment of particular individuals in public offices is a common occurrence in the public service, however this approach to recruiting has often been criticised because in some instances these deployed individuals are

appointed in a manner that is questionable from a transparency point of view. The role of party politics in administrative functioning can have a negative impact on the way a particular department seeks to deliver on its mandate, more so when the deployed candidate has been awarded that position because of loyalty or affiliation to a party, instead of them being awarded such a position based on their merit.

Grobler, *et al.* (2009:166) define recruitment as the process of acquiring applicants who are available and qualified to fill positions in the institution. Whereas recruitment encourages individuals to seek employment, the purpose of the selection process is to identify and employ the best-qualified individuals for specific positions.

Byars and Rue (2006:111) state that recruitment involves seeking and attracting a pool of people from which qualified candidates for job vacancies can be chosen. The magnitude of an institution's recruiting effort and the methods to be used in that recruiting effort are determined from the human resource planning process and the requirements of the specific jobs to be filled.

## ii) Selection

In selecting employees, most institutions try to match individual and institutions. This usually means selection of those who the employer predicts will be good performers (Wanous, 1978:188). Rosenbloom (1993:225) defines selection as the process of choosing among applicants. It can be deduced from the abovementioned statements that the selection process consists of the human resource manager deciding on which candidate is the most suitable to occupy any given job. There are various ways in which the human resource manager may select an individual, ranging from certain examinations (performance, written, oral or assessment centres).

According to Crous (2002:151) the aim of selection is to ensure that the person selected is, of the available applicants, the person best suited for the position, on the basis of skills, experience, abilities, personal attributes and potential, as well as the need to achieve a representative and diverse workforce in the Public Service.

Stahl (1976:131) identifies three criteria for the effectiveness of selection methods, and these are: objectivity, validity, and reliability. These will be discussed in detail below.

- **Objectivity:** one of the prime reasons for professionalising all steps in the examination system is to ensure thoroughgoing objectivity. The objectivity sought is in terms of identifying those characteristics of mind and skill necessary to the given purpose, and only those necessary, whether the purpose be to fill a particular position or to begin a career.
- **Validity:** examinations, especially in the form of written tests, should also have validity, that is, they should actually measure what they contend to measure. Perfect validity is practically impossible to achieve. Reasonable validity, however, is not only possible but indispensable. The process of determining the validity of a test involves statistical correlation between the test results and some criterion of efficiency on the job.
- **Reliability:** the reliability of a test refers to the consistency with which it serves as a measuring instrument. If a test is reliable, a person taking it at two different times should make substantially the same score each time.

In addition to the aforesaid criteria for the selection of candidates, Crous (2002:147) identifies certain principles that should be applied when candidates are selected for recruitment or promotion. These principles will ensure that the successful candidate is selected on a rationally defensible basis:



- job-related selection criteria: the criteria on which selection is based should relate only to the inherent requirements of the duties the candidate will undertake.
- fairness: the process of selection should not discriminate against any applicant on the grounds of arbitrary criteria.
- equity: all candidates should be measured against the same objective criteria, with due regard to the need for diversity and representivity in the Public Service.
- transparency: written, accessible records must be kept of the criteria used for selection, as well as of the assessment markings of individual candidates and the basis for the decision.

The selection process is complex. It requires the human resource manager to apply his or her professionalism and expertise in ensuring that the most suitable individual is appointed. The success of the organisation is dependent on the employees that are selected to perform tasks. Therefore, the human resource manager is responsible for selecting the individual that he or she believes would be most suited to perform the tasks that they are required to perform.

### iii) Placement

Cloete (1991:165) declares that when a candidate has been found suitable for appointment a decision will have to be taken on where to appoint or place this individual. It is essential that recruits should be placed in posts that suit them best.

It could be argued that the placement process is imperative due to several factors, namely; efficiency, effectiveness, and productivity. As it was stated in the aforementioned paragraph, the human resource manager is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that employees are placed in posts that would best suit

them. A highly productive employee may be regarded as one that is appointed in a position that maximises the rate at which he or she performs their duties and tasks in an efficient and effective manner. Placing employees in positions that would enhance their productivity can be viewed as a means to an end, in the sense that, a highly productive employee is arguably one that would perform their tasks in a manner that would result in the institution achieving its aims and objectives effectively and efficiently. Productivity, like performance management is essential because without these two factors the extent to which services will be delivered would be affected.

#### iv) Induction

Grobler, *et al.* (2009:206) state that after accepting a job offer, most new employees are very keen to learn more about their job and the institution. Induction, which is also known as orientation or socialisation, is the process of integrating the new employee into the institution and acquainting him or her with the details and requirements of the job.

Grobler, *et al.* (2009:207) identify several objectives of induction, these are listed below:

- acquainting new employees with job procedures.
- establishing relationships with co-workers, including subordinates and supervisors.
- creating a sense of belonging among employees by showing them how their job fits into the overall institution.
- acquainting new employees with the goals of the institution.
- indicating to the employees the preferred means by which these goals should be attained and,

- indicating the required behaviour patterns for effective job performance.

The abovementioned objectives of the induction process highlight the importance of orientating new employees not only to their jobs, but also to the institutional environment as a whole. Communicating the institutional objectives to the new employee would assist the employee to adapt to the general working procedures of the institution, but more importantly induction can also reduce ambiguity amongst new and current employees, with regards to the tasks that need to be performed.

#### 2.3.1.4 *Human resource management utilisation*

Another critical function that is performed by the human resource manager is the effective utilisation of human resources. The following section will explore the various components of human resource management utilisation, such as: performance management, training and development and career management. It is inarguably important that the human resource manager utilises employees in the most efficient manner, in which their productivity would be maximised, thus enabling institutional goals to be achieved.

##### i) Performance management

Grobler, *et al.* (2009:262) are of the opinion that performance management is a broader term than performance appraisal. Performance management became popular in the 1980s as total quality management (TQM), which places an emphasis on using all management tools, including performance appraisal, to ensure achievement of performance goals. Tools such as reward systems, job design, leadership and training should be included as part of a comprehensive approach to performance.

As it was argued in the previous human resource function, placement is an important process as it gives the human resource manager an opportunity to

appoint employees in positions that would best suit them. Presumably, a position that best suits an employee is one in which the employee can perform duties and tasks to the best of their ability. The need to motivate employees is a crucial element that the human resource manager is required to address, particularly with regards to enhancing performance. Low performance levels of employees resulted in the South African government introducing the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). This introduction could be described as an approach towards monitoring and improving employee performance. Ramsingh (2007:2) mentions that the South African government realised that if it was to transform the way the Public Service operates, it needed to transform the manner in which it managed its employees.

The performance management system is largely attributed to an improved customer-centred approach or what is commonly known as the *Batho Pele* approach. *Batho Pele*, literally meaning “people first” is a government initiative, which ultimately seeks to set a benchmark for the delivery of basic services to citizens. Improving service delivery is therefore the goal of the public service transformation programme (White Paper on Transforming Public Service, 1997).

Scholars of human resource management have argued that effective performance management systems can be used as a tool of retention management. It is important to note that the existence of a performance management system in a department provides an interface in which employees can gauge the extent to which they feel valued or not within the institution. This becomes an important barometer in determining whether their commitment to the institution grows or whether they slowly start to distance themselves from it.

## ii) Training and development

Bass and Vaughan (1978:307) state that even if effective selection decisions are made, persons entering an institution seldom have all the necessary skills, abilities and knowledge to perform optimally. Thus, a training and development

programme is mandatory, if not to improve present job performance, then to ready workers for added responsibility in the future.

The training and development of public servants is extremely important because it plays a vital role in equipping public servants with the necessary skills, knowledge and competencies which are vital for them in the effort to deliver effective and efficient service (Chelechele, 2009:47). From this statement it could be deduced that training and development form an integral part of human resource development.

In South Africa, an institution that is responsible for the training and development of public servants is, amongst others, the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA). It aims to; capacitate public sector departments to identify and meet their management development and training needs in relation to their service delivery objectives, as well as to develop and administer a training framework of curricula and materials oriented to service delivery to be used by providers of transversal skills training for junior and middle managers (PALAMA, 2008).

The importance of establishing an effective training and development system cannot be undermined. The workplace is constantly influenced by various demands from the environment, albeit the external or internal environment. It has become more important for employees to be competent and skilled enough to address the challenges that they are confronted with on a daily basis. This argument is supported by Erasmus, *et al.* (2005:323) who state that it is commonly accepted that a major task of any system of public human resource management is to ensure that public officials are competent to understand and respond effectively to their ever-changing milieu.

Education, training and development are three interrelated functions that seek to equip the employee with the necessary skills and abilities in order to carry out

tasks. The Wikipedia encyclopaedia (2010:1) states that education is “mind preparation and is carried out remote from the actual work area. Training is the systematic development of the attitude, knowledge, skill pattern required by a person to perform a given task or job adequately and development is the growth of the individual in terms of ability, understanding and awareness”. It is evident that the three functions play an important role in preparing the employee for the workplace challenge. Armstrong (1992:103) states that education is another form of communication. An educational programme is designed to increase both knowledge and understanding. The aim will be to influence behaviour and thereby progressively change attitudes. Training is designed to develop specific competences. Management training can also be focused on increasing the competence of managers in specific areas of their responsibility for gaining commitment, e.g. performance management.

Sadarrudin (2001:1) states that training which occurs, may be job-specific training or more developmental in nature. The focus, in either arena, is to enhance the personal qualities of the employees such that the improvements made will manifest into greater institutional productivity.

The fact that institutional change is an inevitable phenomenon, requires the institution to prepare its employees for new developments in the workplace. The importance of adopting internal change agents, who will assist employees through the processes of change, is highlighted by Sadurrin (2001:1), who argues that the role of these change agents, or institutional development specialists, is to help the members of the institution cope with change. Changes that occur in an institution come in many forms. They may be of a cultural nature, where the philosophy, values and ways of operating are changed by senior management.

Change may also occur in the institution’s structure, which can result in layoffs, new job assignments, and team involvement. Despite the types of changes that

occur in the institution, employees have to be prepared to accept these changes and continue performing their duties in a productive and efficient manner.

### iii) Career management

In chapter one, it was stated that career management is a process that individual employees are primarily responsible for, in seeking opportunities for development and promotion in line with their own career aspirations. Supervisors and managers have a responsibility of supporting these aspirations by encouraging their subordinates to take advantage of various opportunities that are presented within the department (DPSA, 2006: 27).

According to Erasmus, *et al.* (2005:296) and Fowler (1995:35) public institutions globally have become flatter and fewer levels can be distinguished, as opposed to the traditional hierarchical structures that were commonly associated with the bureaucratic system of government. Such flatter structures enable public institutions to increase their use self-directed work teams, and this has resulted in institutions becoming more knowledge based. The individual is expected to take control of his or her career, while the institution plays more of a supportive role in this self-management process. Career management programmes are developed by employers to involve employees in setting their own goals and recognising their strengths and weaknesses, which are aimed at assisting employees with the identification of skills and other qualities required for current and future jobs.

From the abovementioned statements, it can be highlighted that career management plays a significant role in human resource utilisation. Employee personal development is crucial to both the employee and the employer. The employer may establish a career management system in the institution, which could be viewed as a method of motivating the employee to become more effective, efficient, and productive at the tasks and duties that they perform

because this would ultimately result in them being rewarded, by virtue of a promotion.

Chapter three of the study will extensively discuss career and retention management, primarily due to the fact that these two components are the central focus of the study. By exploring these two elements, a greater understanding of the purpose of the study will be highlighted because by clarifying what career and retention management mean, it would be evident that these two concepts need to be made more of a priority in the South African Public Service than they currently are. The continuous loss of labour, particularly skilled labour to other sectors in the labour market will eminently result in public institutions being unable to deliver services to people as they do not have the human capacity to do so. Staff turnover is a challenge that the South African government needs to address because it may have negative consequences on the delivery of services.

#### 2.3.1.5 *Human resource management maintenance*

The human resource management maintenance function comprises the activities that are performed by the human resource manager, in ensuring that the adequate number of employees that are required by the organisation are available at any period of time. Maintaining the right number of people, particularly skilled employees is critical if an organisation is to accomplish its aims and objectives. The elements of human resource management maintenance are: compensation, employee assistance programmes and labour relations. These are discussed as follows:

##### i) Compensation

The long-standing debate about whether or not remuneration is a motivating factor to employees is still relevant in contemporary human resource



management practice today. Klesser (2005:317) states that in general terms, remuneration refers to the way in which employees are rewarded at the workplace. A distinction can be drawn between two broad types of rewards, namely: intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

An intrinsic reward is a self-generating outcome such as personal esteem and fulfilment derived from undertaking interesting or useful work. Extrinsic reward is reflected in more tangible monetary and non-monetary payments in the guise of wages or fringe benefits provided by the employer (Klesser, 2005:317). The difficulty of establishing whether or not remuneration is a motivator is due to the fact that different employees have different motives or reasons for performing duties and tasks in the first place. Human behaviour is unpredictable, thus it becomes more complex to understand whether a highly skilled or unskilled employee would be satisfied when they receive a higher remuneration package.

In most instances, employers use remuneration as a means to attract potential recruits. This type of approach may be very effective in recruiting individuals particularly if the employees are financially motivated. The financial aspects of a job position may not necessarily attract potential recruits, but they may place a preference on the intrinsic benefits of that position.

## ii) Labour relations

Labour relations can be referred to as the set of relationships that exist between the employer and the employee, as well as the relationship between the unions that seek to represent the interests of employees and employers. Cloete (1991:169) states that personnel will always have grievances. Regardless of whether the grievances are well founded or not, they should be catered for or else they will undermine the morale and performance of the officials.

The human resource manager is responsible for ensuring that the relations between employees and their employers remain harmonious, however, if difficulties or problems do emerge the human resource manager should be in possession of the interpersonal skills to resolve these disputes. Human resource maintenance requires the human resource manager to maintain healthy working relations between the employees and their employers, particularly if institutional objectives are to be achieved collectively and successfully.

Sadarrudin (2001:1) differentiates between labour relations and employee relations. Labour relations simply involves dealing with labour unions, whereas employee relations refers to those aspects that help make an employee committed and loyal to the institution through fair and equitable treatment, and by listening to employees. Employee relation specialists are responsible for fostering an environment where employees can interact directly with supervisors and settle any differences that may arise.

### iii) Employee assistance programme

According to the Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Transport, an employee assistance programme (EAP) can be defined as a programme aimed at improving the quality of life of officials and their families by providing greater support and helping to alleviate the impact of everyday work and personal problems. This programme enhances officials' well being by restoring impaired job performance whilst at the same time increasing the Department's effectiveness.

The well being of employees is paramount to the performance of the institution. As it was mentioned in the previous human resource maintenance function (labour relations), the human resource manager is responsible for ensuring that a healthy working relationship between an employee and their employer is not only

established, but that it is also maintained. According to the Wikipedia Encyclopaedia, EAPs are beneficial to both the employee and the employer in the following circumstances:

- Employee:

employees and their household members may use EAPs to help manage issues that could adversely impact their work and personal lives. EAP counsellors provide assessment, support, and if needed, referrals to additional sources. An EAP's services are usually free to the employee or household member, having been pre-paid by the employer. In many cases, an employer contracts with a third-party company to manage its EAPs.

The examples of support services that are provided by EAPs include: substance abuse, safe working environment, emotional distress, major life events; including births, accidents, and deaths, health care concerns, financial or legal concerns, family/personal issues, and work relationship issues. The number of services that EAPs provide vary in scope, however, the abovementioned examples are common issues that EAPs are established to address.

- Employer:

EAPs may result in various benefits for employers, including lower medical costs, reduced turnover and absenteeism, and higher employee productivity and morale. EAPs may also provide other services to employers, such as supervisory consultations, support to troubled work teams, training and education programmes, and critical incident services.

From the aforesaid statements, it can be deduced that the use of EAPs in organisations cannot be misjudged. As it has been commonly agreed upon by scholars of human resource management, employees are the institutions most valued assets because the success and the overall performance of the organisation are dependent on them to a large extent. Therefore, the employer has to ensure that the institution establishes an employee support system and that this support service is purposefully utilised by employees who are experiencing difficulties, whether it is in the institution or it is non-work related.

## **2.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF CAREER AND RETENTION MANAGEMENT IN THE HUMAN RESOURCE ENVIRONMENT**

From the abovementioned functions, it is evident that in ensuring that an institution's most valued assets are satisfied within the working environment, a number of critical tasks need to be performed by the human resource manager. The two functions that are identified as being the most critical in the study are the functions of career and retention management. Career management, as it was highlighted above, falls within the scope of human resource utilisation, and were as retention management falls under the scope of human resource maintenance. The importance of providing career development systems to current and potential employees cannot be undermined, especially if an institution is determined to retain its most critical employees. A career management system that is adopted by a particular institution and implemented effectively within that institution will undeniably assist in maintaining low levels of staff turnover, therefore decreasing the high costs associated with employee turnover.

## **2.5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter provided a theoretical framework in which Public Administration and Human resource management were contextualised. Public Administration was described as the discipline in which public administration is studied. The four

types of administrative functions, namely: auxiliary, line, instrumental and generic functions of public administration were identified and briefly discussed. A comprehensive study regarding human resource management was initiated. This objective study focused on the some of the broad functions of human resource management, these include; organisation planning, human resource management procurement, human resource management utilisation, human resource planning and human resource management maintenance.

This study identifies public career and retention management as two critical challenges that the South African government needs to address because the loss of labour, particularly skilled labour may negatively impact on the delivery of services. The following chapter will explicitly examine the two human resource elements; career and retention management, as an attempt to understand the necessity of why the government needs to prioritise the two concepts even more than they are currently prioritised.

## CHAPTER 3: EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND CAREER MANAGEMENT

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter contextualised two important concepts that are core to the study, namely; public administration and public human resource management. Human resource management was identified as one of the generic functions of public administration and it was highlighted that if institutional objectives are to be achieved the human resource manager needs to perform certain functions effectively to ensure that the institution's most valued assets (its employees) are executing their duties efficiently and effectively.

Human resource maintenance was described in the previous chapter as a function that comprises the activities that are performed by the human resource manager, in ensuring that an adequate number of employees that are required by the institution are available at any given period of time. It was also highlighted that acquiring and maintaining the right number of people, particularly skilled employees, is critical if an institution is to achieve its aims and objectives. The following chapter will comprehensively discuss the concepts of employee retention and career management, as these play an important role in determining the length of time that an employee will remain within the institution. The study acknowledges the fact that the human resource system for the South African public service is characterised by four major role players, namely the Department of Labour, the Public Service Commission, the Department of Public Service and Administration, national departments and provincial administrations, of which the Department of Local Government and Housing in the Limpopo Province is incorporated.

The first section of this chapter will explore the topic of employee turnover, which will provide a definition of employee turnover, discuss the different types of

employee turnover, as well as outline the different types of costs of employee turnover that are incurred by the institution. The second part of the chapter will detail the topic of career management. While the third section of the chapter will analyse the concept of retention management.

## 3.2 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

An understanding of what the concept employee turnover entails is paramount if an analysis on employee retention is discussed. Roux *et al.* (1997:211) state that employee turnover can be described as the process of change in the composition of the labour force. Furthermore, each staff member who leaves the institution is replaced by an ‘untrained’ staff member. As it was stated in the second chapter, public institutions such as the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy are tasked with the responsibility of training and retraining public servants, which of course is a costly exercise.

According to the Wikipedia Encyclopaedia (2009:1) employee turnover can simply be defined as the “rate at which an employer gains and losses employees”. Mobley (1982:1) states that employee turnover (people leaving an institution) is a major institutional phenomenon. Porter and Steers (1978:479) are also of the same opinion as Mobley (1982) that employee turnover and absenteeism represent both interesting and important phenomena because they are relatively clear-cut acts of behaviour that have potentially critical consequences for both the person and the institution.

Stahl (1976:390) argues that employees leave their jobs for a variety of reasons. Regardless of the degree of job security or tenure provided this loss and replacement of workers known as turnover, occurs in institutions. In addition Mobley (1982:10) defines turnover as the cessation of membership in an institution by an individual who received monetary compensation from the

institution. Furthermore, Mobley (1982:6) identifies several factors about labour turnover, namely:

- Turnover can have positive and negative implications for individuals, their careers, and their self-concept. Turnover also affects those who leave the institution and those who remain behind;
- Turnover is potentially costly, and institutions need to document these costs carefully. Documenting these costs would assist the institution in identifying the exact expenditure figures from the use of training and development programmes and other programmes that are invested in developing the skills of those employees who leave the institution. Analysing the current 'wasted' expenditure would ensure that in future the same costs are not incurred by the institution;
- Turnover can have positive institutional implications. It can for example, create opportunities for promotion, infusing new ideas and technology, and displace poor performers;
- Lack of turnover can create its own set of problems, such as blocking career-development paths and accumulating poor performers.

Several critical deductions can be made from the abovementioned characteristics of labour turnover. Firstly, employee turnover can have either negative or positive implications for not only the institution, but also for the individuals that leave or remain within the institution. Secondly, the loss of an employee is costly to the institution. The different types of turnover costs will be evaluated in the following section of the chapter. Lastly, it was stated that a lack of turnover can be negative especially if there is a high presence of poor performers in the institution. The subsequent section will analyse some of the important elements of employee turnover, such as the key types of turnover, the costs of turnover and a model for measuring turnover.



### 3.2.1 The key types of employee turnover

Mobley (1982:11) identifies two different types of employee turnover, namely; internal versus external turnover and voluntary and involuntary turnover. Internal turnover involves employees leaving their current positions and taking new positions within the same institution. Internal turnover is both positive (such as increased morale from the change of tasks or duties and the change of supervisors) and negative (such as project/relational disruption). Negative effects of turnover do exist, and therefore, it may equally be important to monitor this form of turnover as it is to monitor its external counterpart. External turnover has an undoubtedly more adverse effect than internal turnover because it results in an employee not only leaving a specific position in the institution, but it entails the individual leaving the institution altogether.

The second type of turnover is what is known as voluntary versus involuntary turnover. Stahl (1976:390) states that voluntary turnover is initiated at the choice of the employee, were as in the instance of involuntary turnover, the employee has no choice in their termination (such as long term sickness, death, family relocations, or more critically employer-initiated termination). Voluntary turnover is defined as employee initiated, with the staff member seeking better employment conditions or prospects or job satisfaction. Involuntary turnover is defined as employer initiated and due to retrenchment or dismissal for disciplinary or performance related reasons (Sutherland and Jordaan, 2004:56).

Another type of turnover is identified by Mathis and Jackson (2003:79) who declare that turnover can either be uncontrollable or controllable. As the concept states, uncontrollable turnover occurs for reasons outside the impact of the employer, were as controllable turnover occurs due to factors that could be influenced by the employer. There are a number of reasons why uncontrollable turnover occurs, such as:

- The employee moves out of the geographic area;
- The employee decides to remain at home for family reasons;
- The employee's spouse is transferred; or
- The employee experiences health related problems;
- As well as the employee's intention to retire from the workplace.

Mathis and Jackson (2003: 79) dispute that although there is not much that an institution can do to avoid the phenomena of uncontrollable turnover, controllable turnover should be avoided or addressed. This is because institutions are better able to retain employees if they address the concerns of employees that are leading to turnover. Furthermore, even though turnover is inevitable, many employers recognise that reducing turnover is crucial. The costs of turnover, including diminished institutional productivity, have led employers to direct considerable efforts on employee retention.

Byars and Rue (2006: 353) explain the concept of 'employment at will' as an initiative that allows either the employer or employee to terminate their employment relationship at any time for virtually any reason or for no reason at all. Although the concept of 'employment at will' may sound like a flexible act that is committed by either an employee or an employer, it may not always result in positive consequences particularly towards the overall functioning of the institution. This act, however, is not common in the public service as it possibly would be in the private sector because the public service as opposed to the private sector is highly regulated by laws and procedures that should be followed by both a public servant and the particular employing institution. The Public Service Act of 1994 and the Public Service Regulations of 2001, play a vital role in setting out the circumstances under which employee exists are affected.

The abovementioned documents outline the responsibilities of the employee and the department with regards to the termination of the employee's contract. For instance, an employee who seeks to resign or retire from a department may do so at any time, provided that he or she has given the department appropriate

notice. An employer who seeks to terminate an employee's contractual obligations to the department is responsible for notifying that employee in advance as well as compensating that employee for the income that he or she would be forfeiting.

In addition to the types of labour turnover, it is important to highlight that labour turnover can be perpetrated either by individuals in unskilled or skilled positions within the institution. The Wikipedia Encyclopaedia (2009:2) states that unskilled positions often have higher turnover and employees can generally be replaced without the institution or organisation incurring any loss of performance. The ease of replacing these employees provides little incentive to employers to offer generous employment contracts.

In the case of skilled employees leaving the institution or organisation, high turnover rates can pose a risk to the institution, due to the human capital (such as skills, training and knowledge) lost. Given the natural specialisation of skilled professionals, these employees are likely to be re-employed by another institution or private organisation. Therefore, turnover of these individuals incurs both replacement costs to the institution, as well as resulting in a competitive disadvantage to the institution. Mathis and Jackson (2003: 78) are of the opinion that this type of turnover is known as functional and dysfunctional turnover. Functional turnover is experienced when unskilled, lower performing or even disruptive employees leave the institution. Dysfunctional turnover is experienced when skilled, key individuals and high performers leave at critical times.

Ramlall (2003:63) indicates that when an institution loses a critical employee, there is a negative impact on innovation, consistency in providing services to citizens may be jeopardised, and delays in the delivery of services to citizens may occur. According to the Public Service Commission's 'Report on the Audit on Vacancy Rates in National and Provincial Departments' (2008:2) the vacancy rate in departments has proven to be one of the biggest challenges that are

central to the problem of service delivery both within national and provincial departments. The challenges of service delivery are highly associated to the slow rate at which vacancies within departments are filled because these departments do not have the capacity to perform service delivery related functions, such as providing houses and health care facilities to those that require them the most.

However, Harvard Business Essential (2002: 65) states that there is another side to the cost-of-turnover coin. The turnover of incompetent people may not produce any costs since the departure of such employees may actually eliminate certain hidden costs. These hidden costs may be incurred as a result of the poor decisions that employees, particularly those in key positions within the institution make. Therefore, the loss of such employees may be a positive outcome. The principles of efficiency and effectiveness are paramount in the way in which government departments perform their functions. Therefore, the departure of underperforming public officials would not be detrimental to the way in which a department attains its goals, but it would instead enhance the productivity and eliminate the negative image that would be associated to the department.

From the abovementioned arguments, it is evident that the consequences of turnover can be categorised as either positive or negative. However, the outcome is that losses will always be incurred as a result of labour turnover. As it was mentioned earlier in the chapter, one of the main reasons why employers engage in staff retention practices is because the cost of losing, as well as replacing employees will impact negatively on the institution. The following section will discuss the costs of labour turnover. The types of labour turnover costs will briefly be analysed, and thereafter an emphasis will be placed on the impact and consequences that these costs have on an institution.

### 3.2.2 The cost of labour turnover

According to Harvard Business Essentials (2002:60-62), retention is the converse of turnover (turnover being the sum of voluntary and involuntary

separations between an employee and his or her company). Stahl (1976:391) argues that the replacement and re-training of workers is an expensive process, and when such operations are unnecessary, they are certainly wasteful. Stahl (1976:393) is of the opinion that the cost of replacing and re-training new employees is considerably high because in many cases the work requires experience, which is often not obtainable outside the institution.

The previous section of the chapter, highlighted that labour turnover can either be committed by skilled or unskilled employees. Arguably, the loss of skilled employees would be more detrimental to the institution, as it would result in the institution being challenged to replace that employee in a short amount of time because if skill is lost to the labour market and that skill is not replaced promptly, productivity levels within the institution may decline, which is negative towards the overall performance of the institution.

According to the Wikipedia Encyclopaedia (2009:2) high turnover often means that employees are unhappy with the work or compensation, but it can also indicate unsafe or unhealthy conditions, or that too few employees give satisfactory performance. The lack of career opportunities, challenges and dissatisfaction with the job scope or conflict with the management have been identified as predictors or causes of high turnover. The introduction of the Performance Management and Development system (PMDS) in the public service was promulgated by the government's realisation that through effective performance management, the attitudes of public servants would be directed in way in which the priorities of government, and of such of the community of the people that it serves, would be enhanced through improved individual performance.

The high price or cost that is associated with turnover is one of the major reasons why retention matters. Harvard Business Essentials (2002:63) identify three types of labour turnover costs:

- Direct expenses: including the out-of-pocket cost of recruiting, interviewing, and training replacements.
- Indirect costs: such as the effect on workload, morale, and customer satisfaction.
- Opportunity costs: including lost knowledge and the work that doesn't get done while managers and other employees focus on filling the slot and bringing the replacement up to speed.

Mathis and Jackson (2003:91) categorise the abovementioned labour turnover costs into hiring costs, training costs, productivity costs and separation costs. Firstly, hiring costs include recruiting and advertising expenses, search fees, human resource interviewer, staff time and salaries, relocation and moving costs, employment testing costs, as well as reference checking time. Secondly, training costs include costs of training materials, supervisors' and managers' time and salaries, co-worker "coaching" time and salaries, as well as training staff time and salaries.

Thirdly, productivity costs include lost productivity due to "break-in" time of new employees, unfamiliarity with institutional processes and services, and the non-delivery of goods and services to the people constitutes the productivity costs. Lastly, the separation costs include human resource staff and supervisor time and salaries to prevent separations, exit interview time, unemployment expenses, as well as legal fees for separations challenged.

In an attempt to understand how labour turnover costs are determined the Wikipedia Encyclopaedia (2009:4) provides a three step analysis of measuring labour turnover:

- Step one: calculate the average number of employees: the number of employees is calculated by adding the number at the start of the period, to the number at the end of the period. Then dividing by two to arrive at the average number of employees;

- Step two: calculate the number of departures during the period;
- Step three: divide departures by number of employees. In the final step, a division between the number of relevant departures by the average number of employees is made.

Branham (2005:4) argues that analysing turnover costs independently is insufficient because in most instances before employees decide to leave, they become disengaged. These disengaged employees are uncommitted, marginally productive, frequently absent or in some cases, working actively against the interests of the institution. It is apparent that human resource managers and supervisors within the institution must identify employees who demonstrate characteristics of disengagement because if the employees are identified at an early stage it would become less problematic to convince these individuals to remain with the institution.

Erasmus *et al.* (2005:29) state that often the dynamic tensions that exist between the employer and the employee in the public service result in organised labour unions such as the Public Servants Association of South Africa, National Union of Mineworkers and Congress of South African Trade Unions, for example, intervening on behalf of the aggrieved employee as these organised unions aim to eradicate the socioeconomic inequalities that are present in the workplace. Such disputes should be resolved as immediately as possible because the problem is often that the public interest is at stake in all public sector bargaining. This statement is supported by Daley (2002:275) who argues that in terms of collective bargaining an agreement is not limited in its effects to the two parties that negotiate it. The loss of productivity in public institutions has an adverse impact on the delivery of services to citizens.

According to Benson, *et al.* (2004:317) the human capital theory suggests that individuals decide whether to stay with an institution on the basis of whether their jobs provide the best fit with and returns on their skills. Thus, a key issue for those who have invested their time and effort in further education is whether their

institutions recognise this effort and provide an opportunity to use the new skills by, for instance, promoting the employees to new jobs. The importance of developing and implementing effective, and not only attractive career management systems cannot be undermined by any institution that intends on retaining some, if not all of its best employees. The latter section of this chapter will explore the importance of an institution engaging in career management practices as a strategy to retain employees.

It has been argued that the loss of critically skilled employees in the institution will lead to lost productivity, which in itself is a cost that is related to turnover. Lost productivity often results in citizens increasingly becoming impatient with having to wait for services that sometimes take longer to be delivered and even when they are delivered, at times fall short of the citizen's expectations (PSC 2008:2). Public institutions are compelled to remain competitive in terms of ensuring that they are well equipped to retain their most valued human resources. The ability of an institution to attract and retain skilled employees is often cited as a challenge to successful service delivery. The Public Service Commission (2010:18) declares that a high level of staff turnover is among the most persistent challenges that the public service is confronted with. However, the challenges that are associated with poor service delivery are also related to the fact there is a general skills shortage in the public service.

Porter and Steers (1978:505) argue that each individual is seen as bringing to the employment situation his/her own unique set of expectations for his/her job. Most employees place a fairly high valence on the attainment of their expectations in certain areas, such as pay, promotion, supervisory relations and peer group interactions. Whatever the composition of the individual's expectation set, it is important that those factors be substantially met if the employee is to feel it is worthwhile to remain in the institution.

The aforesaid statement highlights the importance of acquiring the balance between what the employee is actually rewarded with and what the employee



initially expected to be rewarded with. This discrepancy is explored in the discussion based on career management in the latter section of the chapter.

### 3.2.3 Model for measurement of original human resource costs

Mobley (1982:17) provides a model that depicts a measurement of human resource replacement costs. These replacement costs represent the sacrifice that would have to be incurred to replace human resources presently employed and include costs attributable to the turnover of a present employee and the costs of acquiring and developing a replacement. One of the types of costs that are incurred in this model is the separation cost. The separation cost includes the cost of out-processing, separation pay if applicable, and the cost associated with a vacant position and any decrement or loss of efficiency in performance prior to separation.

As it has been highlighted in the second chapter of the research, most institutions which possess highly skilled and technical employees are challenged with the task of ensuring that they retain those top employees. According to Bernthal and Wellins (no date: 1) talent retention management, which is also commonly known as the 'war for talent' is making it more difficult for institutions to keep current employees and to find qualified replacements. The phrase 'war for talent' as the term is coined, refers to the competition that emerges between two or more institutions, which strive to attract and or retain an individual employee. Sparrow, *et al.* (2004:120) are of the opinion that the purpose of a successful talent management system is to attract, retain, develop and utilise employees in ways that create:

- Sustainable commercial competitiveness through the alignment of employee competence, behaviours and intellectual energy with institutional activities;
- Higher levels of focused innovation;

- Improved staff engagement and commitment;
- Lower loss rates of knowledge and experience; and
- Lower external resourcing costs.

The abovementioned characteristics of an effective talent management system highlight the importance of ensuring that an institution invests the necessary resources, whether those are implicit or explicit to ensure that talented employees remain within the institution. Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009:82) argue that South Africa is experiencing a general skills crisis, especially pertaining to the retention of its top talent or knowledge workers. This '*brain drain*' leads to the depletion or loss of intellectual and technical personnel, with a negative outcome which impacts on the economic and social growth of the country. Inarguably, the loss of skilled individuals from one country to another country is worse than the loss of a skilled individual from one institution to another institution within the same country.

The reality, however, is that the most skilled professionals within the country are not obliged to remain in a working environment that they are not happy or satisfied to be working in. Therefore, these individuals may decide to look for work elsewhere that would satisfy their current needs. The challenge for the employer who would be losing an employee is to establish the reasons why that individual is leaving the institution; after these reasons have been identified the employer is tasked with the responsibility of documenting them for the purposes of developing strategies to curb this impediment before it develops into a trend that may negatively impact on the performance of the institution. As it was stated earlier in the chapter, the reasons for an individual departing may be coined as either controllable or uncontrollable, or avoidable or unavoidable.

The controllable or avoidable reasons should adherently be addressed by the employer because these reasons would be easier to resolve as compared to the uncontrollable or unavoidable reasons. Secondly; after the reasons have been

established, the necessary steps should be taken in order to resolve that particular reason. For instance if the reason is controllable or avoidable, such as, if the employee is leaving because of financial implications or poor working conditions, then it is the responsibility of the employer to utilise the essential resources to retain those employees.

The concerning levels of high staff turnover in the Senior Management Service (SMS) and amongst professional staff resulted in the Public Service Commission (2010:18) conducting an investigation into the causes and effects of mobility in the Public Service. The results of the study highlighted the following:

- The greatest mobility during the period under review was a result of the internal movement of both SMS managers and professionals;
- Better and higher positions were cited as the main causes for mobility;
- Limited development of retention strategies and policies suggest that the importance of effective retention tools and strategies for addressing mobility has not been completely realised. The implementation of retention strategies was inhibited by an absence of guidelines and budgetary constraints that allowed for little flexibility;
- The retention tools that were most frequently utilised were the awarding of cash bonuses, external conferences and seminars, awarding of bursaries, managerial training and on the job training;
- Poor monitoring and an absence of management information in the area of mobility were found to pose significant challenges to effective management of this aspect of human resource management.

From the abovementioned results provided by the aforementioned study, it is evident that retention management policies and strategies in the public service need to effectively be monitored and where gaps within these policies exist, a re-evaluation procedure needs to be conducted to assess the flaws that hinder

these policies from becoming effective. Retention management in the public service will be analysed in the latter subdivision of the chapter.

In an attempt to control the levels of staff turnover, public institutions are responsible for implementing effective and successful career management systems in the workplace. Such systems do not only aim to reduce turnover levels, but also to attract highly competent and skilled personnel, especially those at a managerial level. Career management is a complex, but yet significant process that should be prioritised by public institutions because it is a process that can determine to a large extent whether an institution will succeed in retaining its most valued employees, and at a general level, ensure that staff turnover levels are kept to a minimum. The following section of the chapter will analyse the topic of career management.

### **3.3 CAREER MANAGEMENT**

The second chapter of the study identified career management as a pivotal function that is performed by the public human resource manager. The human resource maintenance task is important primarily because it entails how the human resources of an institution will be retained, as this would minimise the unnecessary costs that are related to staff turnover. According to Van der Walt (2002:177) one of the most effective methods of maintaining human resources is to implement a career management system within the working environment, furthermore, such a system should make provision for horizontal and vertical mobility in the institution. The subsequent section will define career management, as well as explore some of the critical elements of career management such as career development, open and closed careers, and career management in the public service.

### 3.3.1 Defining career management

Public officials worldwide are confronted by an ever-changing milieu. The environment in which they function has become increasingly complex, bringing varied and growing challenges in service delivery. One of these challenges is the growing pressure on public institutions to be flexible and to render more and better services with fewer, but multi-skilled staff members. Globally, the structures of public institutions have become flatter. They increasingly use self-directed work teams, and they have become more knowledge based (Erasmus *et al.*, 2005:296). The post-1994 South African democratic government has inarguably altered the traditional bureaucratic and rigid image that was largely popularised by the apartheid system of government that ruled the country prior to the first democratic elections in 1994.

Various laws, particularly those that were aimed at addressing the development of public servant skills were introduced in the 1990s. The purpose behind the inception of documents such as the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service of 1995, the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service of 1997, the Labour Relations Act of 1995 and the Skills Development Act of 1998, was fundamentally for the empowerment of individuals who were employed in the public service because services had to be delivered to citizens, and this could be achieved through effective employee performance.

Career management was described in the first chapter of the study as an endeavour that individual employees are primarily responsible for, in seeking opportunities for development and promotion in their own career aspirations. Although this definition of career management is somewhat broad, it can be argued that the management of one's career is an exercise that aims to empower an individual employee within an institution.

The significance of establishing what Daley (2002:4) identifies as a “career ladder” should not be undermined because these career ladders provide a long-term perspective that induces institutional commitment and loyalty. These would also enable individuals and institutions to invest in training and productivity programmes, as such programmes would equip the individuals with the necessary skills that are required most by the institution.

Mathis and Jackson (2003:307) define a career as a series of work-related positions a person occupies throughout life. People pursue careers to satisfy individual needs. Employers play a vital role in assisting employees to focus their careers in areas that benefit the institution, if employers fail to do so the result is often that employee turnover will be experienced because these employees may feel undervalued by the institution, and as a result they will seek employment where their career aspirations will be supported by top management.

According to Armstrong (1992:159) career management plans and shapes the progression of individuals within an institution in accordance with assessments of institutional needs and the performance, potential and preferences of individual members of the institution. Furthermore, Armstrong (1992:159) identifies three overall aims of career management, these are:

- To ensure that the institution’s needs for management succession are satisfied;
- To provide men and women of promise with a sequence of training and experience that will equip them for whatever level of responsibility they have the ability to reach;
- To give individuals with potential the guidance and encouragement they need if they are to fulfil their potential and achieve a successful career with the institution in tune with their talents and aspirations.

From the perspectives of career management that were provided above, it is evident that career management is a relatively complex process that requires the institution to assist its employees in achieving their career goals and ambitions. However, in attaining their career ambitions, these individual employees have to align their personal goals with the goals of the institution. This alignment is vital because it would establish the career ladder that the employee needs follow if he or she is to attain their goals.

Byars and Rue (2006:205) identify the importance of career self-management and define it as the ability to keep pace with the speed at which change occurs within the institution and to prepare for the future. The concept emphasises the need of individual employees to keep learning because jobs that are held today may evolve into more complex structures and processes in the future. Career self-management also involves identifying and obtaining new skills and competencies that allow the employee to move into a new position.

### 3.3.2 Career development

According to Harvard Business Essentials (2002:108) career development is a comprehensive term that describes the training experiences, work assignments, and mentoring relationships that move people ahead in their vocations. Any public institution that aims to retain its most valued people and to fill vacancies caused by retirements, defections and growth from within must dedicate resources to career development. In addition, an institution with a reputation for career development can make that unit attractive to potential recruits who are serious about fabricating their careers. Career development is a form of internal hiring, which in effect alleviates the institution from the burden of having to utilise funds to advertise and recruit individuals that are external to the institution.

Van der Waldt (2002:179) states that career development is a formal approach taken by the institution to ensure that employees with proper qualifications and

experience are available when the institution needs them. Furthermore, the employees of the institution should be encouraged to grow and realise their full potential for the benefit of the institution. If the career planning and development of employees are effective, they will realise their full potential and will probably be prepared to stay with their present employer until retirement.

Career development is similar to what Armstrong (1992:157) identifies as management development, which is a process that aims to ensure that the institution has the effective managers that it requires to meet its present and future needs. It is concerned with improving the performance of existing managers, giving them opportunities for growth and development, and ensuring, as far as possible, that management succession within the institution is provided for.

Another perspective of career development is provided by Byars and Rue (2006:200) who state that career development is an ongoing, formalised effort by an institution that focuses on developing and enriching the institution's human resources in light of both the employees' and the institution's needs.

From the abovementioned statements based on career development and management, it is evident that the nurturing process of the institution's human capital is critical to the operation and survival of the institution, particularly in the long term. The career ladder that the employer is responsible for establishing plays a vital role in assisting talented and aspiring employees to strive towards attaining their career goals. The most ambitious and talented employees will always seek to ascend the career ladder, which is defined by Harvard Business Essentials (2002:108) as a logical series of stages that move a talented and dedicated employee through progressively more challenging and responsible positions.



Maphunye (2005:218) is of the opinion that career public servants, like any other professionals, have a strong commitment to themselves (and to younger colleagues who will succeed them in their senior posts) to keep control of their department and run it on the basis of their ideas of good professional practice. Furthermore, these public servants have public responsibilities and must, if necessary resist improper political interference even from their designated political head.

### 3.3.3 Closed and open careers

Stahl (1976:61) argues that through the device of low maximum age limits for entrance and the filling of upper-level positions entirely from within, some career services have what is referred to as a closed system. Under all such systems the concept is that substantial opportunity for achievement can be assured only if the hierarchy is refuelled by personnel from the base, preserving the upper ranks for those already in the service.

Branham (2005:93-94) states that most institutions fail to retain top individual employees because often these institutions have limited growth and advancement opportunities. This feature definitely places the institution at a disadvantage as compared to other institutions that have clear growth and advancement opportunities. Branham (2005) also argues that institutions with limited growth and advancement opportunities have unfair or inefficient internal selection processes; they post positions and then take a long period of time to follow through or proceed, and they don't communicate the status of the posted positions.

Stahl (1976:62) describes the open system as one that permits entrance at any or all grade levels. Those already in the service always have a natural advantage (intimate knowledge of the programme, performance already known to selecting officials, ready access to the selection process, etc.), so it would be incorrect to

claim that outsiders have equal access to all job openings or that insiders lack adequate assurance of advancement opportunities.

In retrospect, both of these two career systems have their own distinct advantages and disadvantages. In the case of open career systems, the advantage would be that the procurement of external recruits would give the institution the chance to acquire new and innovative ideas, which may have otherwise not been acquired internally. However, the disadvantage in this regard is what Branham (2005:94) identifies as a reason why many institutions fail to create opportunities of growth and advancement, and that reason is that these units of employment do not hire enough from within, but they instead hire from outside the institution.

Public institutions that fail to promote or hire from within their respective workplaces, may often fail to realise that the internal candidates that they already have at their disposal are willing to undertake those promotion opportunities, furthermore, that these internal candidates are more than competent enough to perform the duties that are required of them. In addition to hiring externally, the cost of recruiting from outside is higher than that of hiring within the institution. According to Daley (2002:4) internal selection is easier because the employee has already been attracted. The questions of whether an individual will fit in and adapt to an institution's culture become less ambiguous. Furthermore, the problems of orientation and socialisation can be overcome.

It could be argued that in the case of closed career systems, the advantages and disadvantages are the reverse of the open career system. The advantage of employing a closed career system is that the cost of recruiting internally is significantly lower than acquiring recruits from outside the institution. Promoting employees in the institution will increase efficiency and productivity amongst the employees, as it would create an incentive for them to work harder and at the same time smarter if they are to move up the career ladder. Promoting a

particular individual is a commonly utilised procedure in reward management, and Armstrong (1992:180) states that a primary aim of a reward management system is that of increasing the motivation of employees. Therefore, employers should create enabling environments, which would allow individuals to maximise their levels of productivity. Such an enabling environment would be beneficial to both the employee and employer because the end result would be that institutional objectives would be achieved, effectively and efficiently, in the case of the employer, were as the employee would be rewarded, for example by being promoted.

The most prominent disadvantage of limiting the recruitment process to include only internal candidates, is that the avenues for new and innovative ideas to be acquired would also be restricted, which would ultimately place the institution at a disadvantage. A lack of new ideas may hinder the institution from solving pre-existing, current, and potential problems that impact negatively on the way the institution operates particularly if these problems have a significant impact on the delivery of public services and goods. Daley (2002:4) identifies “inbreeding” as a danger that is associated to internal selection because although it may promote a more harmonious, homogeneous workforce, it can also hinder the institution from gaining new knowledge, as it was stated earlier.

The concept of talent management was briefly discussed earlier in the chapter and it was stated that the primary aim of talent management is to retain, develop and utilise employees. The employer is a major role player in ensuring that it's most talented employees are not attracted by rival competitors and even if this form of poaching occurred the employer should be prepared to counter-offer what the rival institution is offering the talented individual. The importance of retaining talent is emphasised by Cheminais, *et al.* (1998:136) who argue that the public service is confronted with immense challenges in its human resource management provision function because firstly, the responsibility of rendering the best possible service and the ethical requirements of public service demand that

the very best candidates are appointed. Secondly, labour market conditions are such that an employer offering modest remuneration packages will find it difficult to attract highly skilled applicants.

It is evident from the arguments provided by Cheminais, *et al.* (1998) that internal recruiting is imperative particularly if an institution does not have attractive programmes or systems in place that would address the issue of career management and development because that is an important facet in attracting and retaining scarce skills within the institution. Individuals seek to move up the career ladders that exist in the working environment, therefore, it is important that this factor is not overlooked by the employing institution.

#### 3.3.4 Career management in the South African Public Service

According to the Public Service Commission (2010:23) in 2000 the public service was not successful in terms of implementing career management programmes. The absence of effective career management programmes in institutions during the abovementioned period (2000) was ascribed to the fact that most institutions were characterised by outdated and rigid structures, decentralisation, absence of time-frames in national policy, and the implementation of the new Public Service Regulations (PSR) was anticipated. Subsequently the Public Service Regulations, 2001, took effect and the Codes of Remuneration (CORE) replaced the Personnel Administration Standards (PAS).

The aim of CORE required departments to develop their own career paths and career development programmes within the framework of the PSR and CORE. Although public institutions have been given a relative amount of autonomy in establishing their own programmes for attracting and retaining employees, many of these institutions have failed to develop such programmes, which may be attributed to the high turnover levels that can be analysed in the institutions of concern. The issue of incapacity is a major stumbling block in the Public Service,

that is, institutions which lack the necessary human capital often struggle to develop effective policies and programmes that may assist them in addressing various challenges.

Human resource management in the South African public service is regulated by numerous statutory sources of authority, many of which were developed according to the founding principles of government's former Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR), which means that a balance has to be struck between the need for rapid, visible affirmative action and the need to maintain the necessary efficiency and experience to address the country's socioeconomic problems (Cheminais *et al.* 1998:137). In addition, Maphunye (2005:217) argues that, traditionally, a senior public servant's tenure is regarded as a lifetime career service although later entries (or some early departures for various reasons) have been breaking down this assumption for some years. Successful ministers rise through several departments to become senior while fading ones may be "redeployed". A senior public servant in conflict with a current minister may well only need to await a cabinet re-shuffle to have a new minister who may be more amenable.

According to Sheoraj (2007:221) the impact of unemployment on career guidance is that relevant services will only be available to privileged groups, who are able to access the labour market. Affirmative Action (AA) and Employment Equity regulations were developed and implemented by the government as a response to address the skills and unemployment crisis in the South African labour market.

The following section of the chapter, will explore the topic of retention management. The existence of a career management system within an institution will not necessarily guarantee that talented employees would be willing to remain in the institution. Therefore, it is critical to identify other factors that would explain

some of the reasons why institutions fail or succeed in retaining their human resources.

### **3.4 RETENTION MANAGEMENT**

Recruiting and retaining potential staff is one of the important processes that the human resource manager is responsible for in his or her institution. They are tasked with the function to ensure that the institution has the right number of staff, the right kind of staff, at the right time and place, with the right skills doing what is efficiently, effectively and economically important for the institution (Department of Social Development, 2008:2-3). One can deduce from the previous statement that retention management is not merely the process of ensuring that the institution has the required staff, but most importantly, that the required staff are encouraged to obtain a relatively long term or permanent status in the institution. Staff retention management is a process that places an emphasis on the principles of loyalty and commitment. If this process is effectively managed in the workplace, then the recurring challenges of high staff turnover can be minimised.

The importance of retention management will be highlighted in the subsequent section of the study. The study will then explore some of the important variables that are commonly valued by employees. These variables could be considered to be the determinants for effective staff retention. The retention management process, as well as employee retention management strategies will also be analysed in the following section.

#### **3.4.1 Importance of staff retention management**

Retention management, simply defined, means the ability of an institution to maintain low staff turnover levels. Mathis and Jackson (2003:79) argue that as a practical matter, with lower turnover, every individual who is retained means one

less person to have to recruit, select, and train. In addition, institutional and individual performance is enhanced by the continuity of employees who know their jobs, co-workers, and institutional services. The continuity of employees provides better “employee image” for attracting and retaining other individuals.

Mackay (2007:64) states that retention of good people, even moderately good, is essential for any institution. If individuals leave for the competition, it sends out a clear message that there is something more attractive about other rival institutions. It was stated in the previous section of the study that, public institutions have the autonomy to develop their own career management programmes and systems, but according to the Public Service Commission (2010:23) this autonomy results in a certain degree of competition in the Public Service because public institutions have the independence to re-evaluate posts and set higher salary scales, however these re-evaluations can only be undertaken with the approval of the Department of Public Service and Administration.

The introduction of the Occupation Specific Dispensation programme in the Public Service was aimed to improve government’s ability to attract and retain employees, through improved remuneration. In addition to the improvement of remuneration structures, government also aims to strengthen the career pathing models that exist in the public service, so as to recognise seniority and reward performance.

It was mentioned earlier in the chapter that effective retention aims to avoid incurring direct and indirect costs of labour turnover. The loss of human capital cannot be easily replaced, particularly if those human resources are highly skilled. The costs of training or even replacing skilled human resources are essentially high for an institution to incur, thus it is imperative for any working unit, whether it is in the private or public sector, to employ strategies that would assist them in retaining some, if not all their skilled employees. Mathis and

Jackson (2003:316-317) argue that employers are often confronted with a “make-or-buy” choice: develop and train competitive human resources, or “buy” them already developed from somewhere else. It is a common trend for technical and professional people to be hired based on the amount of skill development that they have already achieved, rather than on their ability to learn or their behavioural traits.

Many institutions show an apparent preference to externally recruit rather than “make” scarce employees in the current labour market. However, public institutions do spend a considerable amount of money to train and develop current employees. The establishment of training and development institutions such as the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy and the various Public Sector Education and Training Authority (PSeta) structures were intended to address the skills development challenges that exist in the public service.

#### 3.4.2 Variables valued by employees

According to Grobler, *et al.* (2006:225) and Munsamy and Venter (2009:188) the retention of employees is a major focus of human resource management practices in institutions. The determinants of retention can broadly be divided into four categories, namely; compensation and benefits, institutional environment, work/development environment and work-life balance.

Each of the abovementioned broad categories comprise of different variables. Firstly, in the area of compensation and benefits, variables such as health and retirement benefits, performance bonuses, guaranteed base salary, internal and external equity are included, furthermore, compensation and benefits must be market-related to an extent, and mechanisms should also be in place to reward and retain top performers. The importance of an institution prioritising the variables of compensation and benefits is highlighted by Belcher (1978:426) who



states that these two variables are concerned with building the terms of trade so that most employees will want to continue the relationship that they have with the institution. In addition Byars and Rue (2006:304) state that employee benefits, sometimes called fringe benefits, are those rewards that employees receive for being members of the institution and for their positions in the institution.

Secondly, in the area of institutional environment, the variables included are; open communication/transparency, diversity, fairness, job security, formal knowledge/knowledge sharing, senior team reputation and institutional support and commitment. Elements such as accountability, transparency and effective leadership are imperative in establishing a prestigious and reputable image for an institution, therefore, government departments that aim to become 'employers of choice' should ensure that the abovementioned components are prioritised as marketing tools for the attraction and retention of key employees.

Thirdly, work/development environment comprises variables such as; empowerment and responsibility, advancement opportunities, mentoring programme, new opportunities/challenges, performance evaluation and feedback, personal fit with institution, internal mobility, teamwork, and manager quality and integrity. The work environment must be challenging and offer learning and growth opportunities. Catering for internal mobility, vertically and horizontally, together with recognition, role clarity and relevant responsibility are essential for the attraction and retention of high-value employees. Cheminais, *et al.* (1998:29) are of the opinion that managers should be sensitive to the working environment, as well as to the environment in which the institution operates.

Lastly, the ability of an employer to support the work-life balance of each employee is undoubtedly an important quality that is valued by employees. The focus here is on the notion of a flexible and stress-free work environment by making provision for childcare facilities and access to families. This category comprises areas such as; flexible working hours, geographic location of work,

extra vacation/longer annual leave, and childcare facilities. Career satisfaction, according to Martins, *et al.* (2002:399) is linked to several important institutional outcomes, such as institutional commitment, intentions to leave, or “turnover intentions”, and support for institutional change. In addition, an important determinant of career satisfaction is work family conflict. An employer must not underestimate the importance of the ‘work-life balance’ of employees because this conflict can have a significant impact on how individuals view their career outcomes.

Mackay (2007:70) argues that the following are situations that occur in the work environment and often these situations may cause problems:

- Unrealistic workloads;
- Poor management;
- Role conflicts-an employee reporting or working for two managers;
- Poor balance between effort and rewards.

The factors that are listed above are common discrepancies that occur in any working environment and if these situations are not managed accordingly, it may result in the loss in some of the institution’s most skilled human resources, as well as it resulting in a negative impact being made on the operations of the institution. The four broad categories that were briefly described above are important to the employer and should thus consign attention to them, particularly because these factors are considered to be of value to employees in general. These factors will essentially determine whether or not an employee remains within the institution.

### 3.5 RETAINING TALENT WITHIN THE INSTITUTION

A recurring concept that has been briefly described and identified in the study, is that of talent management. Schweyer (2004:38) defines talent management as encompassing all human resource management processes, administration and technologies. The process commonly refers to the sourcing (finding talent); screening (sorting of qualified and unqualified applicants); selection (assessment/testing, interviewing); on-boarding; retention (measures to keep the talent that contributes to the success of the institution); development (training, growth assignments); deployment (optimal assignment of staff to projects, lateral opportunities, promotions) and renewal of the workforce with analysis and planning as the adhesive component.

Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009:82) argue that it is imperative for South Africa to become globally competitive. A critical component of competitiveness is having the appropriate skills complement across a range of occupations and professions as well as the skills to drive leadership in South African public institutions. The retention of talent or human capital is a rather complex process because an institution that seeks to attract and retain the most talented employees will be challenged by its competitors for those particular employees. The war for talent compels an employer to identify what its employee's value the most and adhering to those specific requirements because the significant factor is to ensure that the employee is productive and thus performs to the best of his or her ability.

Branham (2005:36) argues that when an employee realises that the employer cannot meet a key expectation in the contract, there is often a feeling of having been betrayed, as if a contract has been broken in bad faith. From the argument provided by Branham (2005), it is apparent that retaining talent is a process that should not be undermined by an employer. It is imperative that the employer identifies the values held by individual employees even prior to these employees

being recruited because it is also important for the employer to align the institution's values to the values held by potential recruits.

Another challenge that subsists in the public service is the fact that, often when an individual departs from the institution, the length of time it takes to replace that particular individual is relatively long, which has a significant impact on the institution's ability to deliver on its mandate. Employee satisfaction is another critical component that should be considered in the retention management process. Job satisfaction and performance management are interrelated, but yet distinct concepts, which substantially attempt to address the challenges related to an employee's poor performance. Poor performance can be regarded as a precursor to the identification of dissatisfied or disengaged employees; therefore, the employer is responsible for ensuring that these individuals are identified before they initially feel the need to leave the institution.

### **3.6 THE RETENTION MANAGEMENT PROCESS**

The effective retention of staff is highly dependent on the processes that are put in place by the particular institution. The Department of Local Government and Housing in the Limpopo has implemented a Career and Retention Management Policy (2006) that aims to limit the number of employees that leave the Department. However, it should be noted that the existence of a policy such as the career and retention management one, does not guarantee that employees will remain within the institution, hence the increasing numbers of staff turnover in national and provincial departments in the South African public service.

According to Pienaar and Bester (2008:32) retention should be a strategic priority since it is difficult to replace the knowledge, skills and experience of staff. These skills are only acquired over a long period of time and are accompanied by extensive experience. In addition to the argument provided by Pienaar and Bester as mentioned above, Ramlall (2003:64) states that it will become

significantly more important to recognise the commitment of individuals to an institution, as well as the institution's need to create an environment in which one would be willing to stay. Institutions will need to create an intellectual capital environment where the transmission of knowledge takes place throughout the structure, or continue to lose important individual knowledge that has been developed during the length of service.

According to Munsamy and Venter (2009:187) a lack of opportunities regarding both personal growth and job challenge are some of the reasons why people voluntarily leave institutions. The national skills shortage leads to an abundance of vacant positions, which results in the increased mobility of skilled individuals. These skilled employees require compelling reasons to remain with an institution, which makes it essential for government departments to have an understanding of what employees expect from employment.

Identifying dissatisfied and disengaged employees at an early stage in the overall retention management process is crucial. It has previously been stated in the study that the reasons for employees deciding whether to leave an institution may be termed as either controllable or uncontrollable. The controllable reasons should be analysed by the employer and if possible be avoided because unlike the uncontrollable reasons, the challenges posed by controllable reasons may to an extent be addressed more effectively. It was earlier highlighted in the study that public institutions have the autonomy to re-evaluate job positions and salary scales according to the Occupation Specific Dispensation requirements. This autonomy grants institutions the flexibility to "enable them to make counteroffers when an employee is offered a job elsewhere (Daley, 2002:110)". Counteroffers in the public service are, however, determined in accordance to the requirements that are established by the Department of Public Service and Administration.

The development of employee retention strategies is imperative in the retention management process. Public institutions are provided with the scope to develop

their own institutional framework strategies. Such strategies can only be described as being effective or successful if they reduce the turnover rates that occur in the respective institutions. The ensuing section of the chapter will analyse some of the critical and commonly utilised employee retention strategies.

### **3.7 EMPLOYEE RETENTION STRATEGIES**

The effort spent in attracting and recruiting employees is wasted if they cannot be retained. Workforce planning, employing turnover analysis and exit interviews, is necessary to alert the institution of recruitment problem areas. More generally, employee attitude surveys and suggestion systems provide an early warning device for potential problems. Retention of desired workers focuses on managing turnover. Pay and job satisfaction are key strategies in the retention management process. The pay package (salary/wages and benefits) must be deemed adequate for the employee's needs (Daley, 2002:110).

The four broad categories (compensation and benefits, institutional environment, work/development environment and work-life balance) that were stated above should inarguably be taken into consideration when a retention strategy is formulated, and then eventually implemented. The primary aim of any retention strategy is to reduce the amount of people that voluntarily leave the institution, therefore authors such as Mathis and Jackson (2003:93) and the Department of Social Development, Eastern Cape (2008:6) argue that effective retention of staff commences with the recruitment and selection of the right individuals, that is, during the recruiting process, the job should be outlined and a realistic job preview presented, so that the reality of the job matches the expectations of the new employee (Mathis and Jackson 2003:93).

The steps that are listed below are identified as basic practices that should be considered in the formulation of retention strategies (Naukrihub 2010:1):

- i. Hire the right people in the first place;
- ii. Empower employees: give employees the authority to get tasks completed;

- iii. Employees should realise that they are the most valuable assets;
- iv. Have faith, trust and respect for employees;
- v. Provide them with information and knowledge;
- vi. Keep providing them with feedback on their performance;
- vii. Recognise and appreciate their achievements;
- viii. Keep their morale high;
- ix. Create an environment where employees want to work and have fun.

The practices that are listed above, although basic, are vital to the success of any retention strategy that is implemented by a public institution or private organisation. This is fundamentally because these practices are centred on the values held by employees that were drawn attention to earlier in the chapter.

Functional turnover, as it was stated earlier in the chapter, will result in the loss of unskilled employees, whereas dysfunctional turnover will result in the loss of skilled employees. The argument that has been emphasised within the third chapter is that not all types of employee turnover are negative. Inarguably, the loss of unskilled employees would be preferred by the institution as opposed to the loss of skilled professional employees. According to the Department of Social Development (2008:5) the loss of employees that have the critical and scarce skills can hamper service delivery, hence it is important to identify and prioritise the retention of such skills. To know which employees need to be prioritised, it is important to classify the skills that are important to retain. Classifying skills is therefore a key step in ensuring a focused and cost-effective retention strategy.

The primary target group of the study is that of senior managers in the South African public service, therefore the particular intervention strategies that are described in the study will chiefly be aimed at the senior or top management echelon of public officials. The Attraction and Retention Policy (2008:5-6)

identifies three types of skills that need to be retained, these are; scarce skills, valued skills and high-risk skills.

Scarce skills are described as those skills that are needed to realise the department's goals and objectives, but which are difficult to recruit and expensive to replace. These skills, according to the Attraction and Retention Policy (2008:5), are identified, firstly; by the department having to analyse the levels of staff turnover, and secondly by understanding the department's skills requirements and the compensation of such skills in the labour market.

Valued skills are those skills which are not determined as scarce skills, which a valued employee possesses and whose loss would have a negative impact on the department's ability to meet its goals. These skills are identified by assessing an employee's performance evaluations and the role that they perform in the department. Lastly, high-risk skills are described as the skills that are possessed by employees who may leave the department in a relatively short period of time. These include employees who have indicated a need to leave the department, those who are de-motivated and may have reached a career ceiling.

The abovementioned skills are undoubtedly the types of skills that any employer would not be willing lose to other competitors. These skills are imperative to the institution because the achievement of institutional goals and objectives are dependent on the retention of such skills. Naukrihub (2010:2) declares three levels that retention strategies should be directed towards, namely; low, medium and high level strategies. For the purpose of the study, only the high level strategies will be evaluated, these are listed below:

- i. Encouraging professional training and development and/or personal growth opportunities, this can be achieved through;
  - mentoring programmes;
  - performance feedback programmes;



- provide necessary tools to the employees to achieve their professional and personal goals;
  - higher study opportunities for employees;
  - offer personalised career guidance to employees;
  - getting the most out of employees interests and talents.
- ii. Provide an environment of trust; communication is the most important and effective way to develop trust;
- suggestion committees can be created;
  - open door communication policy can be followed;
  - regular feedback on institutional goals and activities should be taken from employees by; management communications, intranet and internet can be used because they provide constant and reliable access to information, as well as notice boards and newsletters.
- iii. Hire the right people from the beginning. The process of retention commences at the start of the recruitment process;
- the new recruits should fit with the institutional culture. The personality, leadership characteristics of the candidate should be harmonious with the culture of the hiring institution; and
  - proper training should be given to the managers on interview and management techniques.

The Attraction and Retention Policy (2008:9) states that retention interventions for middle and senior management could include the introduction of mentorship and coaching programmes. Mentors and coaches play the role career counsellors and sounding boards for managers. Enhancement programmes for

middle and senior managers (that continuously re-focuses and re-news their skills) could also be considered. These programmes could provide training on the key executive and senior management competencies that are required, and could allow for interventions designed for each specific manager.

Mathis and Jackson (2003:91) are of the opinion that employee surveys can be used to diagnose specific problem areas, identify employee needs or preferences, and reveal areas in which human resource management activities are well received or are viewed negatively. Obtaining employee input provides managers and human resource management professionals with data on the “retention climate” in an institution. The use of an employee survey is a commonly used tool in the retention management process because as Mathis and Jackson (2003) argued in the aforementioned statement, employee surveys provide employees with the chance to express their opinions towards the institution.

Mathis and Jackson (2003:91) state that one specific type of survey used by many institutions is an attitude survey, which focuses on employees’ feelings and beliefs about their jobs and the institution. By serving as a means to obtain data on how employees view jobs, their supervisors, their co-workers, and institutional policies and practices, these surveys can be starting points for reducing turnover and increasing employee retention for longer periods of time. A crucial aspect of conducting an attitude survey is to provide feedback to those who participated in it.

The exit interview, according to Mathis and Jackson (2003:92) is an interview in which individuals are asked to identify reasons for leaving the institution. The values held by employees that were discussed in the previous section of the chapter, should always be taken into consideration by the employer because the reasons that are cited by employees during the exit interview will stem from their values not being regarded as a priority by the employer.

Mackay (2007:67) identifies a number of factors that should be considered when retention strategies are being implemented; some of these are listed below:

- Monitor the market benchmark to ensure that pay rates are competitive;
- Review the choice of benefits and increase the variety;
- Review the recruitment process and information provided on the institution web pages to ensure that it gives an accurate depiction of the institution;
- Review the quality of the induction procedure and training opportunities offered;
- Promote career progression opportunities, such as dual career ladders for technical and managerial staff;
- Improve the abilities of managers and supervisors in their people-handling skills.

The factors listed above are critical for the implementation of retention strategies because these factors will to a large extent determine the success or failure of the strategies that are employed by the institution. According to Branham (2005: xi) the true root causes of voluntary employee turnover are imbedded. If these causes are to be conceptualised, they can be identified as: lack of recognition (including low pay), unfulfilling jobs, limited career advancement, poor management practices, untrustworthy leadership, and dysfunctional work cultures. The causes of staff turnover are hidden from the very people who need to be most aware of them; the line managers who are charged with engaging and keeping valued employees in the institution. Managers fail to perceive that the “push factors,” mostly within their own power, are the initial stimuli, the first causes that open the door to the “pull” of outside opportunities.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

This chapter explored the two critical concepts that are imperative to the study, namely career and retention management. The successful ability of an institution reaching its aims and objectives is dependent on the well-being of its employees, therefore if an employer intends on retaining a talented, but disgruntled employee, such an employer is tasked with the responsibility of identifying some of the reasons why that employee wants to leave the institution, and this can be achieved through the use of some common intervention strategies such as employee surveys and exit interviews.

It was highlighted that most managers fail to discover the factors that “push” the employee away from remaining with their current employers. It is important to identify what each employee, particularly those who have indicated that they intend on leaving the institution, cite as their reason for not willing to remain within the institution. Human resource managers, as well as supervisors should be attentive to employees who display characteristics of disengagement and withdrawal because it is often these employees who may have intentions of leaving the institution.

## **CHAPTER 4: AN ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The twenty-first century has undeniably influenced the way in which public service institutions, privately owned institutions, as well as non-governmental institutions function. The environments in which these different institutions function in are constantly changing as a result of diverse influences that affect those particular environments. The political, economic, social, cultural, technological and legal environment ultimately determine the way in which different institutions can achieve their goals and objectives, therefore, it is of importance to analyse the impact that these external factors may have on the Department of Local Government and Housing.

It is important to note that the Department is not only influenced by the external environment, but by the internal or specific environment as well. The leadership structure, policies, interpersonal relations amongst colleagues, and the vision and mission are examples of the internal factors that may influence the way in which the Department will successfully achieve its mandate. Public sector human resource management is a function that exists within the boundaries and influences of the abovementioned environments (external and internal). The study establishes that an analysis of the relationship between public sector human resource management and the aforementioned environments is vital. The following chapter will explore the influence of the internal and external environment on the Department of Local Government and Housing. The ability of the Department to achieve its mandate is relatively determined by the stability of the environment in which it operates.

The inception of the Career and Retention Management Policy (2006) in the Department can be ascribed to the influences that emanate from both the internal

and external environment. An examination of these environments can establish a platform for an understanding of the founding provisions on which the policy was initiated. The chapter will conceptualise the relationship that exists between the Department and the environment in which it functions. An emphasis will be placed on the different factors that subsist in the two environments, as well as the influences or impact that such factors have on the Department.

## **4.2 THE ENVIRONMENT DEFINED**

As it was stated in the introduction to this chapter, there is no institution (public, private or non-governmental) that operates in solitude from the demands of the environment. The public institutions that aim to serve their citizens and the private institutions that aim to make a profit from selling goods and services to individuals are both dependent on the stability of the environments in which they operate. The influence of political, economic or social factors, will largely determine the success or the failure of these institutions achieving their aims and objectives.

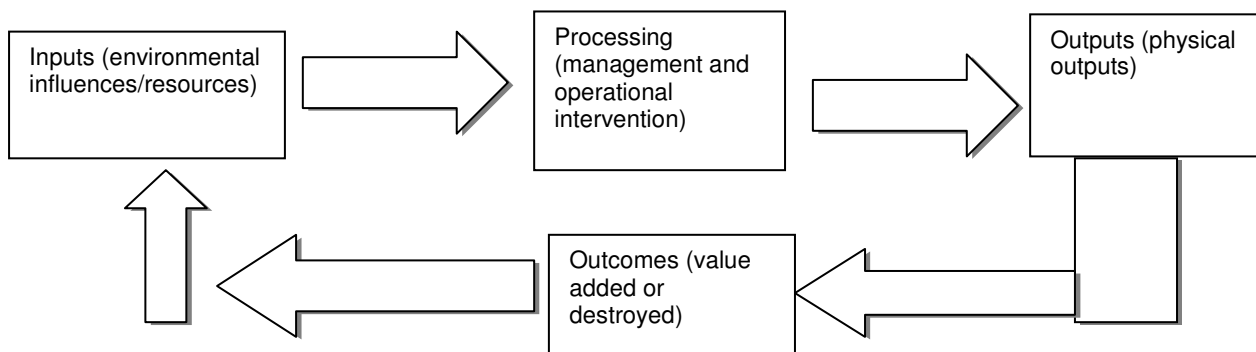
### **4.2.1 Definition of the environment**

Simply stated an environment can be defined as the context in which an institution operates. Context, in this regard are the total surroundings of the institution (Minaar and Bekker, 2005:21). The Department of Local Government and Housing is a government or public institution, therefore, unlike a private institution the Department aims to provide basic services to the population of the Limpopo Province without the intentions of making a profit from this endeavour.

The golden thread between what citizens want and what institutions deliver is especially relevant in an age where democracy and human rights have become globally expected moral values (Minaar and Bekker, 2005:21). Firstly, it is imperative that the Department is aware of the needs of the society that it serves.

Secondly, the Department should establish how such needs will be satisfied, that is, how will the necessary resources (financial, human, information, etc.) be acquired? Thirdly, once these resources have been acquired, they should be grouped together for the purposes of co-ordination and control so that the programme may be undertaken. Lastly, on completion of the project, the process of service delivery must be initiated. Diagram 4.1 (below) illustrates the open systems process:

**Figure 4.1 The open system approach to service delivery**



**Source: Minaar and Bekker (2005:23). Public Management in the Information Age. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.**

The abovementioned four step service delivery process, although simply described, is a relatively complex process because of the fact that the process occurs in two different environments, therefore, public servants who are responsible for the delivery of goods and services to citizens have to take into account the influences, determinants and challenges that the environments pose because these factors will ultimately determine whether services are efficiently and effectively delivered.

Contextualising the open systems approach or theory to administration is imperative for understanding the activities of government because such activities occur within a set environment. Minaar and Bekker (2005:24) describe the open system as a theory that states that institutions exist in close and constant

interaction with their environment. They receive the production factors (resources) that they require to operate (e.g. human capacity, money, land, buildings and information) from their environment. In turn, the institution influences its environment through the impact that its services have in satisfying the needs, as well as improving the living conditions of citizens who find themselves in this environment.

Environmental scanning is an essential process because according to Daley (2002:34) no institution is independent of the environment in which it exists. External environmental scanning monitors and assesses economic and social conditions (and their implications). What do communities need in the future? What methods will it allow for achieving those aims? The environmental scan tallies stakeholder interests and desires. Public institutions exist only to advance the political, social and economical well-being of its citizens, therefore the most important stakeholder in the public institution's environment are the citizens.

De Bruyn and Kruger (2006:26) argue that the institution uses inputs from the environment and in turn delivers outputs in the form of goods and services for which there is a need in the environment. The inputs that Bruyn and Kruger (2006) refer to are the needs that emanate from the community or society concerned. It then becomes the responsibility of the public institution to satisfy those needs by making outputs (housing, education, health care facilities, road and transport, etc.) available to citizens.

De Bruyn and Kruger (2006:26) identify certain characteristics of the environment in which the Department of Local Government and Housing operates, these are:

- Interrelatedness of environmental factors: a change in one of the external factors may cause a change in the internal factors, and, similarly, a change in one external factor may cause a change in other external environmental variables.

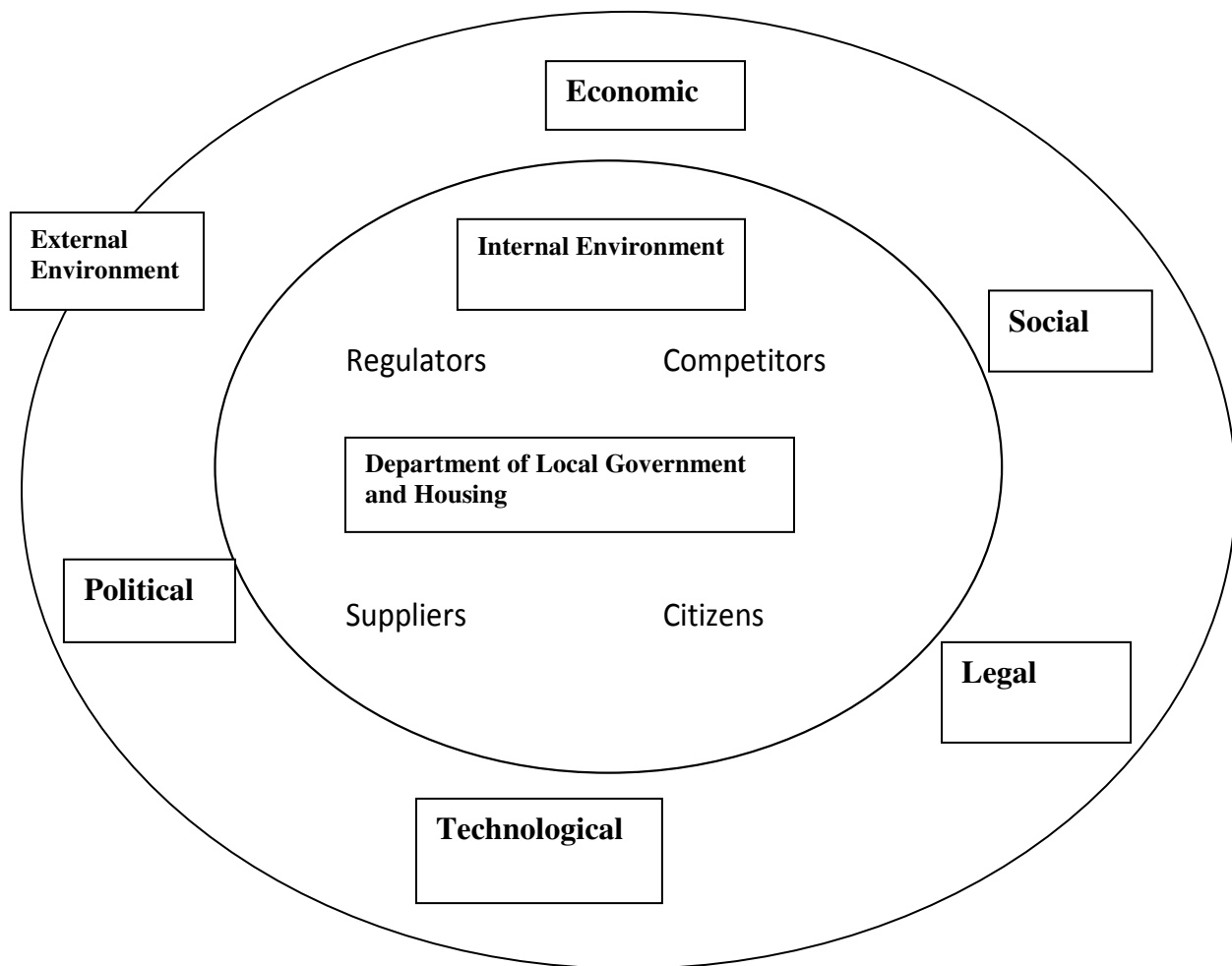


- Increasing instability: one of the consequences of interdependence in the environment is increasing instability and change. It could be argued that political, social and economic factors are three of the most important factors in the external environment; therefore the stability of these three factors will largely determine the success or failure of the Department achieving its mandate.
- Complexity of the environment: this indicates the number of external variables to which the institution has to react. The complexity of the environment may result in a lot of uncertainty, which makes it difficult for decisions to be made by those tasked with formulating policies and programmes of action. Therefore, it is important that information is made available regarding the changes that occur in the environment.

The subsequent section will describe the two types of environments, namely; the external and internal environment, in which the Department of Local Government and Housing functions. Thornhill and Hanekom (1995:16) argue that the administration of public affairs results from political activities, and forms part of political life, not only takes place in a political environment, but concerns all areas of societal life. The environment of public administration is shaped by the contemporary role of the state, in that the nature and extent of government action goes in accordance with the level of development of the state. The environment also has a direct bearing on the guidelines/foundations of public administration.

The diagram below (figure 4.2) is an illustration of both the external and internal environment of the Department of Local Government and Housing. Based on its mandates and core functions, the Department works closely with numerous stakeholders, ranging from local institutions of higher learning to international institutions and unions such as the European Union (EU).

**Figure 4.2 The External and Internal Environment of the DLGH**



**Source: Minaar and Bekker (2005:23). Public Management in the Information Age. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.**

Minaar and Bekker (2005:22) term the illustration that is depicted above as the administration environment of the Department. The management environment refers to the total surroundings of the Department, both tangible and intangible, which impact on what the institution is supposed to do and determines its ability to do it. The subsequent section of the chapter will analyse the total surroundings (external and internal) of the Department and how factors within these surroundings impact on the Department's ability to achieve its mandate.

## 4. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

According to Du Toit, *et al.* (2002:93) the external environment consists of a natural and an intellectual environment. The intellectual environment can be further divided into several sub-environments. Various phenomena emanate from each of the two environments, as well as from the sub-environment. Although the term refers to what is outside the confines of public institutions, it can nevertheless influence the activities of public institutions.

The following section will analyse some of the critical factors that exist in the external environment, which have an influence on the functioning of the Department. Although quite a number of factors in the external environment may have an impact on the way in which the Department may achieve its mandates, the study highlights three traditional factors which, arguably, may be considered to have an impact on the failure or success of the Department's ability to deliver services to the general society. An emphasis will be placed on the political, economic and social environment.

### 4.3.1 Natural environment

Fox, *et al.* (1991:12) argue that the natural selection model is the most extreme version of utilising environmental factors to explain institutional phenomena. This view gives a highly deterministic role to the environment as it posits that environmental factors determine institutional characteristics. Institutions change their structures and processes toward a better fit with the environment.

### 4.3.2 Intellectual environment

Du Toit, *et al.* (2002:93) state that the intellectual environment is the creation of people's abilities. People are intellectual beings and, as such, are continuously busy creating an environment for themselves in which they feel safe and

comfortable. Improving the environment gives rise to various phenomena, some physical and others mental in nature:

- *Intellectual physical phenomena*

This phenomena refers to the physical changes to nature caused by the actions of people. For example, if the provincial Department of Local Government and Housing in Limpopo were to establish numerous reconstruction and development programme (RDP) houses in a certain district within the province, the physical phenomenon, which is the process of constructing these houses, would result in changes to the nature of the environment in which these houses are built.

- *Intellectual mental phenomena*

These are also intellectual creations, but are not physical in nature. Erasmus, *et al.* (2005:102) identify the following as examples of intellectual mental phenomena; social phenomena: refers to the different traditions and sub-cultures that exist within a society or community. Secondly, economic phenomena refer to factors such as inflation rates, interest rates, employment rates, strength of the rand, tax revenues, budgets and economic depression. Thirdly, political phenomena may be a result of the role that is played by elected officials, political appointees, legislators and interest group representatives. Lastly, statutory phenomena refer to the legal parameters in which people must conduct their lives, that is by means of acts of Parliament, draft bills, regulations, and white papers.

Tshiyoyo (2009:778) argues that public service delivery is a crucial responsibility of government and its institutions. Hence, the role of government is concerned mainly with carrying out particular activities in order to rectify inconsistencies

within society. Therefore, it can be deduced that the phenomena that emanate from both the physical and mental environments should be critically analysed by public institutions, such as the Department of Local Government and Housing because the extent to which these institutions can successfully deliver services to the people is dependent on the positive stability of the environment. Cheminai, *et al.* (1998:28) indicate that an institution functioning in a stable environment is confronted with limited pressure to change, while an institution functioning in a turbulent environment is compelled to appraise novel practices and processes in order to manage its internal resources in optimally and efficiently.

#### 4.3.3 Political environment

The political environment, as it was earlier stated in the chapter, is a component of the external or general environment. According to Schwella (1991:19) the political system of a society is the way in which a society is governed. The political system has a major impact on institutions within the society. Political ideas, philosophy and especially political ideology form the basis of the political environment. Public institutions are profoundly influenced by national power structures and processes such as political parties, pressure and interest groups, political policy, governmental laws, acts and regulations as well as political and executive authorities.

The Department of Local Government and Housing is a public institution, which is established from two different national departments, namely; the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (CoGTA), as well as the Department of Human Settlements. According to the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2008: 2-3) all societies need to put in place a model of governance that suits their socio-economic developmental interests. South Africa adopted the democratic model of co-operative governance which is enshrined in the Constitution and provides the foundation

for intergovernmental relations. Furthermore, intergovernmental relations is intended to promote and facilitate co-operative decision-making, as well as to ensure that policies and activities across all spheres encourage service delivery and meet the needs of citizens in an effective way.

The Department of Local Government and Housing derives its mandates from the abovementioned two national government departments. The *raison d'être* for this mandate is described by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs in the following process:

- Firstly, National government establishes and facilitates a sustainable national housing development process. It does this by determining the national housing policy;
- Secondly, Provincial government creates an enabling environment. Therefore the Department of Local Government and Housing is required to utilise its powers to facilitate the provision of adequate housing in the province within the framework of the national housing policy, for example by providing funding; and lastly
- Municipalities must pursue the delivery of housing. These municipalities must work within the policy framework of national and provincial housing. They must address issues of land management and usage, services and infrastructure provision and create an enabling environment for housing development.

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, which was formerly known as the Department of Provincial and Local Government, derives its mandates from chapters three and seven of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. As a national department, its function is to develop national policies and legislation with regard to provinces and local government and to monitor the implementation of the following (The Department Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2009:1):

- *Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act, 2005 (Act No. 13 of 2005)*
- *Local Government Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)*
- *Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, 2003 (Act No. 41 of 2003)*
- *Disaster Management Act, 2002 (Act No. 57 of 2002)*
- *Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No.32 of 2000)*
- *Local Government: Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998)*
- *Local Government: Municipal Demarcation Act, 1998 ( Act No. 27 of 1998)*
- *White Paper on Local Government (1998)*

In addition to monitoring the implementation of the abovementioned policies, the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs is also tasked with the mandate of providing support to provincial and local government in fulfilling their constitutional and legal obligations. The Department of Human Settlements, formally known as the Department of Housing, was established to facilitate the specific housing and housing-related needs of citizens. With regards to housing development the Department of Human settlements has established a number of housing support institutions, with various roles and functions. These are:

- National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBC)
- National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC)
- National Urban and Reconstruction Agency (NURCHA)
- Rural Housing Loan Fund (RHLF)
- SERVCON Housing
- Social Housing Foundation (SHF)
- Thubelisha Homes

Housing provision is a constitutional obligation that is entrusted to the Department of Human Settlements. The Constitution of the Republic requires the

Department of Human Settlements to provide houses to every citizen, who can otherwise not provide for themselves. The two tables below (table 4.1 and 4.2) are a statistical representation of the number of houses that the Department of Human Settlements has delivered to citizens in the nine provinces of the country between the financial year of 1 April 2007- 31 March 2008 (table one) and 1 April 2008- 31 March 2009 (table two). However, it should be noted that these figures refer to housing units that have been completed, as well as housing units that are in the process of completion.

**Table 4.1 Housing Delivery Financial Year 2007-2008**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Total</b>
Eastern Cape	12,684
Free State	12,482
Gauteng	90,886
KwaZulu-Natal	34,471
Limpopo	18,970
Mpumalanga	16,569
Northern Cape	8,686
North West	19,945
Western Cape	34,157
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>248,850</b>

Source: Department of Human Settlements, 2010.

**Table 4.2 Housing Delivery Financial Year 2008-2009**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Total</b>
Eastern Cape	22,180
Free State	14,667
Gauteng	80,469
KwaZulu-Natal	36,068
Limpopo	16,686



Mpumalanga	17,626
Northern Cape	4,914
North West	15,912
Western Cape	31,011
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>239,533</b>

Source: Department of Human Settlements, 2010

It can be construed from the two tables that the Department of Human Settlements had failed in its capacity to provide, as well as complete the housing targets between the specified financial periods. Table 4.1 established that a total of 248,850 were either completed or in the process of completion between the financial period of 2007-2008. Table 4.2 depicts that the Department had significantly failed to increase the total number of completed houses because there was a difference of 9317 housing units that were neither completed nor in the process of completion.

The most noteworthy decline was experienced in the Eastern Cape as 12 504 housing units were neither completed nor in the process of completion between 2007 and 2009. The Limpopo Province also experienced a decline in the total number of completed housing units, as well as housing units that were in the process of completion. A total amount of 2284 housing units were neither completed nor in the process of completion in Limpopo. The decline in figures could be ascribed to different factors that may impact on the Department in attaining its housing unit targets. Such factors may emanate from any of the environments in which a public institution functions, therefore it is of essence that the political environment of the Department of Local Government and Housing is analysed to identify some the causes that hinder the Department from achieving its mandates.

Du Toit, *et al.* (2002:95) argue that the political environment is the environment created and manipulated through the activities of different social groups. Social

groups such as political parties, sport, cultural and religious institutions, labour unions and employer unions can all contribute to the establishment of a political environment. The Department of Local Government and Housing is an institution that exists merely to formulate and implement government policies and programmes. Therefore, the institution can be described as a means to an end in the overall service delivery process because institutions such as the DLGH are political institutions that aim to satisfy citizen's constitutional rights, of which housing provision is included.

Thornhill and Hanekom (1995:18) state that the Republic of South Africa is a democratic state, thus it is obvious that the principles according to which a democratic state function should be present in the activities of public officials. The political stability of the country is dependent on factors such as the efficiency and effectiveness of public officials that render the day to day services of the state. This argument is sustained by Thornhill and Hanekom (1995:18) who are of the opinion that every political office-bearer and every appointed public official should, in the execution of his/her official work, show responsibility to render work of such a high quality that he/she can account in public for his/her actions.

The Department of Local Government and Housing, is a provincial public institution and because it is a provincial institution it plays an important intergovernmental relation role in assisting the several municipalities, namely; Capricorn District, Aganang Municipality, Blouberg Municipality, Lepelle-Nkupi Municipality, Polokwane Municipality and Molemole Municipality that are identified in the Limpopo Province by providing a support service to these municipalities. Daley (2002:11) argues that for public institutions, politics mean that institution mandates and objectives are set by external, elected and citizen actors. In addition, the political setting is prone to ambiguity. With goals that are unclear, public institutions are confronted by great difficulties when assessing performance.

In regards to the political relations that the DLGH has with other sector departments and parastatals, the Department associates itself to various institutions such as the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), the National Home Builders Regulatory Council (NHRBC), Risima Finance, Thubelisha and State Information Technology Agency (SITA). These institutions form an integral part in ensuring that the DLGH achieves its mandates and objectives. In addition to the aforementioned institutions, the following entities work co-operatively with the Department of Local Government and Housing; Office of the Premier, Department of Public Works, the Provincial Treasury, Department of Health and Social Development, Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environment, Department of Road and Transport, Department of Agriculture, and lastly the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture. The success or failure of the DLGH achieving its mandates and institutional objectives is largely dependent on the positive relationship that it has with all of the institutions or stakeholders that are involved.

Cheminais, *et al.* (1998:39) dispute that as one of the largest employers of workers in the economy, the government plays a major role in job creation and employment by providing career opportunities in a wide variety of occupations in national and provincial public institutions, as well as state owned enterprises. According to Maphunye (2005:221) the debate regarding the politicisation of the public service is a contested concept in many countries. In the South African case, this occurs more at the levels of Director-General (DG), Deputy-Director General (DDG), Chief Director and Director. Furthermore, politicisation can occur when the executive decides on issues like appointments, transfers and promotions i.e. the day-to-day operational matters of a department. The phenomenon of politicisation in the public service is not a new occurrence; however it is imperative to examine the micro and macro impact of politicisation in accordance to the delivery of quality services.

#### 4.3.4 Economic environment

Du Toit, *et al.* (2001:95) define the economic environment as an economic system or combination of economic systems, applicable at a given time and place, which people use to create and distribute wealth. Furthermore, in the creation and distribution of wealth, a government's vision can play a major role in the economic system of the country. Rapid wealth creation and distribution has been a government priority for a relatively long period of time, particularly as the new democratic dispensation came into effect in 1994, socio-economic upliftment has been one of the key ruling party's mandates, and as result this has become a constitutional mandate.

According to De Bruyn and Kruger (2002:32) unemployment is one of the biggest problems in the South African economy. Furthermore, the South African public service suffers from adverse productivity rates amongst its labour force, as a result; output in the service delivery process is relatively low and citizens are ultimately deprived off what they are constitutionally entitled to.

Government is the largest single employer in the South African labour market, and because factors such as high unemployment, low productivity and crime undoubtedly affect the South African economy, government is tasked with the responsibility of curbing these socio-economic ills. Through the creation of jobs for unemployed inhabitants, the overall aim of government is what Erasmus, *et al.* (2005:29) describe as a method to stimulate the economy in order to create the means to improve the quality of life of all the country's inhabitants, however, a major barrier that exists is the issue of socioeconomic inequalities in the society.

Despite the fact that government creates jobs for its people, it does not necessarily mean that these individuals are compensated enough to improve their well-being. Employees being overworked, but yet underpaid is a common

phenomenon in the South African labour market, specifically in the public service, and as a result disgruntled employees may decide to refuse to work until such job-related issues (not necessarily remuneration, but working conditions and other job-related benefits) are addressed by their employers. Organised labour unions in the public service play a compelling role in eradicating the socio-economic inequalities that may have a negative impact on their members. These labour unions are representatives of the working class and are pivotal in advocating for an improved work-life balance for its members, by continuously engaging and lobbying itself in interactive relations with government.

Public institutions are funded by various sources of taxes that are collected by the South African Revenue Service (SARS), as well as from foreign direct investment that other countries may be willing to invest in the South African economy. As it was stated earlier, the Department of Local Government and Housing functions co-operatively with various institutions as a means to achieve its institutional mandates and objectives and because public funds are limited the Department works closely with other housing financial institutions, which would assist the Department with its housing provision mandate. These institutions are identified as ABSA bank, the Development Bank of South Africa, Standard Bank, as well as the National and Provincial Treasury.

#### 4.3.5 Social environment

As it was stated earlier in the chapter, the purpose of environmental scanning is to monitor and assess economic and social conditions. This process aims to answer the following questions, which are posed by Daley (2002:34): what does society need in the future? And what methods will it allow for achieving those aims?

Schwella (1991:27) argues that public administration functions under political direction to provide services to people. It is evident that the needs and

aspirations of the people should be the guiding force for the system of public administration. Important societal values such as equality, equity, responsibility, justice and empathy should be taken into account.

The ability of the Department of Local Government and Housing in successfully providing houses to the inhabitants within the province is dependent on how well public officials of the Department scan the social environment that the DLGH functions in. Corruption, discrimination and inefficiency are some of the factors that Mokgoro (1991:31) identifies as reasons why the bureaucratic system of government has often not been supported by citizens. Furthermore, a democratic public service will have to expand services so that historically neglected communities can benefit. This is justified by the need to increase human resources, as well as the need to have legitimate and empathetic public officials who would manage development programmes within disadvantaged communities.

Public Administration is therefore constantly influenced by relevant aspects of the environment within which it operates and in turn influences that environment. The developments and challenges in the discipline of Public Administration requires scholars and practitioners of the discipline to re-evaluate how such developments, challenges and influences may adhesively be dealt with. In doing so the Department of Local Government and Housing has collaborated with institutions of higher learning within the province, namely; the University of Venda and the University of Limpopo.

The partnership that exists between the Department and the abovementioned institutions of higher learning is critical and this statement is supported by Vil-Nkomo (2000:53), who is of the opinion that empirical evidence informs most societies that public service and public sector transformation is a daunting challenge that mandates a partnership approach among politicians, practitioners,

citizens and other stakeholders. Furthermore, the successes, policies and priorities guiding co-operation must be precise and practical.

Du Toit, *et al.* (2002:94) describe the social environment as the total sum of all the social sub-systems that people belong to and the interaction between these sub-systems that can influence the environment of public administration. Examples of the sub-systems referred to are social groups such as families, sports organisations and religious groups.

It is also important to consider the role of the media in the social environment. According to Cheminai, *et al.* (1998:39) the media play a major role in defining the image of the Department of Local Government and Housing in Limpopo both through telecommunications and in the printed media. Furthermore, the media forms an important link between the Department and society in which the Department serves.

The media can be regarded as a significant role player in the domain of developmental local government, which is defined by Murphy (2000:112) as local government that is committed to working with citizens and groups within the society to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and to improve the quality of their lives. In addition active community participation is a cornerstone of local democracy; elected councils and municipal employees are charged with promoting the involvement of citizens and community groups, as well as harnessing the creative energy of citizens. The Department of Local Government and Housing identifies and acknowledges the important role that the media has in the social environment, particularly because it is a tool of communication that provides access to information for both the Department and society in general.

## 4.4 INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The preceding section described the external environment of the Department of Local Government and Housing. The political, economic and social environments were highlighted as the traditional external factors that typically have an immense impact on the Department of Local Government and Housing. The specific or internal environment will be explored in the following section of the study. Diagram 4.2 above, depicted a simplified illustration of the Department of Local Government and Housing's external and internal environments, and as it can be noted the Department's internal environment is comprised of four factors, namely; regulators, suppliers, citizens and competitors. Ramlall (2003:64) argues that it is important for institutions such as the Department of Local Government and Housing to recognise the commitment of individuals to the institution, as well as the Department's need to create an environment in which individuals would be willing to stay.

### 4.4.1 Definition of the internal environment

According to Schwella (1991:20-21) the internal environment, also known as the specific or micro environment can be defined as the concrete manifestation of more general environmental forces. The internal environment is that part of the environment which directly influences the availability of resources to the Department. As such these environmental factors are observable and directly experienced by the Department. It was previously stated that the Department's internal environment comprises of four factors that influence the Department's ability to achieve its service delivery mandates and broader institutional objectives. These four factors are analysed subsequently.



#### 4.4.2 The vision, mission and values of the DLGH

The vision and mission of the Department ask two fundamental questions: firstly, *where* does the Department see itself within a particular timeframe? (vision). Secondly, the mission of the Department aims to establish *how* the Department will achieve its vision. The vision and mission describe what the Department of Local Government and Housing is mandated to do. The vision, mission and values of the Department are briefly described below (Department of Local Government and Housing, 2010: 1):

- i) Vision:  
Sustainable Development Local Governance and Integrated Human Settlements.
- ii) mission:  
To establish, support and monitor sustainable developmental local governance through:
  - Coordinated and integrated development planning in all spheres of government;
  - Coordinated and targeted capacity building programmes;
  - The creation of an environment within which housing development occurs; and
  - Coordination of disaster management.
- iii) Values:  
The Department's foundation is based on honesty and integrity, thereby building deep trust in the relationships that the Department has with its stakeholders. Continuous growth and innovation are two other fundamental values that are upheld within the Department.

In addition, the Department commits itself to the following eight *Batho Pele* principles:

- Access
- Consultation
- Courtesy
- Information
- Redress
- Value for money
- Service standards
- Openness and Transparency

The vision and mission statements, as well as the founding values of the Department underline the commitment that the Department has in improving the socio-economic well-being of the inhabitants of the Limpopo Province .

According to the Citizen's Report (2008-2009:1) the commitment of the Department is based on the premise that the Department of Local Government and Housing continues to experience significant overall organisational performance and this has resulted in considerable progress being realised in the implementation of the core mandates of the Department.

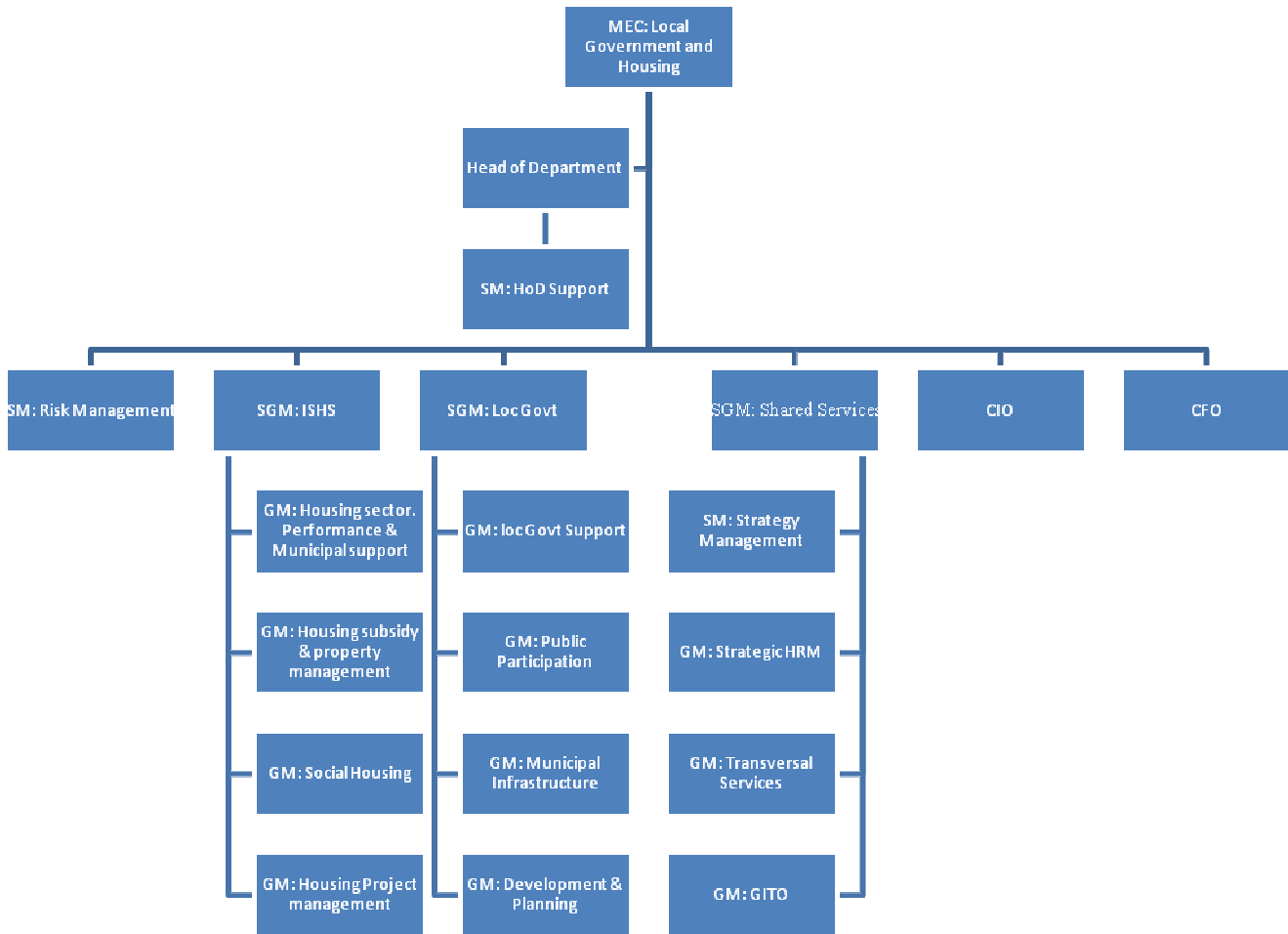
The important role that the leadership structure of the Department play's in implementing the vision and mission statements, as well as the values of the Department cannot be undermined. Roythorne-Jacobs (2003:204) argues that leadership involves the process by which one individual influences other individuals towards the attainment of personal or institutional goals. Leadership is also a process of influencing the activities of a group towards goal setting and goal achievement. In turn these influences determine the effectiveness of the institution. Figure 4.3 illustrates the organogram of the Department.

The strategic objectives are determined by the leadership structure of the Department and should clearly be communicated to the employees of the

Department, so that these employees can align their personal goals and objectives with the objectives of the Department. Some of the Department's strategic objectives are listed as:

- To provide support to the Department.
- To provide political and strategic direction of the Department.
- To provide operational support to the housing function in terms of applicable legislation and acts.
- To support integrated and sustainable settlements.
- To provide capacity and support to municipalities with regard to Housing delivery in line with the Housing Act.
- Strengthen Provincial Integrated Development Framework
- Deepening cooperative governance.
- Facilitate service delivery, economic development and poverty alleviation.

**Figure 4.3 Organogram of the Department of Local Government and Housing**



**Source: Department of Local Government and Housing, 2010.**

In striving to achieve its mandates and institutional objectives the Department of Local Government and Housing consists of three main programmes, namely; Shared Services, Integrated Sustainable Human Settlement and Local Governance. Each of these main programmes are subdivided into sub-programmes. Firstly, the Shared Services programme consists of nineteen sub-programmes, these are illustrated in the table 4.3 below:

**Table 4.3: Shared services sub-programmes**

<b>Shared Services Programme</b>		
MEC's Support	Departmental Expenditure and Housing Finance	Corporate Services
Office of the HoD	Accounting Systems	Service Excellence Centre
Human Resource Planning	Budget Services	Risk and Security Management
Human Resource Administration and Systems	Legal Services	
Human Resource Development	Labour Relations and Employee Wellness	
Organisational Transformation	Research and Policy Management	
Information Technology	Strategic Management	
Supply Chain Management	Communication Services	

According to the Citizen's Report (2008-2009:10) the purpose of the Shared Services programme is to provide support to the core activities of the Department and also to ensure that resources are allocated efficiently, effectively and economically.

The second main programme of the Department, Integrated Sustainable Development, is subdivided into eight sub-programmes, which are specifically identified in table 4.4 below:

**Table 4.4: Integrated sustainable development sub-programmes**

<b>INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME</b>	
Human settlement stakeholder capacity building	Community based housing
Housing accreditation	Institutional housing
Industry and economic development analysis	Credit linked, project linked and social amenities
Housing property, subsidy administration and claims management	Rural housing, housing rectification

The Departments' Citizen's Report (2008-2009:31) stipulates that the purpose of the Integrated Sustainable Human Settlement programme is to ensure the provision of housing development in an integrated manner in both urban and

rural areas. Lastly, the Local Governance main programme consists of fifteen sub-programmes:

**Table 4.5: Local governance sub-programmes**

<b>LOCAL GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME</b>	
Spatial and Human Settlement Planning	Management and Free Basic Services
Local Economic Development	Infrastructure Administration Support
IDP Coordination	Municipal Institutional Capacity Building
Land Use, Deeds and Statutory Bodies	Performance Monitoring and Evaluation
Infrastructure Development Planning	Municipal Finance
Municipal Infrastructure Planning	Democratic Governance
Municipal Infrastructure Delivery	Disaster Risk Management and Emergency Services
Municipal Infrastructure Assets	

The objectives of the programme of Local Governance are to give capacity to municipalities, thereby, to coordinate the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of infrastructure development processes. In addition, the Local Governance programme is responsible for enhancing the planning process through intergovernmental relations and establishing a cohesive system for disaster management (Citizen's Report, 2008-2009: 37).

The ensuing section will analyse four critical factors that influence the internal environment of the Department of Local Government and Housing. Regulators, suppliers, competitors and citizens will to a large extent determine how successful the Department is in achieving its mandates and institutional objectives, therefore it is imperative to analyse these factors to establish what type of impact that they may have on the Department.

#### 4.4.3 Regulators

Du Toit, *et al.* (2002: 98) define regulators as the formal internal environment of public institutions. Government creates the formal internal environments in which public institutions function. This implies that the South African government can

manipulate the formal internal environment of institutions when it believes it to be in the interests of the public. This is illustrated by the implementation of a regulatory framework such as the *Batho Pele* principles.

From the aforementioned statement, it can be deduced that regulators are key role players in controlling the relationship that the Department of Local Government has with its various stakeholders. The external stakeholders that were previously described in the external environment were identified as imperative in assisting the Department to achieve its aims and objectives. Cheminai, *et al.* (1998:94) state that the regulatory framework in all three spheres of government significantly affects virtually the whole spectrum of human resource policies, for example the Career and Retention Management Policy that the Department has in place.

According to Schwella (1991:21) regulators are usually vested with some form of authority to provide enforceable rules by which the institutions within their spheres have to abide. Examples of societal institutions that exercise a regulatory function over public institutions are found within the legislative, judicial and executive governmental structure. Often these regulating authorities derive their powers of regulation by virtue of a mandate from the citizens to serve as their controlling agents over the particular institution.

The Department of Local Government and Housing, like any other public institution is a publicly-owned entity. Therefore, its existence is justified only on the basis that it is there to provide goods and services to citizens who would otherwise not be able to provide for themselves. Its mandate and objectives originate from the public arena, thus the way in which it achieves or does not achieve its objectives should constantly be monitored or regulated by a specific body of authority. Such a body of authority applies the democratic principles of accountability, transparency and efficiency when evaluating the ability of public institutions to achieve their mandates.

The internal checks and balances of the Department are crucial to ensure that the institution is well equipped to deliver the services that it is responsible for delivering. Regulators are also tasked with improving the problem areas that public institutions may be confronted with when delivering goods and services. The Department derives its mandate from a vast array of legislative documents. Examples of some these are briefly listed below. It should be noted that these documents are statutory provisions as assembled by regulatory bodies in the public service. The documents are categorised according to five different categories (Department of Local Government and Housing, 2007-2008: 5):

- *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996*
- *Housing Act (Act no. 107 of 1997 as amended)*
- *Development Facilitation Act (Act no. 67 of 1995)*
- *Local Government Municipal Systems Act (Act no. 32 of 2000)*
- *Public Service Regulations of 2001*

The legislative documents that are listed above were briefly listed because they are representative of a broader and more comprehensive list of statutory provisions that guide the Department of Local Government and Housing in achieving its mandates. According to Cheminais, *et al.* (1998:95) government should generally regulate and facilitate governmental interventions with the following objectives being taken into account:

- To respond to the formal requirements articulated in the Constitution and other subordinate legislation (such as those listed above);
- To ensure that public officials are managed and utilised in such a way that society or the community receive effective and efficient services;
- To provide an environment where public employees act in an ethical and incorruptible conduct in the provision of services to society;
- To create institutions which regulate the employment of public employees, such as the Department of Public Service and Administration; and



- To ensure that employment equity and equal employment opportunities are enhanced in public institutions.

The process of service delivery may only commence once resources have been allocated. In the case of the Department of Local Government and Housing, the availability of land is one of the most important resources if the Department is to successfully build and provide houses for the inhabitants of the province. Suppliers are crucial role players in the provision of some of the resources that are required by public institutions.

#### 4.4.4 Suppliers

As the concept states, a supplier is an entity that is tasked with allocating and providing resources to public institutions that require them. Schwella (1991:21) is of the opinion that suppliers produce, mobilise and allocate various kinds of resources to particular institutions. For example, the financial resources that are allocated by Parliament are of major importance. These financial resources are mobilised by means of taxes, levies or service charges and are then allocated to public institutions in accordance with political and policy priorities.

Examples of societal institutions acting as suppliers of financial and political resources to public institutions include legislative bodies such as Parliament, the electorate and the tax payers. Executive and administrative bodies acting as suppliers include the Cabinet and the Treasury. Schwella (1991) further states that suppliers of resources gain power over the institutions or individuals that are being supplied by them. One of the implications of this is that these suppliers also gain authority and power to act as regulators over those institutions that they supply. Thus, although the provincial Department of Local Government and Housing has a certain degree of autonomy to determine the way in which it will achieve its aims and objectives, the Department requires authoritative entities

such as Parliament to allocate the necessary resources for these aims and objectives to be attained.

The labour market is defined by Mathis and Jackson (2003:202) as the external supply pool from which employers attract employees, therefore, the Department of Local Government and Housing is responsible for identifying potential recruits from the labour market and recruiting these individuals because the labour market is a competitive environment that consists of different institutions, such as; private institutions, other government departments and non-profit institutions. In the labour market, the abovementioned institutions will challenge the Department in attracting potential recruits, therefore it is imperative that the Department establishes itself as the most suitable employer of choice and offer these individuals what its rival institutions do not offer.

According to Fowler (1995:51-52) the emphasis on equal employment opportunity is important and stems directly from human resource management philosophy, which is of the view that the effective and healthy institution needs to draw on the widest possible range of human talent. As it is often the case with other government institutions within the Republic, the Department of Local Government and Housing is confronted with problems and challenges from social, economic and political changes. Fowler (1995) suggests that the Department can address these challenges most effectively if its workforce reflects the make-up of the community, and includes a much wider range of skills, understandings and attitude. The labour market plays a vital role in supplying the Department with potential individuals that can improve the capacity of the Department in addressing some of its problems and challenges.

In collaboration with the three housing financial institutions (ABSA bank, Development Bank of Southern Africa and Standard Bank) that were identified in the external economic environment, as well as with its co-operative exertions with the Limpopo provincial treasury, the Department of Local Government and

Housing has a number of financial suppliers that assist the Department in terms of financial support. This provides the Department with an opportunity to reach its obligations more efficiently because it would have more financial resources in its capacity.

Inarguably, the Department of Local Government cannot function in isolation from its supply environment. The provision of resources (financial, human, information, communication and technology) is dependent on their availability in the supply environment. In economic related terms, the factors of supply and demand are two interdependent variables because the demand for a certain resource, for example financial, can only be satisfied depending on whether the provincial treasury of the Limpopo Province has made enough of these financial resources available in its budget processions. The possibility of limited financial resources being made available, has resulted in the Department establishing partnerships with various financial institutions, hence the rationale behind the Department co-operating with ABSA Bank, the DBSA and Standard Bank.

The limited availability of resources results in the Department being compelled to compete with other institutions and departments. The success of the Department in achieving its mandates and institutional objectives is largely dependent on the availability of resources, thus if the Department is to obtain the resources that it requires, it must ward off its competitors by creating strategic interventions that would effectively, economically and efficiently give it a competitive advantage over its competitors. The subsequent section will describe some of the critical factors that emanate from the competitive environment.

#### 4.4.5 Competitors

The competitor component of the specific or internal environment consists of those societal institutions which compete for scarce resources with the Department of Local Government and Housing in Limpopo. In many instances

public institutions are ostensibly in a monopolistic environment, where there are no competitors for the services that they deliver (Schwella, 1991:22).

The Department of Local Government and Housing competes with several other government departments within the province for scarce resources. The Department's rival institutions are namely the; the Department of Health and Social Development, Department of Roads and Transport, Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environment, as well the Department of Agriculture. Although the abovementioned departments were earlier identified as public institutions that co-operatively function with the Department of Local Government and Housing, these institutions may compete for similar resources in order to successfully achieve their mandates.

According to the Department's Citizens Report (2008-2009:5) the Department has identified and acquired strategically located land for development in some of the major areas of the province, such as Polokwane, Mokopane, Lephalale and Phalaborwa. Land is a key resource for the Department because without the provision of land houses cannot be built for communities and because other departments such as the provincial Department of Agriculture in Limpopo also require the provision of land in order to meet its institutional obligations, it is apparent that competition for resources within the province poses different challenges and problems with the departments concerned.

Furthermore, the Department of Local Government and Housing has been strategic in its ability to enhance the human resource management and development approach of the Department primarily because building internal capacity is at the core of the Department's human resource strategy. The emphasis of human resource development is attested by the fact that the Department has put in place a memorandum of understanding with the University of Limpopo. The partnership between the Department of Local Government and Housing and the University of Limpopo is an Executive Management

Development Programme, which is a programme that is created specifically for the senior management service (SMS) of the Department. In addition to its human resource development strategies the Department commits itself to enhancing the internship programmes that are currently implemented by the Department, as these programmes afford graduates an opportunity to gain valuable work experience (Citizens Report, 2008-2009).

According to Fourie (2006:925) the worldwide utilisation of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) is to deliver certain public services. The utilisation of PPPs in the South African context is also applicable where the focus of service delivery outcomes, risk and the three E's (efficiency, effectiveness and economy) are being shared between the public, private and non-governmental sectors. It can be deduced from the statement provided by Fourie (2006) that institutions, whether private, public or non-governmental do not necessarily have to compete with each other for scarce resources, but instead these institutions can deliver basic services to the people by establishing partnerships with each other in order to share available resources efficiently, effectively and economically.

It can be argued that the existence of government is justified primarily by the role it plays in uplifting the well-being of its citizens and inhabitants of the country concerned. Private institutions provide goods and services to consumers with the overall aim of making a profit, while public institutions provide goods and services without a profit making incentive. A citizen centred approach is imperative if the South African government or any other government is to improve the way in which it enhances the socio-economic well-being of its citizens. The fourth factor, namely; citizens, in the internal environment will be explored in the following section.

#### 4.4.6 Citizens

The Department of Local Government and Housing, like other public institutions, functions within an open system as opposed to a closed system. Minaar and Becker (2005:24) describe the open system as an ongoing, repetitive process, consisting of the following components:

- Inputs are obtained from the environment in order to enable the management process to function. These inputs consist of the resources required to start the management process;
- These inputs (resources) are transformed into needs-satisfying utilities by the institutional processing systems. These include transaction processing systems, decision support systems and operating management procedures;
- The results of the two preceding components of the management process are known as the outputs of the management process, this is known as service delivery to the community;
- The outcome of the management process is the ultimate manifestation of the success or failure of the process. If the Department of Local Government and Housing can continuously add or create value in its environment, then its institutional policies will be successfully implemented and the entire management process could then be regarded as successful.

The open system process, as it has been described above, is a rather complex process in practice because it is a system that requires constant interaction with its environment. Therefore, the changes that occur in the environment should continuously be monitored and evaluated by the Department. The needs of citizens should be identified and satisfied by the Department. Minaar and Bekker (2005:24) argue that in a dynamic, democratic and demanding twenty-first century public service environmental reality, public administration systems have

to function as open systems. They must constantly interact with their environment and integrate the inputs and demands received from the environment into their service delivery management systems.

The study has established that the Department of Local Government and Housing is a provincial government department. Thus, the Department is responsible for providing support and assistance to the Municipalities which are identified at the local sphere of government. The important role of provincial departments providing support and assistance to municipalities is emphasised by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2008:5) which argues that the Intergovernmental Relations Framework Act provides methods for local, provincial and national government to work together to effectively interpret national priorities. This co-operation promotes the provision of important services that are at the core of the developmental agenda of the state.

According to Fowler (1995: vii) new problems, issues and opportunities demand from local governments a capacity to respond in new ways. They have to become closer to their local communities; they need to find imaginative solutions to the even more complex problems of public policy, they have to achieve value for money and value in the services they provide. The 2007-2008 Annual Report of the Department of Local Government and Housing states that because improving basic service delivery and infrastructure remains one of government's top priorities, the Limpopo Province Indigent Policy Framework has been developed and launched to assist all municipalities in developing compliant Indigent Policies. The department's approach to housing delivery has changed for the better. Through the Breaking New Ground Policy (BNG), the Department is bringing people closer to places that offer better economic activities by building integrated and sustainable human settlements.

The six municipalities in Limpopo are identified as the institutions that are “closest” to the people within the regions of the province. The term closest, in this context refers to the fact that local government or the municipal level of government is that level of government which is responsible for the delivery of goods and services to citizens. This statement is supported by the Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2008: 5) which declares that local government’s participation in intergovernmental relations is important because it is the key site of service delivery and development. Although Local government has the responsibility and autonomy to manage its own affairs, it is imperative that the Department of Local Government and Housing ensures that it provides sustained support and assistance to the local sphere of government. Such support may consist of resource provision, as well as human capacity assistance wherever it may be required by municipalities.

According to Sekoto and Van Straaten (1999:104) in order to transform and improve the image of the public sector, several governments attempted to introduce private sector practices, which were briefly described in the second chapter, in what was examined as the north-south debate. This was mainly aimed at improving service delivery that was extensively perceived to be exemplified by a culture of non-delivery. Furthermore, Sekoto and Van Straaten (1999:105) advocate for public institutions such as the Department of Local Government and Housing, as well as other provincial departments in the Limpopo Province to adopt a customer-focused approach because it is a practice that attempts to improve efficiency and productivity, not only in the private sector, but also in the public sector. In addition the main objective of a customer or citizen-focused approach is to improve service delivery and is characterised by; consulting users of services, setting service standards, increasing access, ensuring courtesy, providing more useful information, increasing openness and transparency, enhanced accountability, encouraging innovation, rewarding excellence and building partnerships with the wider community.



The Department of Local Government and Housing is characterised by a citizen-focused approach. This is evident in the value system that exists within the Department, of which according to the Department's Citizen Report (2008-2009:6) is founded on honesty and integrity, thereby building trust in all of the relationships that exist between the Department, its community (citizens) and other stakeholders. It should also be noted that the citizen-focused approach that is evident in many public institutions across the country, originates from the eight *Batho Pele* principles that were introduced by government which aim at improving service delivery by placing citizens at the core of every public institution. That is, public institutions should be a means to an end, rather than an end in themselves.

As it was stated earlier in the chapter, the existence of public institutions is justified by the role that they play in uplifting the socio-economic conditions in which citizens find themselves in, Cheminais, *et al.* (1998:39) support this statement by declaring that the primary clients and recipients of public goods and services, have certain expectations of, firstly how 'their' taxes should be spent, and secondly the type of individuals they expect to serve the public.

The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2008: 6) states that citizens play an important role in identifying their own development priorities. Councillors encourage citizens to participate through Ward Committees and public meetings that are organised by the council. The Municipal Systems Act (Act No. 32 of 2000) provides for a process of public participation in the affairs of local government. This promotes accountability, public participation and consensus on growth and development priorities.

## 4.5 CONCLUSION

The purpose behind the discussions in this chapter was aimed at conceptualising the two types of environments, namely the external and internal environment, in which the Department of Local Government and Housing in Limpopo functions. An environment was defined as the total surroundings of the Department of Local Government and Housing, both internally and externally. For the purposes of the chapter, only three critical factors of the external environment were analysed, those were identified as the political, economic and social environment.

In attaining its mandates and institutional objectives the Department of Local Government and Housing has an established strategic partnership with various stakeholders. The internal environment of the Department comprises of four critical factors, namely the; regulators, suppliers, competitors and citizens. It was argued that the Department of Local Government and Housing cannot achieve its mandates and institutional objectives if an environmental analysis is not engineered by the Department because the chapter has emphasised that the institution does not operate in an isolated environment, but rather, the open system philosophy that exists in the South African public service coerces the Department to constantly be aware of the changes that occur in both of its environments. The success or failure of the Department is dependent on how stable each of the factors in the two types of environments is.

## **CHAPTER 5: CAREER AND RETENTION MANAGEMENT IN THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING: CHALLENGES AND TRENDS**

### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

An environmental analysis of the Department of Local Government and Housing was provided in the previous chapter of the study. The chapter concluded that the external and internal environment will primarily determine the extent to which the Department can successfully achieve its mandate and objectives.

The study has highlighted the overarching significant role that an institution, as an employer, is required to play in constantly monitoring the performance, as well as the potential signs of withdrawal that tend to develop as individuals display characteristics of intending to leave that particular institution. The third chapter of the study differentiated the common types of employee turnover and conceptualised the various reasons why employees may want to leave the institution.

The purpose of the study, as it is stated in the first chapter, was to comprehend the effectiveness of the Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department of Local Government and Housing. An understanding of whether or not the Policy can achieve its aims and objectives is imperative because if the Policy is failing to meet its objectives, then the challenges of career and retention management will persist and thus become costly to the taxpayer, as this results in a waste of financial expenditure.

The following chapter will analyse the phenomenon of career and retention management within the Department of Local Government and Housing. The challenges of the two concepts will be discussed by examining some of the perceptions and attitudes that are held by a particular echelon of employees

within the Department, namely; the senior managers. The Department has a total number of forty-five senior managers; however the study had targeted a representative sample size of forty senior managers. The study utilised a random sampling method to select the managers, therefore the selection was not limited to a specific age, gender, skill or a qualification that managers may possess.

A self-administered questionnaire, which contained open and closed questions, was electronically distributed to forty of the targeted senior managers; however, only twenty one out of the forty senior managers had willingly and successfully completed the questionnaires. This chapter will examine the results of the self-administered questionnaires as well as explore the limitations that were experienced.

## **5.2 RESEARCH APPROACH**

A qualitative, empirical, analytical research paradigm was adopted, as the study aimed to provide an in-depth description of a group of people through analysing responses received from self-administered questionnaires (Mouton, 2001, cited in Munsamy and Venter, 2009.) This paradigm was adopted in order to understand the career and retention factors important to the research participants in their natural setting (Munsamy and Venter, 2009:190).

Research participants were requested to complete the self-administered questionnaires on a voluntary basis, as this would eliminate any form of subjectivity or bias. The primary objective of questionnaires being distributed to research participants was to give participants an opportunity to effectively express their personal views, attitudes and perceptions about a particular phenomenon in a natural setting. Moreover, the questionnaires retain the identity of its participants because this would give them an opportunity to reflect their real-life experiences without necessarily having to limit the way in which they answer the questions. Although the identity of the research participants was

retained, it does not necessarily mean that the bias of participants' will be eliminated. This statement is echoed by Katzer, *et al.* (1982: 54) who argue that respondents may try to “psyche out” the investigation as an intellectual challenge because they are afraid of being judged, either because they want to do what is expected of them or they want to behave in a manner that is socially acceptable.

The prime approach to the study is summarised by Munsamy and Venter (2009:190) who state that the study was exploratory, and was aimed at expanding on existing baseline literature, in attempt to integrate existing knowledge into a framework without limiting the framework to the existing literature alone. By evaluating the Career and Retention Management Policy, the study aims to provide a theoretical framework in which the challenges of career and retention management in the public service can be conceptualised because these challenges append to the already existing problems that exist in public institutions.

### **5.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

A theoretical framework was adopted for the purposes of the study. The survey of the literature explicitly highlighted the imperative key points regarding the discipline of Human Resource Management, with particular emphasis being placed on the issues of career and retention management.

Qualitative data sources included an analysis of existing literature in the discipline of Human Resource Management, as well as self-administered questionnaires. The self-administered questionnaires consisted of twenty-two questions and were divided into two broad types of questions, namely; open and closed questions. The questionnaires contained an introduction letter that briefly explained the purpose of the research and were then electronically mailed to forty senior managers within the Department of Local Government and Housing.

Buckingham and Saunders (2004:69-70) argue that the great advantage of mailing out questionnaires is cost. This research instrument was also advantageous firstly because participants were given a sufficient amount of time to complete the questionnaires and secondly because the questionnaire contained both open and closed questions, this allowed participants to express their views without any unnecessary pressure or fear of judgement from the presence of a researcher (as in the case of an observation or interview). However, as it was stated earlier in the chapter, the disadvantage of utilising a research instrument such as a questionnaire is that not many people may want to participate in the study; therefore a low response rate will be experienced, which unfortunately limits the possibility of a vast amount of data being collected.

As it was stipulated in the first chapter of the study, the research is predominantly qualitative because its descriptive nature can be associated with the human or social sciences. However, for the purposes of interpretation or analysis, the researcher *quantifies* the data in order to make the analysis more meaningful in terms of graphically displaying the perceptions, views and attitudes of respondents towards a particular phenomenon (the Career and Retention Management Policy). This mixed model research process is described by Du Plessis and Majam (2010:466) as when the researcher quantifies the results by counting the number of times each type of response occurs (quantitative data analysis). Furthermore, the researcher also reports the responses as percentages and examines the relationship between sets of categories or variables.

#### **5.4 RESEARCH SETTING**

The Department of Local Government and Housing is a provincial government institution that is located in the city of Polokwane, in the Limpopo Province. The questionnaires were randomly distributed to forty senior managers within the Human Resource Development Unit of the Department.

## 5.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As with any research study, a number of limitations were experienced during the compilation of the study. These are discussed as follows: firstly; as it was explained above, the key research instrument that was utilised in the study is a self-administered questionnaire and because participants were randomly selected, their participation was voluntary. Therefore, the completion of the questionnaires was not guaranteed. This resulted in a relatively moderate response rate (52.5%). Work commitments and time constraints were cited as the biggest reasons for low response rates.

Secondly, the rate at which questionnaires were sent back to the researcher was fairly slow. However, this was due to the work commitments that participants were confronted with. Finally, financial constraints hindered the researcher from conducting further empirical studies to obtain any other latent issues that were not indicated by participants in the self-administered questionnaires. Further studies would have allowed the researcher to determine the degree of bias from participants, which could otherwise not be determined as in the case of the self-administered questionnaires.

## 5.6 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Potter (1996:134) declares that there is a wide selection of methods of analysis available to qualitative researchers. These methods can be used separately, but more likely they are used in combinations created by the researcher to fulfil a particular purpose. The following section will present the data that was collected from the self-administered questionnaires and because of the theoretical nature of the data, the analysis is systematically categorised into sub-headings which represent different themes and concepts that emanate from the questions that were asked in the questionnaire. A single copy of an uncompleted questionnaire is attached to the appendix (**Appendix A**) for consideration.

### 5.6.1 Section 1: Demographic information of research participants

It was earlier mentioned in the chapter that a total of forty questionnaires were randomly distributed to senior managers who are currently employed at the Department of Local Government and Housing. This section of questions contained four broad categories in which participants were requested to answer, namely; gender, age, number of years employed in the public service and educational level. The primary reason behind asking participants to indicate their demographic information was to develop an understanding of the target population, i.e. to answer the question of; *who* are we dealing with?

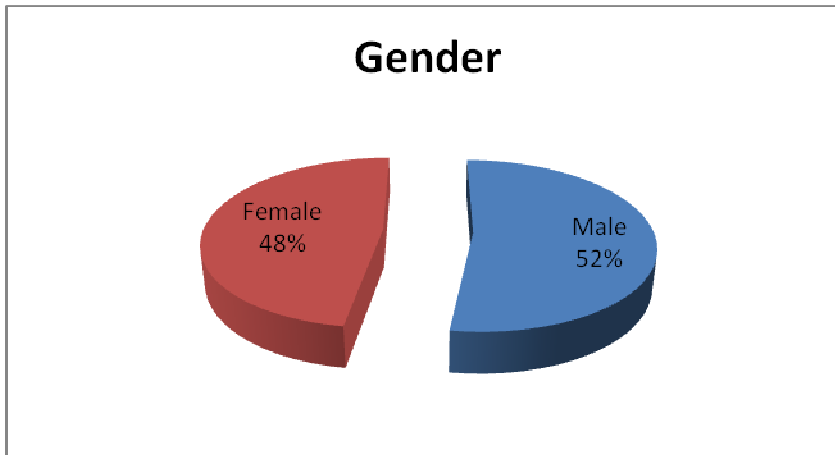
According to Aaker, *et al.* (1995) and Saunders, *et al.* (1997) as cited in Coetzee (2005), the *representativity* of the population in the response is of greater significance than the general response percentage. These categories are distinctively examined below. It should be noted that a random sampling technique was used to select participants, therefore the selection criteria was not subjective, but rather objective because every senior manager who had received a questionnaire was randomly selected, their identity was unknown to the researcher.

#### i) **Gender:**

The research participants were requested to select their gender. Figure 5.1 below illustrates the percentage of males and females who had participated in the study.



**Figure 5.1: Gender of research participants**

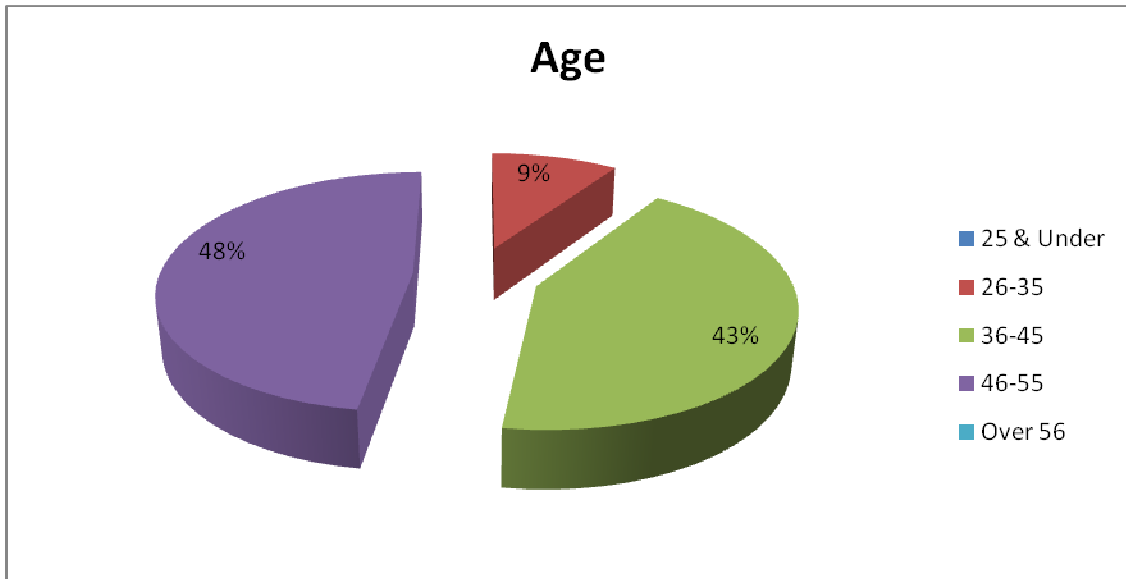


According to the chart above, the majority of participants were male (52%), whereas the remaining 48% minority was accounted for by the female senior managers. As it was stated earlier in the chapter, the study had a total of twenty one participants, eleven of these participants being male and the remaining ten, female.

**ii) Age:**

The second demographic category that participants were requested to state was their age. Five age categories were provided for them to choose from. To be precise, the age categories were provided as follows; twenty-five and under, twenty-six to thirty-five, thirty-six to forty-five, forty-six to 55 and lastly, over 56. These responses are demonstrated in figure 5.2.

**Figure 5.2: Age of research participants**

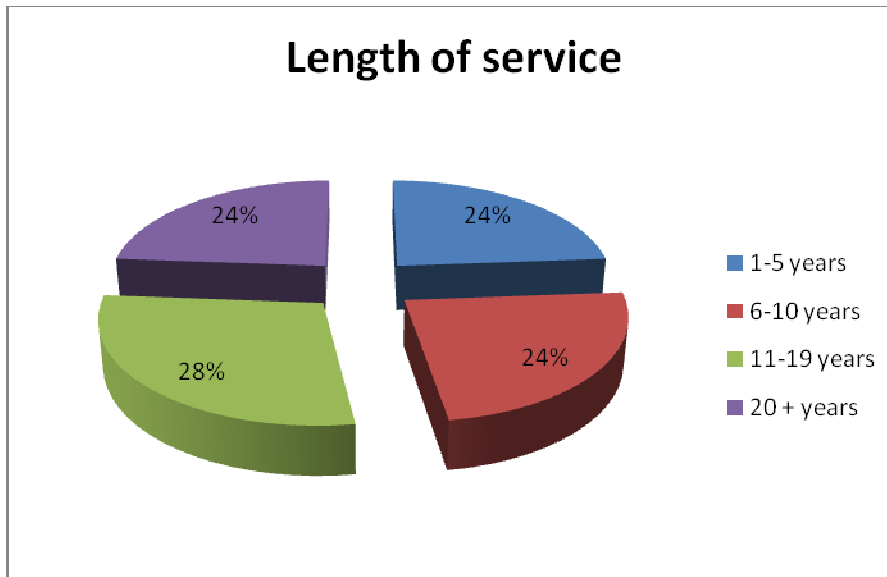


The chart above reflects that the majority of the managers who participated in the study were between the ages of forty-six and fifty-five (48%). The second dominant generation of participants were between the ages of thirty-six and forty-five (43%), followed by those between the ages of twenty-six and thirty-five. As the chart also indicates, there were no participants younger than twenty-six or older than fifty-six.

iii) **Number of years employed in public service:**

Research participants were asked to indicate the number of years that they have been employed in the South African public service. Participants were provided with four options, which are; one to five years, five to ten years, eleven to nineteen and lastly, twenty or more years. These figures are displayed in figure 5.3 below.

**Figure 5.3: Number of years employed in the public service**

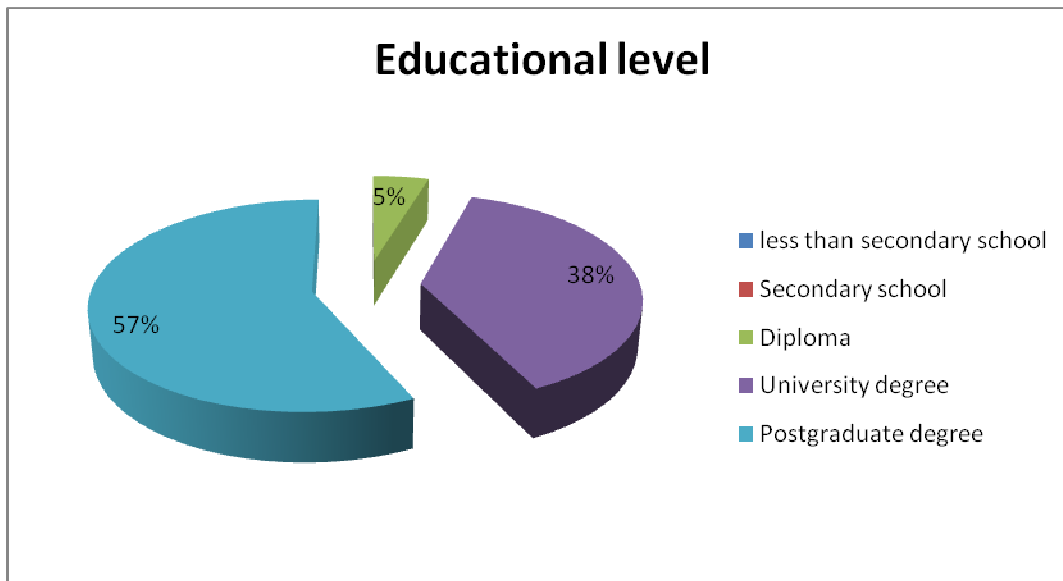


The figure above highlights that the majority (28%) of participants have been employed in the public service for a period of more than ten years, but just less than twenty years (11-19 years). Only five out of the twenty-one senior managers have been employed in the public service for a period of twenty years or more (24%), while five of them have been employed for less than six years (between 1 and 5 years). The remaining five managers have been working in the public service for a period of between six and ten years (24%).

iv) **Education level:**

The fourth and final demographic category which participants were requested to state was their highest level of education. Five options were provided in which participants had to select their highest educational level. The categories were provided as follows; less than a secondary school qualification, secondary school (were asked to specify the grade), diploma, university degree and postgraduate degree. The chart below (figure 5.4) depicts the responses of participants.

**Figure 5.4: Education level of participants**



The illustration above reflects that the highest education level of the majority of participants (57%) is a postgraduate degree. A university degree is held by 38% of the participants, while only one senior manager is in possession of a diploma. It is evident from figure 5.4 that there are no respondents who possess an education level that is below that of a diploma, i.e. secondary school or less than secondary school.

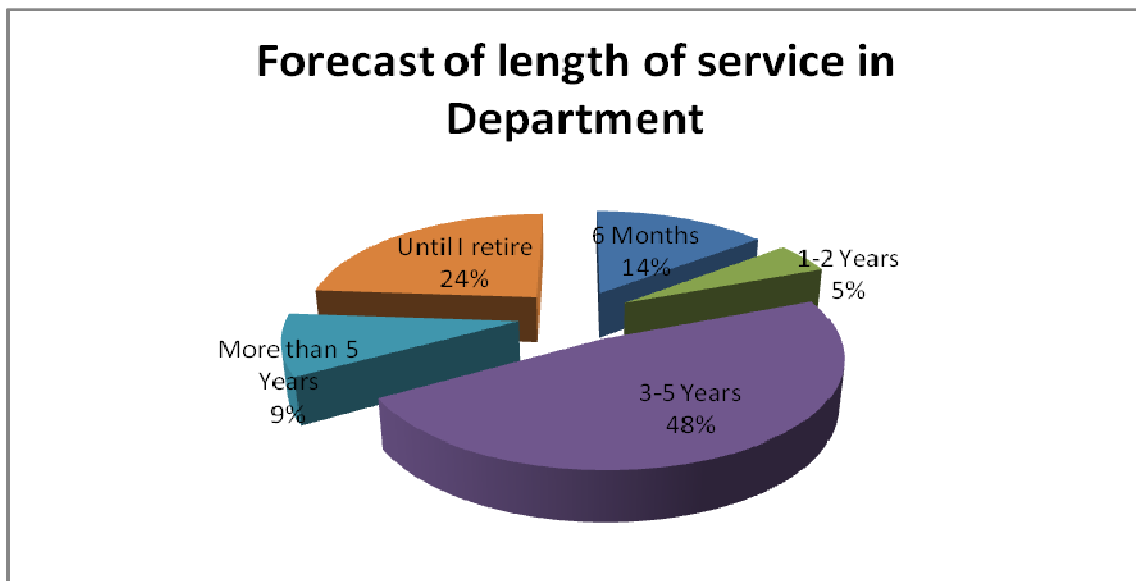
#### 5.6.2 Section 2: closed questions

This section required respondents to answer questions regarding their general attitude towards the Department and how this relationship may largely determine the retention ability of the Department. The purpose of this question was to identify the type of relationship that senior managers have among themselves and the Department; whether or not they envisage remaining employed within the Department on a long term basis; whether or not they personally identify with the vision, mission and goals of the Department as well as for them to identify some of the push factors, which may result in them deciding to leave the Department.

i) **Forecast of length of service in the Department:**

Respondents were asked how long they could envisage working in the Department if they had a choice. The results are graphically illustrated in the figure below (figure 5.5).

**Figure 5.5: Forecast of length of service in the Department**



It can be deduced from the figure above that the majority of participants (48%) envisage working for the Department of Local Government and Housing for the next three to five years of their working lives. Five out of the twenty-one (24%) participants stated that they intend on working for the Department until they retire, while 14% of the participants believe that they will not be working within the Department for more than a mere six months. Only two out of the twenty-one participants (9%) envisage remaining in the Department for more than five years, whilst 5% of the participants consider being employees of the Department for a period of between one and two years.

Some of the critical reasons why senior managers may want to leave the Department will be analysed in the succeeding section of the discussion based on the analysis of closed questions.

**ii) Current situation:**

The participants were provided with three random options, which related to their current working situation, and then they were asked to indicate which of the three options most appropriately described the way that they felt towards their working situation. The bar graph (figure 5.6) below reveals how the participants feel towards their current work situation.

**Figure 5.6: Current working situation**

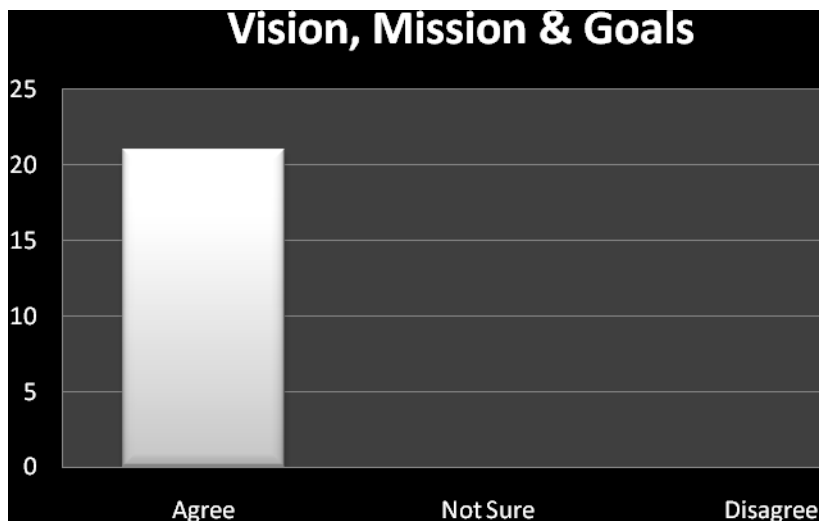


Figure 5.6 above indicates that the majority of participants (66%) are occasionally seeking other employment opportunities, this may be due to various reasons, however it is imperative that the Department identifies the possible reasons why its senior managers are seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. Five out of the twenty-one participants (24%) have admitted to continuously seek for other employment opportunities, while the remaining two participants have indicated that they are not looking for another job.

**iii) Identify with vision, mission and goals of the Department:**

The importance of employees being able to personally identify with the vision, mission and goals of the Department cannot be undermined. These intrinsic factors play an important role in ultimately determining the commitment that employees may have in striving towards institutional goals and objectives. Therefore, during the recruitment stage, the Department has an important role in identifying employees who may be beneficial towards the accomplishment of institutional objectives, precisely because their personal objectives are congruent with those of the Department. The graph below (figure 5.7) reflects the extent to which participants feel personally aligned to the vision, mission and goals of the Department of Local Government and Housing.

**Figure 5.7: Vision, mission and goals of the Department**



From the figure above (5.7) it is relatively apparent that every participant can personally identify with the vision, mission and goals of the Department. As it was stated above, the extent to which employees can personally identify with the vision, mission and goals of the Department will largely determine the Department's success in achieving its objectives. The alignment of an

employee’s personal objectives with the objectives of the Department will ensure that a harmonious working environment is created in which the employee is allowed to perform his or her duties to the best of their ability.

iv) **Skills and qualifications:**

The skills and qualifications that an individual possesses will inarguably establish the extent to which that particular individual may find employment. Research participants were required to indicate how easy it would be for them to find an equivalent or better job if they chose to leave the Department. Participants were provided with three options and had to denote the most appropriate choice. The illustration below (figure 5.8) is a graphical display of the results.

**Figure 5.8: Skills and qualifications**



From the graph above (figure 5.8) it is evident that 66% of the participants believe that with the skills and qualifications that they possess, finding another job would be a relatively easy task, while three out of the twenty-one (14%) participants think that finding another job would be very difficult. The remaining

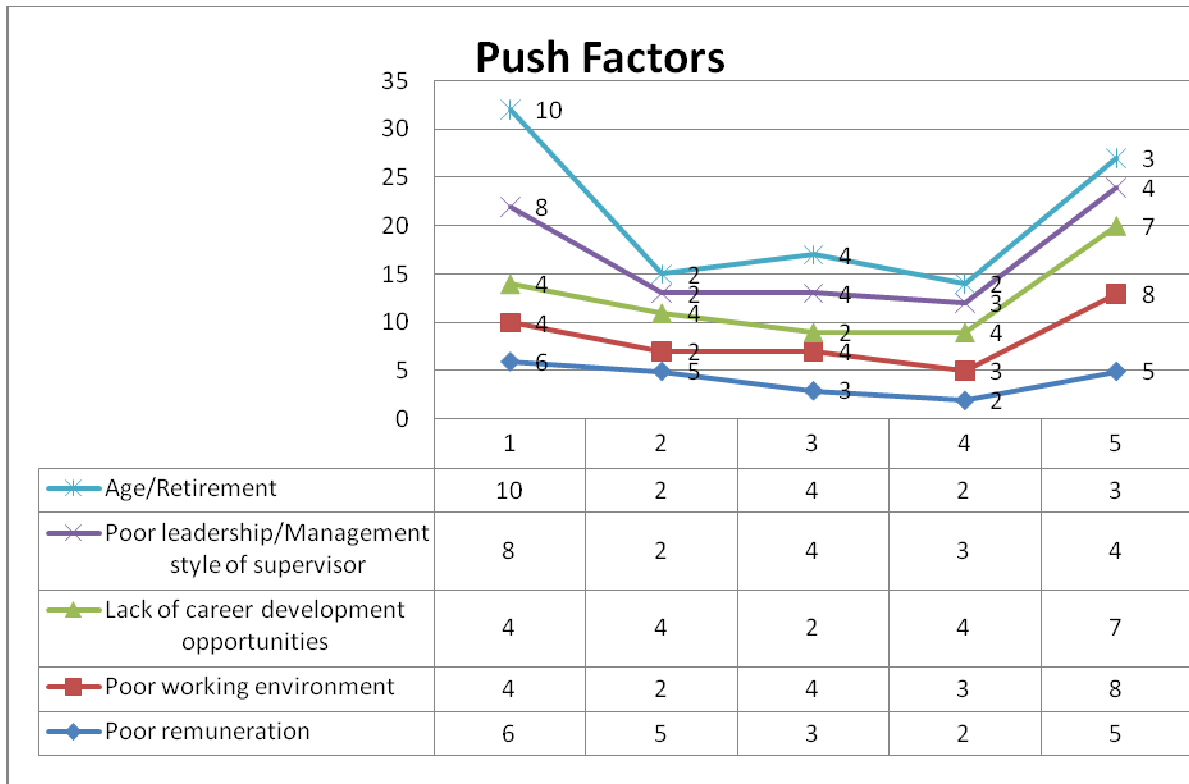


four participants (20%) are not sure about the prospects of getting another job despite the skills and qualifications that they possess.

**v) Push factors of the Department:**

The purpose of this question was to conceptualise some of the critical reasons or factors that may result in participants wanting to leave the Department, i.e. what are the “push factors” of the Department? The participants were provided with five broad categories (poor remuneration, poor working environment, lack of career development opportunities, poor leadership/management style of supervisor and age/retirement) and were then requested to rank each of these factors on a scale of one to five (with one being the lowest priority; five being the highest). This question forms the crux of this section of closed questions because it provides participants with some of the factors which are typically known to either attract or “push” employees to and from the Department. The results are portrayed in the graph (figure 5.9) below.

**Figure 5.9: Push factors of the Department**



The results of Figure 5.9 above can categorically be deduced to simplify the analysis. This will be done by scrutinising each of the five broad categories that participants were required to rank according to priority on a scale of between one to five. The analysis will start with the last factor (poor remuneration) and conclude with the first factor (age/retirement). The purpose of this is to analyse each of the factors in congruence with the manner in which they were displayed in the self-administered questionnaire.

Firstly, 29% of the research participants indicated that poor remuneration would not be a determinant in them wanting to leave the department. The table in the figure above (5.9) shows that six out of the twenty-one participants ranked poor remuneration as a low priority factor, whereas five out of the twenty-one (24%) ranked it as a high priority factor in determining their imminent departure. The general deduction that can be made from the analysis of this factor is that participants do not perceive poor remuneration as a reason to want to leave the

Department. In addition to the six participants who had indicated that poor remuneration is of low importance in determining whether or not they remained employed in the Department, five participants (24%) had rated the factor lowly.

Secondly, with regards to the factor of poor working environment, 38% of the participants believed that this would be an immense determinant in their departure. Only 19% of the participants ranked it as a low priority. The environment in which individuals work in is undeniably and largely responsible for determining the productivity levels of employees. The Department should constantly create an environment that enables employees to maximise their productivity levels, as this would ensure that the institutional goals and objectives are continuously strived for.

The third factor relates to whether participants believe that a lack of career development opportunities within the Department may be a reason for them to want to leave the Department. From the graph above (figure 5.9) it is apparent that 33% of the research participants ranked this factor highly, while 19% consider it to be a low priority in determining whether or not they remain employed in the Department. However, another 19% of the participants indicated that this factor would play an important part in making them want to leave the Department. From the findings based on the subject of career development, it is evident that the majority of senior managers who participated in the study, value the opportunity of being promoted or progressing along the career ladder. The glass ceiling effect has often been considered to be a hinderance for the development of one's career, for that reason the Department has to be conscious of the personal career objectives that its employees may hold and assist each of these employees in achieving those goals. The topic of career management was extensively examined in the third chapter of the study.

A poor leadership or management style of a supervisor is not deemed to be a key determinant by 38% of the senior managers who participated in the study,

whereas four out of the twenty-one participants (19%) believe that a supervisor with a poor leadership or management style would result in them contemplating departing from the Department.

Lastly, 47% of the participants declared that age or retirement would be a factor of low priority in determining whether or not they remain in the Department. In contrast, only three out of the twenty-one participants (14%) believe that this factor should be highly prioritised. The general deduction that can be made about this factor is that participants do not perceive or rank age/retirement highly enough as a reason to stop working for the Department.

In addition to the abovementioned factors, three participants identified other factors which they considered to be of a high priority in establishing their stay or departure from the Department. These factors are: firstly, to be close to home. Secondly, to be given decision-making power and lastly, working in the private sector. Unfortunately, the participants who listed these factors did not further elaborate on them, nonetheless, each of these factors are important and should be addressed wherever possible because they can ultimately determine whether or not the Department loses anymore senior managers.

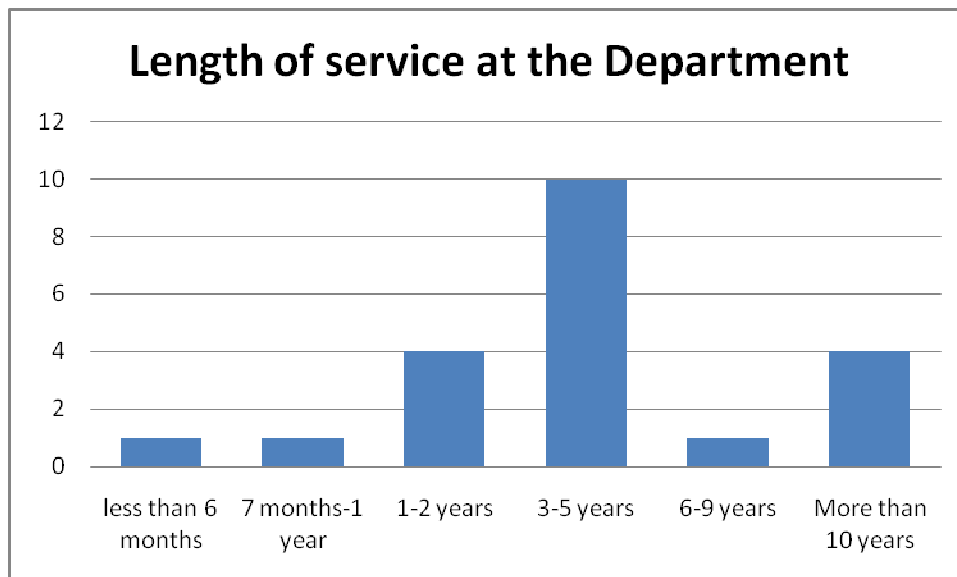
### 5.6.3 Section 3: open-ended questions

The open section of the questionnaire gave the participants an opportunity to further elaborate their views, attitudes and perceptions as the closed questions did not provide them with this opportunity. The participants were asked thirteen questions in this section, which were geared towards conceptualising their attitudes and perceptions regarding the issue of career and retention management practices within the Department. The results obtained from the open questions are analysed and interpreted below.

**i) Length of service at the Department:**

Participants were requested to indicate how long they had been employees of the Department. As it was stated in the paragraph above, the open questions sought to provide respondents with an opportunity to convey their perceptions regarding the career and retention management practices of the Department. Therefore, thorough knowledge of these practices would be largely determined by the amount of time that participants have been exposed to them. Inarguably, senior managers who have been employed at the Department for a relatively long period of time would be able to formulate perceptions about these practices, thus enabling them to evaluate whether or not these practices have been successful particularly in ensuring that the Department continually achieves its mandates and objectives. Figure 5.10 reflects the length of service of the participants in the Department.

**Figure 5.10: Length of service at the Department of Local Government and Housing**



The graph above (figure 5.10) reveals that the majority of participants (47%) have been employed at the Department of Local Government and Housing for a

period of between three and five years. Only four out of the twenty-one respondents (19%) have worked at the Department for more than ten years, while another 19% of the respondents indicated that they have been employees of the Department for a period of between one and two years. Two senior managers stated that they have worked in the Department for less than a year (one less than 6 months and the other between 7 months to one year).

The illustration also displays that out of the twenty-one participants, only one of them have been employees of the Department for a period of more than five years, but less than ten years (6 to 9 years). From figure 5.10 above, it is reasonable enough to assume that the majority of participants (fifteen out of twenty-one) who have been employed at the Department for a minimum period of at least three years to a maximum of more than ten years, are in a position to describe the *modus operandi* of the Department, particularly pertaining to career and retention management practices.

## ii) **Job satisfaction:**

Simply stated, job satisfaction asks the question; what does a particular employee enjoy the most about his or her job? Knowing what satisfies an employee the most about their job is imperative for the Department because this factor can decisively establish whether or not an employee will want to remain employed in the Department. Table 5.1 below categorically illustrates some the factors which participants adjudged to be of satisfactory importance in their tasks and duties.

**Table 5.1: Job satisfaction of participants**

FACTOR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Area of responsibility	8
Teamwork/ Interpersonal relations	7
Learning Environment	1

<b>Good Supervisor</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>4</b>

From the table above, it is apparent that the majority of participants are mostly satisfied by their area of responsibility. Senior managers within the Department are responsible for a number of core functions pertaining to service delivery and general institutional management. Some of these functions include; housing delivery, financial management, human resource management and development, information management, organisational development. 33% of the participants asserted that they are most satisfied about the interpersonal relations that they have with their colleagues, as this fosters a positive working environment based on teamwork, while two participants regard a good supervisor and a vigorous learning environment as the most satisfying aspects about their jobs. Four out of the twenty-one participants declined to mention their most satisfying job aspects.

### iii) **Role of supervisor in career development:**

The role of the supervisor in the development of an employee's career cannot be undermined. As it was argued in chapter three of the study, different individuals aspire to ascend the career ladder because this would provide them with an opportunity to satisfy their personal needs. According to figure 5.9 above, a lack of career development opportunities was ranked highly as one reasons why participants may decide to leave the Department and pursue their careers elsewhere. The relationship between a supervisor and his or her subordinate is paramount in establishing the amount of time that a subordinate may be willing to remain employed within the Department. Table 5.2 below provides a summary of the perceptions held by participants towards the role that their supervisors play in supporting them with their careers.

**Table 5.2: Supervisors role in career development**

FACTOR	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Motivate	1
Mentor	3
Leadership & Trust	3
Support & Guidance	8
None	6

According to table 5.2 above, 38% of the participants believe that their supervisors have played a critical role in their personal career development by providing support and guidance. For instance, some managers have cited that their supervisors encourage them to attend developmental workshops on a regular basis, which could assist in equipping them with the necessary skills and knowledge pertaining to their area of responsibility and some have highlighted the fact that their supervisors share useful information with them, supposedly as a means of empowering them.

Despite the fact that 71% of the participants were able to identify a role that their supervisors play in the development of their careers, the remaining 29% stated that their supervisors have played no supportive role in the development of their careers. Although it is only a minority of the participants who stated that their supervisors have not played a supportive role in the development of their careers and unfortunately because these participants did not cite any particular reasons for this phenomenon, it is crucial that the relationship between a supervisor and his or her subordinate is harmonious. Tension can arise between the two individuals, which could eventually result in the subordinate making a decision to leave the Department because of the strenuous relationship that he or she has with their supervisor.

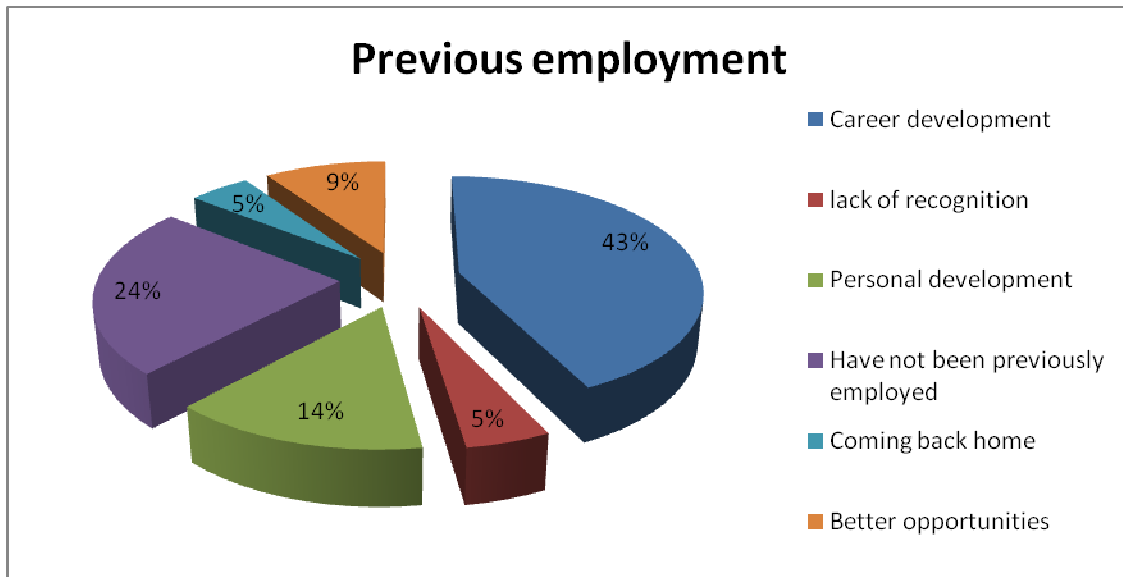


**iv) Previous employment in the public service:**

Participants were asked whether or not they had previously been employed by any other national or provincial government department. If they had been employed by another department, they were requested to indicate why they had decided to leave that department.

From figure 5.11 below, it is apparent that a lack of career development opportunities is the main reason why 43% of the participants had decided to depart from their previous institutions of employment. 24% of the participants indicated that they have previously not been employed by any other provincial or national government department. Personal development and better opportunities were cited as factors which resulted in 14% and 9% of the participants leaving the departments in which they were employed. Interestingly, one of the participants stated that returning back home, to Limpopo, was a reason why they had decided to depart from their previous place of employment. Another participant declared that they chose to relinquish their position in another government department because they believe that their efforts were not recognised enough by that particular department.

**Figure 5.11: Previous employment in the public service and reason for departure**



It is evident that a lack of career development opportunities in other departments has resulted in 43% of the participants opting to join the Department of Local Government and Housing on the basis that they believed that this Department would satisfy their personal career goals, whereas other departments had failed in doing so. Figure 5.9 had indicated that a lack of career development opportunities in the Department was ranked as one of the highest push factors of employee departure by participants. Career development and management practices should not be overlooked by the Department of Local Government and Housing because according to figure 5.9 and 5.11, participants value the opportunities that are provided to them for the development of their careers. In the third chapter of the study it was highlighted that it is not only the individual who is responsible for the development of his or her career, but this responsibility is shared equally by the employer (department). An enabling environment should be created by the Department, so as to allow individuals the prospect of attaining their personal career goals.

v) **Ability of the Public Service to retain professionals:**

The research participants were asked to state whether or not they believed that professional employees could be retained in the public service. Specific reference was made to whether senior managers could be retained; furthermore participants were requested to motivate their answers. Table 5.3 below stipulates the responses of those participants who believe that the public service is proficient enough to retain professional employees, particularly those of the senior management echelon. Table 5.4 depicts the results of those participants who are of the opinion that the public service is incapable of retaining professionals such as senior managers.

**Table 5.3: Participants who think that retention can be achieved**

FACTOR/REASON	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Remuneration	4
Work environment	2
Continuous skill development	1
Job security	1
Develop retention strategies	1
Enable supportive environment	2
Work ethics based on professionalism	1
No particular reason provided by respondent	5

According to table 5.3 above, 19% of the participants who believe that effective retention management can be achieved in the public service are of the opinion that if remuneration packages of senior managers are market-related and competitive with other sectors, such as the private sector, then the retention of professionals, particularly senior managers can be accomplished. Other participants (9%) believe that a supportive work environment should be enabled if the Department is to effectively retain its professional managers. The role of the supervisor in the development of an employee's career was examined in the

earlier section of the analysis and it was concluded that supervisors play an important role in establishing a supportive work environment. Some participants suppose that effective retention can be achieved, however this is limited to employees with average skills as opposed to those employees who possess rare skills. The reason that was cited for this is because the retention of professionals with rare skills is more difficult as these professionals are few, yet their demand is high. This results in a talent war occurring, as different working sectors will be competing for those individuals who possess extraordinary professional skills. Table 5.5 below illustrates the views of participants who oppose the ability of the public service to retain its professional employees.

**Table 5.4: Participants who think that retention cannot be achieved**

FACTOR/REASON	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Private sector offers more attractive package	1
Some managers are self-interested	1
Public Service salary structure does not match SMS remuneration package	1
No particular reason provided by respondent	1

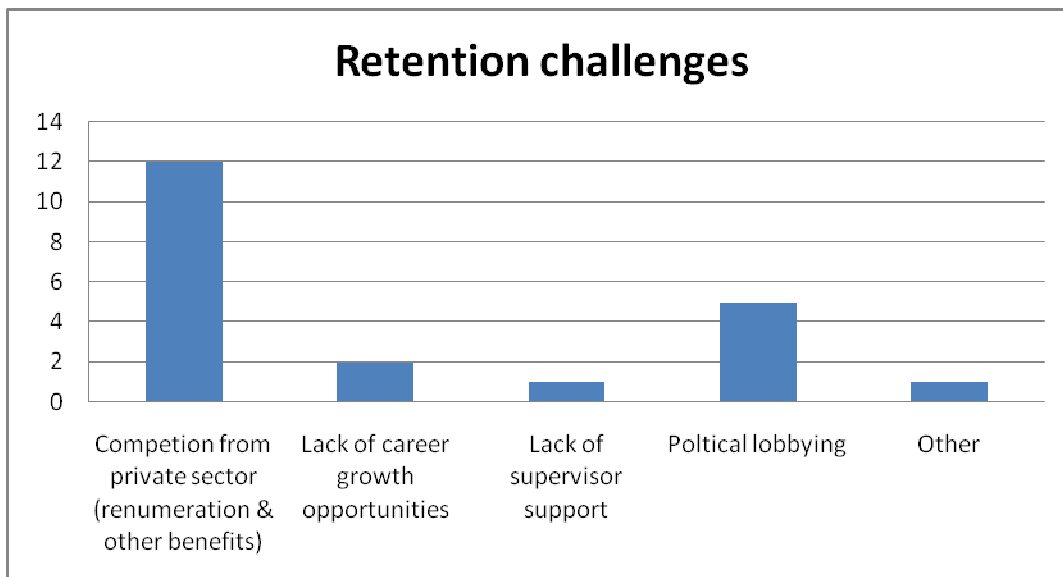
It can be deduced from table 5.4 above that participants are of the opinion that the public service cannot compete with the incentives that are offered largely by the private sector. It was stated in the third chapter that the Occupation Specific Dispensation (OSD) was introduced as a means of improving government's ability to attract and retain employees, through improved remuneration. However, because government funding is limited, it cannot compete with other sectors by offering its professionals with excessive remuneration packages and fringe benefits in the same way that private institutions can, for instance. The outcome is often that government departments are inclined to lose their professional employees, simply because they cannot offer the same "packages" that are offered by other sectors. This phenomenon is one that needs to be curbed

because a continuous loss of skilled professionals in the public service will undoubtedly have a detrimental effect on service delivery. The final chapter of the study will recommend various strategies of addressing how some of the challenges of career and retention management can be confronted.

vi) **Main challenges of retention in a department:**

Participants were requested to conceptualise some of the challenges that an institution may be confronted with when attempting to retain its professional employees, i.e. senior managers. Four broad categories were utilised to conceptualise these challenges, namely; competition from the private sector (remuneration and other benefits). Secondly; lack of career growth or development opportunities. Thirdly; lack of supervisor support in government departments. An occurrence of political lobbying and/or interference by some officials has been identified as a developing trend within the Department, is identified as the last broad challenge of retention management. These findings are represented in figure 5.12 below.

**Figure 5.12: Retention management challenges**



According to figure 5.12 above, competition from the private sector was cited as the biggest retention challenge, as 57% of the participants are of the opinion that government institutions cannot offer the same incentives as their counterparts in the private sector. The private sector is characterised by more flexible salary structures and conditions of employment as opposed to what the public sector has to offer its skilled professionals. This results in professionals deciding to leave the public service because of the lucrative incentives that the private sector offers them. Incentive in this context, does not only refer to the monetary tool of attraction that a private institution may be inclined to utilise in order to compete with its rivals, such as government departments and other non-profit organisations.

From figure 5.11 above, no participant had indicated that poor remuneration was a reason for their departure, whereas 43% of the participants cited a lack of career development opportunities as their motive for departing from their respective previous places of employment. Therefore, it can be argued that because individuals have diverse needs and objectives, they will seek as well as take the opportunities that will assist them in attaining their personal targets of development and progression.

Maslow's well-known hierarchy of needs (see **Appendix 2**) illustrates the importance of considering the role that internal activators play in the development of an individual. Bergh and Theron (2003:153) state:

*“Internal activators are psychological processes within the individual that determine, or influence, his or her motivation.”*

Motivation in this context refers to the individual's ability to pursue his or her needs and objectives that are geared towards personal career development in the workplace. Career management has certainly been one of the biggest challenges confronting the public service. Evidently so, as this chapter has

highlighted the concern that participants have in government's inability to establish effective career management and development systems. Government's continued failure to do so will provide private sector institutions with an opportunity to attract the professional employees who are currently employed in the public service.

Political lobbying or deployment was stated as one of the other main challenges of retention management. This is evident in the fact that 23% of the participants indicated that retention is a challenge, as there is an existence of unqualified and inexperienced political officials within the Department. This political interference may have a negative impact on the desire of some managers to want to remain employed within the Department; therefore these individuals may seek job opportunities elsewhere. This results in the Department, moreover, the public service not being able to retain its most valued intellectual capital. An investigation of the role of elected officials and political appointees should be conducted, as this may identify the impact that political lobbying and interferences have in the Department, particularly with regards to the career and retention practices of the Department. Politicisation in the public service was discussed in the previous chapter of the study.

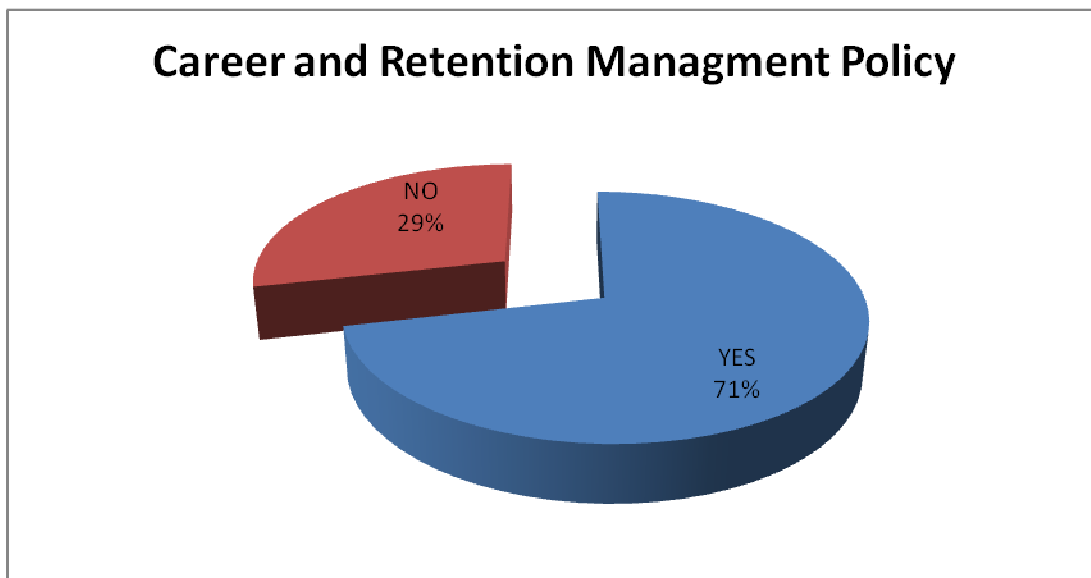
**vii) The Career and Retention Management Policy:**

The Career and Retention Management Policy was introduced into the public service in 2006 by the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA). The aims of the Policy were discussed in the first chapter of the study and can be summarised as follows; firstly, the process of retention management is regarded as a key priority of strategic planning. Secondly, the Policy is strategic as it aligns both the psychological aspects of the employee and the operational aspects attached to the job.

Lastly, the policy recognises that in order for the Department to meet its objectives, senior and operational line managers need to work in partnership on staff retention management.

Participants were asked a number of questions regarding the Department's Policy on Career and Retention Management. Figure 5.13 below, depicts the number of participants who are aware of the existence of the Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department.

**Figure 5.13: Awareness of the Career and Retention Management Policy**

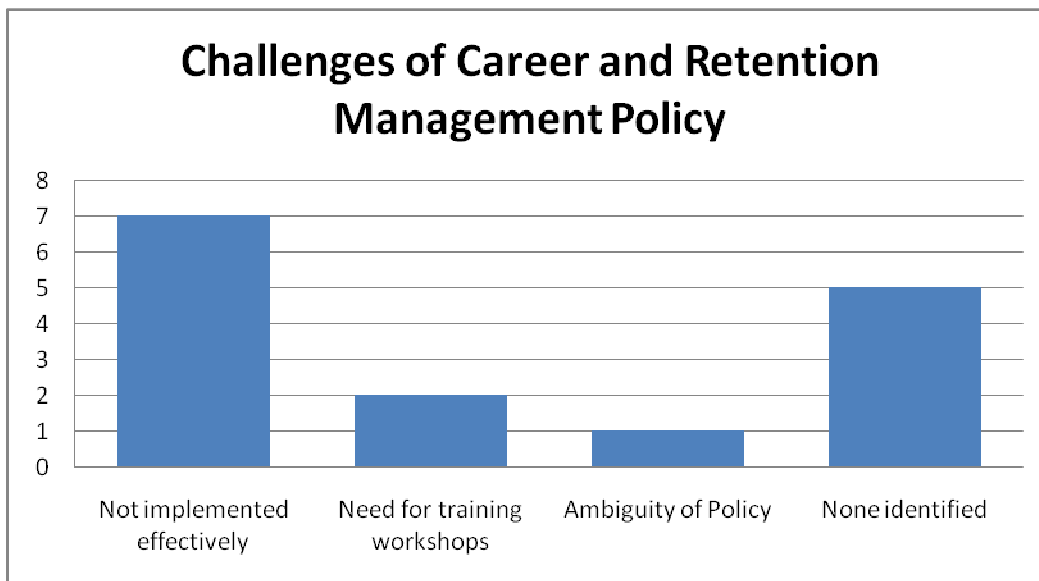


From the figure above (fig. 5.13) it is evident that the majority of participants (71%) are aware of the Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department, whilst the remaining 29% of the participants had indicated that they did not know of the Policy's existence. Subsequent to this question, participants who had stated that they were familiar with the Policy were asked to indicate some of the foremost challenges of the Policy, particularly with regards to the content of the Policy and its implementation thereof.



The challenges are identified in the following groupings; not implemented accordingly, need for training workshops, and ambiguity of Policy. The retort regarding the Policy’s challenges that are identified by participants are illustrated in figure 5.14 below.

**Figure 5.14: Challenges of Career and Retention Management Policy**



An overwhelming number of participants (33%) believe that the foremost challenge of the Career and Retention Management Policy is that the Department does not implement the Policy effectively. The failure of the Department to implement the Policy is attested by the fact that 29% of the participants had indicated that they were not aware of the existence of the Policy. Participants, who declared that they were aware of the Policy, argued that the content of the Policy needs to be reviewed because of its ambiguous characteristics. The Policy is believed to be general and not intended for a particular group of employees, such as the senior managers of the Department. A lack of communication with regards to the implementation of the Policy and the need for training workshops have contributed to the Policy being unable to make a desired impact within the Department.

Training workshops would provide officials with an opportunity to be informed about the Policy, specifically with regards to the purpose and objectives of the Policy, which would thus eliminate the uncertainty that some individuals may have in interpreting the Policy. The following section will examine possible ways or methods of addressing several of the identified challenges that were mentioned above.

viii) **Addressing the challenges of the Career and Retention Policy:**

The previous section highlighted the challenges confronting the effective implementation of the Career and Retention Management Policy within the Department. This section will discuss the possible methods of addressing some of the significant challenges which were previously identified. Table 5.6 below reflects the challenges as well as the possible solutions to those particular challenges.

**Table 5.5: Addressing challenges of Career and Retention Policy**

CHALLENGE	EXPLANATION	POSSIBLE SOLUTION
<b>Implementation</b>	The implementation of the Policy has been criticised by some managers on the basis of the ineffectiveness of the Policy in retaining managers and enhancing career development opportunities. i.e. the purpose and objectives of the Policy are questionable.	Purposes and objectives of Policy need to be reviewed by policy officials of the Department.  The rationale behind reviewing the Policy's aims and objectives is that broad challenges would be identified in order for the necessary steps of action to be taken to address those challenges.
<b>Ambiguity</b>	The content of the Policy has been described by some managers as ambiguous or general, as it does not target a	The content of the Policy has to be reviewed, as it was stated in the previous challenge regarding its implementation.

	specific cadre of employees, i.e. SMS. The ambiguity of the Policy may be related to its failed implementation.	SMS is comprised of scarcely skilled professionals; therefore their retention is of critical importance to the Department. Developing a separate set of policies for the different management levels may ensure that unique challenges across the levels may be addressed adequately.
<b>Communication</b>	The purposes and objectives of the Policy are not communicated to employees. Moreover, the challenges of the Policy are not communicated to senior managers and/or staff in general.	The introduction of training and information workshops has been identified as a possible tool or mechanism that could curb the challenge of communication.
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation</b>	The monitoring and evaluating (M&E) step is critical in the process of policy management. Some managers have argued that the Policy has not been effectively gone through the process of M&E, hence its failed impact within the Department.	The process of M&E is critical, as it cannot be separated from the process of implementation, if the Policy is to successfully achieve its aims and objectives. The process of M&E would identify whether or not the policy objectives are being achieved.
<b>Applicability</b>	The applicability of the Policy can be linked to the ambiguity of the content of the Policy. It was stated that the nature of the Policy is general and therefore does not address specific challenges that may affect the different levels of management. Senior managers are of the	It has been reiterated in this section that the broad characteristics of the Policy need to be reviewed if its purpose and objective are to be achieved. Participants do not believe that the Policy is effective enough to curb the challenges of career and retention management

	<p>opinion that the content of the Policy does not particularly address the fundamental issues regarding career and retention management, especially because the Department has fallen short of addressing the issues that the Policy was designed to deal with in the first place.</p>	<p>within the Department. That is, senior managers do not agree that the Policy guarantees the advancement of any career development opportunities. Therefore, reviewing the content, as well as the applicability of the Policy is imperative as this would distinctively inform policy officials about the success or failure of the Policy, particularly its role in retaining the scarce skills of the Department.</p>
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Table 5.5 explicitly illustrates some of the perceptions, views and opinions of participants with regards to the Career and Retention Management Policy. It can be deduced from the table above that the Policy has failed to achieve its aims and objectives, as participants have indicated that the content of the Policy is ambiguous and therefore, it does not address the challenges confronting career and retention management of senior managers within the Department. Participants have argued that the Policy does not apply to senior managers because it is not specific, but rather general, as it was not formulated for a particular group of employees.

However, the setback with employing a policy that is not developed for a specific group of employees is that individuals from different management levels may have higher expectations because of the skills and qualifications that they possess. In the earlier discussions of the chapter, it was highlighted that one of the main challenges of retaining skilled employees, is that career development opportunities within the Department are not prioritised and as a result these employees may want to leave the Department because there are no growth opportunities, whether this aspect of growth is personal or career related, they

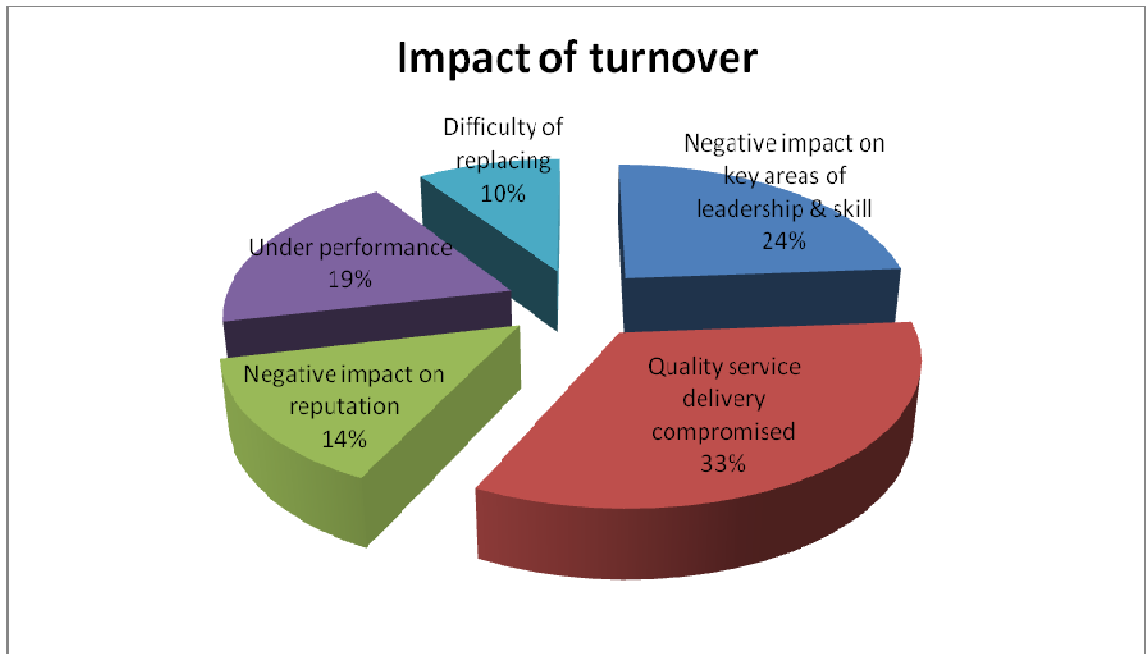
may seek other opportunities elsewhere and this loss of skill will undoubtedly have an adverse impact on the ability of the Department to deliver services effectively and efficiently.

The following section will discuss the types of impact that employee turnover, specifically scarcely skilled employees, has on the Department of Local Government and Housing and its ability to attain its mandate of enhancing local government and providing houses to the populace of Limpopo.

**ix) The impact of SMS turnover in the Department:**

The previous section examined the critical challenges that hinder the success of the Career and Retention Management Policy. The failure of the Policy to achieve its intended objectives has a negative impact on the Department's ability to provide senior managers with career development opportunities; consequently, these managers believe that the Department does not value what they may have to contribute to the workplace; therefore they may decide to seek development opportunities in other departments, moreover other sectors such as the private sector. Figure 5.15 below displays the results and views of participants regarding the types of impact that senior management turnover has on the Department, particularly in the achievement of its mandates and institutional objectives.

**Figure 5.15: Impact of turnover on the Department**



According to figure 5.15 above, the greatest impact of senior management turnover, is that the quality of service delivery will be compromised (33%). This factor is certainly the most important in terms of the negative outcome that employee turnover has on the Department's ability to deliver standardised houses to the inhabitants of Limpopo. The provision of housing is a constitutional obligation, moreover it is a human right that every South African is entitled to. In chapter four of the study, it was comparatively illustrated in figure 4.1 and figure 4.2 that housing delivery in Limpopo had declined slightly between the year 2007 and 2009. The decline in this context is ascribed to the fact that the Department is losing critical staff and is unable to replace the lost skill within a relatively short period of time. Despite the fact that skilled employees will eventually be replaced, their replacements are described by 19% of the participants as under-performing and unskilled individuals who are simply promoted into those positions. The underlying problem in replacing skilled employees with employees who may not necessarily have the skills and or experience of their predecessors, is that the level of expertise in problem-solving related matters will be compromised. That

is, these unskilled individuals will be make poor decisions that can be detrimental to the overall functioning of the Department.

A negative impact on key areas such as leadership and skill can be attributed to the phenomenon of poor decisions being made by unskilled individuals. A lack of concise and effective leadership may result in employees, particularly unskilled employees not attaining expected performance standards because they may undermine the process of having to account for the decisions that they take or do not take because a clear leadership structure is not present. As it is indicated in figure 5.15, 24% of the participants stated that employee turnover has a detrimental affect on the leadership structure and functionality of the Department, as there is a loss of skilled individuals and leaders within the Department.

In addition to the loss of skilled individuals and leaders, 14% of the participants indicated that the Department of Local Government and Housing would also lose its reputation as a Department that has successfully been able to deliver services to inhabitants. Inarguably, the loss of skilled employees impacts on the Department's ability to provide houses effectively and efficiently. The consequence of this is that the relationship that exists between the Department and society would become less harmonious, as the level of trust that the society has in the Department would decline immensely.

It was earlier highlighted that although senior managers and other critically skilled employees may be replaced by underperforming and unskilled employees, the fact of the matter is that the rate at which scarcely skilled individuals are replaced is slow and the difficulty of replacing them is relatively high, this is reflected by 10% of the participants who indicated that senior managers are easily not replaced when they leave the Department. Furthermore, the replacement time often exceeds a period of three months and the challenge therefore, becomes even more complicated because as it was emphasised in the previous chapter,

the Department operates within an open system and thus the task of delivering goods and services to the community must remain continuous and uninterrupted.

The public service environment is constantly changing, which requires government departments to adapt to these changes. The aim of departments is to provide goods and services to the communities in which they serve in the most economic, efficient and effective way, particularly because resources (financial, human and material) are limited and their utility should be maximised for the enhancement of the public good. The following section will analyse some the reasons why participants choose to remain employed at the Department of Local Government and Housing.

x) **Choice to remain at the Department of Local Government and Housing:**

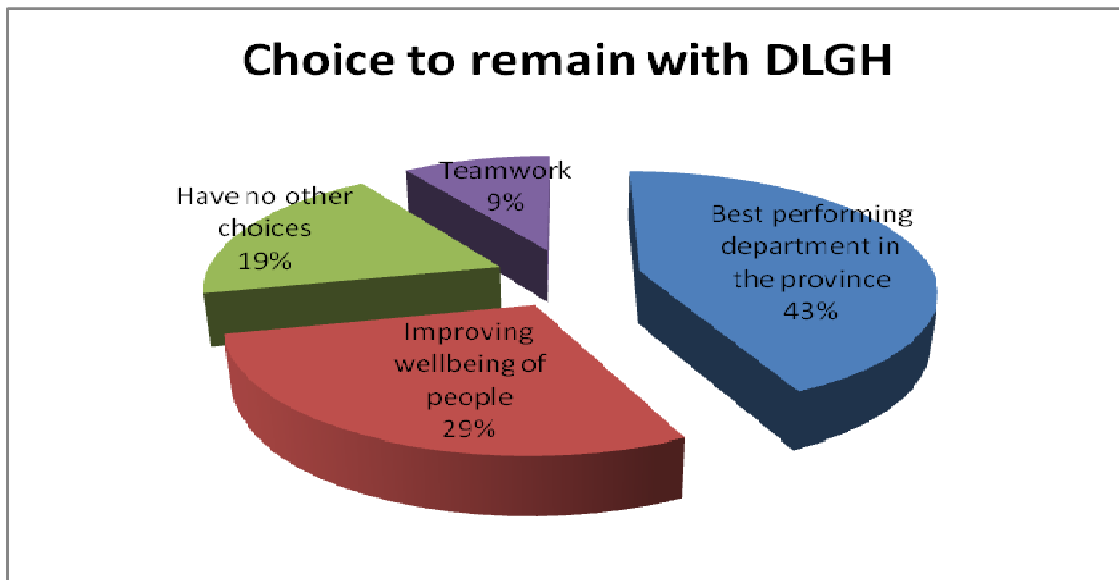
Research participants were requested to state the reasons why they choose to remain employed in the Department. Figure 5.16 below depicts the responses of the twenty-one participants with regards to why they choose to stay employed at the Department of local Government and Housing, particularly as they possess sought-after skills in the labour-market. The war for talent in the South African labour market is developing and becoming even more complicated as institutions, private and public, are compelled to adapt to the changes that are occurring within their environments. At an individual level, employees are exposed to more employment options and the options that satisfy them the most will ultimately determine where they may decide to work.

This chapter has attempted to conceptualise the effectiveness of the Career and Retention Management Policy, with regard to its ability in assisting the Department to retain its employees and develop career management programmes. An understanding of why employees decide to remain employed within a certain institution is imperative because it may serve as an indication as to what that particular institution is doing in upholding its retention strategies. The



figure below categorises the reasons why participants choose to remain employed in the Department of Local Government and Housing. The four categories are; teamwork, best performing Department in the Province, improving the wellbeing of people and no other choices.

**Figure 5.16: Reasons for remaining employed in the DLGH**



From the four broad categories in figure 5.16 above, the most prominent reason for 43% of the participants choosing to remain employees of the Department of Local Government and Housing is because they are of the opinion that the Department is the best performing institution within the Limpopo Province. The term best in this context refers to the ability and functionality of the Department in achieving its aims and objectives, that is, how can it enhance the sphere of local government in Limpopo, as well as effectively provide houses to the inhabitants of the Province? This factor is related to the second highly rated reason of why employees choose to remain employed in the Department of Local Government and Housing; its role in improving the wellbeing of people. As the figure above (5.16) reflects, 19% of the participants believe that the reason why they have decided to remain employed at the Department is because of the Department's commitment to improving the lives of people. As it was stated in chapter two of

the study, the existence of government is justified on the role it performs in improving the wellbeing of people by providing goods and services to people who could otherwise not provide for themselves.

However, some participants (19%) highlighted that they have decided to remain employed in the Department because they have no other choice, that is, no better employment opportunities exist elsewhere for them to leave the Department. Job mobility in the public service is a relatively common phenomenon, especially amongst employees who believe that their skills and qualifications would situate them in an advantageous position in terms of attaining better job opportunities.

Teamwork, as it is indicated in figure 5.16 above, is regarded by 9% of participants as their reason for not leaving the Department of Local Government and Housing. This factor indicates that the relations amongst employees of the Department are pleasant, primarily because as it was illustrated in figure 5.7 every participant indicated that they personally identify with the vision, mission and goals of the Department. The establishment of a vision, mission as well as a set of institutional objectives, will indisputably foster a vigorous working environment in which supervisors and subordinates can work together to achieve the institution's aims and objectives. A commitment to improving the lives of people has been cited as the fundamental motivation behind the success of the Department in attaining its mandate. Simply stated, teamwork refers to the collective or collaborative efforts that individual employees contribute to the workplace for the purposes of attaining the institution's objectives.

The final question of the self-administered questionnaire asked participants whether they had any further comments or views regarding career and retention management practices within the Department of Local Government and Housing. These comments are discussed in the section below.

**xi) Comments regarding career and retention practices in the Department:**

Participants were asked if they had any further comments or views regarding career and retention management practices in the Department. This question aimed to provide participants with an opportunity to express other issues of concern which may not necessarily have been highlighted in the previous questions of the questionnaire. Table 5.6 below displays some of the critical views and suggestions that have been underlined by participants in the completion of the questionnaire.

**Table 5.6: Comments/views on career & retention practices in the DLGH**

FACTOR	COMMENT/VIEW
<b>Career development</b>	Participants believe that good employees, no matter what level or rank they occupy in the Department should progress by virtue of a promotion.
<b>Feedback</b>	Subordinates should always be provided with feedback, albeit positive or negative. Very often supervisors fail to provide their subordinates with this information and this creates uncertainty because employees are unsure if the tasks that they are required to complete are done accurately. Feedback is critical as it will largely determine the career progression of a particular individual.
<b>Further education</b>	Participants believe that the Department plays a critical role in encouraging them to study further.
<b>Supervision</b>	Participants are of the opinion that supervisors should motivate their subordinates because this will create a conducive environment. Most employees are not necessarily

	<p>motivated by money, therefore self-actualisation is very important for the individual. As it was indicated earlier, participants value the process of receiving feedback from their supervisors.</p>
<p><b>Training &amp; development</b></p>	<p>Officials should be trained in line with their qualifications. This would ensure that managers and employees in general, undergo practical experiential learning as this would correspond with prior theoretical learning that they would have been exposed to.</p> <p>In other words the application of theoretical learning in the workplace would become easier because the training and development workshops that these employees would undertake, will equip them by providing practical learning opportunities, particularly in areas of skills development.</p>

Table 5.6 comprises broad factors which may be considered as independent, but yet interrelated. This phenomenon is mainly due to the fact that the recurring key theme in the table above is that of career development and progression. Despite the level of management that an employee may occupy within an institution, being provided with an opportunity to advance vertically along the career ladder is imperative not only for the individual, but most importantly for the institution as a whole. The role of the supervisor, moreover the Department, in the development of an employee's career has been emphasised throughout this study.

Table 5.6 above summarises five critical pillars of career management and development as expressed by the participants of the study. According to participants of the study, the Department of Local Government and Housing has

to continuously apply these factors to its current career development practices, if the retention of scarcely skilled employees such as senior managers is to be a successful endeavour.

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

This chapter has exclusively examined the general views, opinions and attitudes of senior managers who are currently employed in the Department of Local Government and Housing. The chapter contained various themes as a systematic method of analysing the research instrument, a self-administered questionnaire. The key themes that were examined in this chapter were career development and management, retention management, as well as some of the essential reasons why employees have chosen to remain employed at the Department. In terms of career development and management, research participants have indicated that the Department has to place an emphasis on the provision of more effective career development strategies, primarily because employees are not necessarily motivated by monetary incentives or rewards, but rather by intrinsic factors such as opportunities geared towards personal growth and career development.

With regards to the theme of retention management, the majority of participants have indicated that the retention of critically skilled employees can be achieved in the public service. Several factors supporting this opinion were illustrated in table 5.3 of the chapter. Furthermore, the main challenges of retention management in the public service were discussed in the early section of the chapter and the most prevalent challenge was adjudged to be the fact that the private sector provides public officials with more attractive opportunities and incentives.

The last broad theme that the chapter examined was the issue of why each participant chooses to remain employed in the Department of Local Government and Housing. Figure 5.16 demonstrated the results of this subject-matter. The

Department's ability to enhance the wellbeing of its employees, as well as the commitment it has in improving the lives of people, was cited as the most ubiquitous rationale for the majority of participants choosing to remain employed in the Department of Local Government and Housing. However, some participants indicated that they have chosen to remain with the Department as they have had no opportunities to work elsewhere. This is certainly a point of concern because in retrospect, it means that if this particular group of employees, i.e. senior managers, are exposed to better job opportunities, they will be tempted to seize them thus resulting in the public service losing highly skilled officials.

The following chapter will provide possible solutions and recommendations for developing an effective career and retention management strategy because this chapter has consequently proved that the current Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department of Local Government and Housing is an ineffective tool in terms of its inability to enhance career development opportunities, whilst reducing the turnover rate of skilled officials.

## **CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter of the study expansively analysed the results that were obtained from the self-administered questionnaires. As it was also highlighted in the previous chapter, the purpose of the questionnaire was to provide participants with an opportunity to convey their personal views, opinions and perceptions of career and retention management practices within the Department of Local Government and Housing. The chapter concluded that despite the existence of the Career and Retention Management Policy in the Department, this Policy has been particularly ineffective in terms of addressing the challenges of career development and management. A compromise in the quality of service delivery was cited as one of the major problems that confront the Department when skilled labour turnover occurs.

This chapter will provide a summary of the key points that were underlined in the previous five chapters of the study. Furthermore, recommendations will be provided for the purposes of enhancing the effectiveness of the Career and Retention Management Policy, principally in its ability to be regarded as a valuable retention tool or strategy. In addition to recommending possible strategies the chapter will conclude the study.

### **6.2 SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter one introduced the study by providing a background to the career and retention challenges that continue to confront the South African public service. It was emphasised in chapter one that employees are the most important assets that any institution, whether privately or publicly owned, can possess. The aims and objectives, research methods and target population of the study were also

outlined in this chapter. In addition, a list of key terms and concepts of the study was supplied in the first chapter.

The overall purpose of the second chapter was to delineate the relationship that exists between two broad academic disciplines, namely; Public Administration and Human Resource Management. Chapter two drew attention to the fact that an emphasis should be placed on effective career development and management practices in the public service. Providing public officials with career development and growth opportunities will certainly satisfy the personal needs of many officials who constantly seek such opportunities.

Chapter three of the study explored the concepts of career and retention management broadly. The types of employee turnover, as well as the cost of employee turnover were explained prior to the discussion on career development and management. In 2000, the Public Service Commission stated that the public service has not been successful in its attempts of implementing career management programmes. This was ascribed to the fact that most institutions were characterised by outdated and rigid structures, decentralisation and an absence of time-frames in national policies. However, how much of a change has occurred in the public service ten years later? Retention management was conversed in the latter section of the chapter, as the retention management process and various employee strategies were explained.

An environmental analysis of the Department of Local Government and Housing was provided in chapter four. The environment was defined as the total surroundings of the institution. Furthermore, two types of environments were analysed, namely; the external and internal environment. The major components or factors that can be attributed to the external environment were identified as the political, economic and social environment, whereas the components that can be identified in the internal environment are the Department's vision, mission and objectives, its regulators, suppliers, competitors and citizens or customers. This



chapter concluded that all of these factors have to be taken into consideration by the DLGH if it will successfully attain its mandate.

Chapter five presented the results of the self-administered questionnaires that were completed by research participants. This chapter aimed to identify the foremost reasons or causes of ineffective career and retention management practices in the DLGH. In addition, this chapter analysed the perceptions and attitudes of participants with regards to their views of the Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department. Chapter five deduced that a majority of participants are of the opinion that the retention of officials, particularly skilled officials can be successful the public service. Furthermore, four major challenges of retention were identified, namely; a lack of career development opportunities, a poor work environment, poor remuneration and poor leadership/management style of supervisor. These challenges need to be addressed adequately by the Department because a failure to do this will result in a higher turnover of senior officials, moreover a general loss of highly skilled employees who may feel undervalued by the Department.

On the basis of the results provided in chapter five, this chapter will provide plausible recommendations of improving career and retention practices in the Department. Despite the existence of the Career and Retention Management Policy, this Policy has been criticised by senior managers as it has failed to achieve its aims and objectives, specifically in relation to providing more career development opportunities for skilled officials. This consequently results in the phenomenon of skilled labour turnover.

The following section will explore some possible recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department of Local Government and Housing.

## **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

On the basis of the findings in the previous chapter, this section will provide possible solutions and recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of the Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department of Local Government and Housing. The retention strategies that were briefly discussed in chapter three should be integrated into the strategic plans of the Human Resource Development and Management Unit of the Department.

In addition, some of the following factors and recommendations are identified as the most critical for the creation of an effective Policy and should therefore be considered by the Department.

### **6.3.1 Ambiguity of the Career and Retention Management Policy**

As it was stated in the first chapter of the study, the Department of Public Service and Administration with the guidance of the White Paper on Human Resource Management, 1997, has given departments a mandate of establishing policy frameworks that would promote good HRM practices. The DPSA introduced the Career and Retention Management Policy as a tool for addressing the challenges of career and retention in the public service. This Policy was formulated and implemented at the national sphere of government and thus had to be adopted by all government departments, including the Department of Local Government and Housing.

The Policy was criticised by participants in the previous chapter for being ambiguous and general, primarily because the Policy lacks clarity in terms of which level of management it targets. From the findings that were obtained in the previous chapter regarding the challenges of the Policy (see table 5.5), it is evident that the Policy has failed to achieve its primary aims and objectives. This may be ascribed to the fact that the Policy was not formulated by the Department itself, as it was adopted from the national sphere of government and as a result the objectives of the Policy have not been aligned to the overall strategic human

resource management plan of the institution. The objectives of the Policy need to be aligned to the HRM plan of the Department, if the Policy is to be successful. The Department of Local Government has to review the content of the Policy and establish how relevant or irrelevant some of the objectives of the Policy are because it is been argued in the previous chapter that the applicability of the Policy is broad and general, but this would not necessarily mean that the Policy is relevant to employees of all management levels.

It was suggested in table 5.5 that the development of a separate set of policies, particularly those aimed at addressing career and retention challenges of senior managers may assist in identifying unique challenges that the current Career and Retention Management Policy cannot establish. These different sets of policies should be formulated in accordance to the strategic plan of the Department and communicated to every individual concerned, i.e. senior managers and other highly skilled professionals. The successful implementation of this policy is not solely determined by the top leadership of the Department, but more importantly, it requires the input of senior managers as well.

### 6.3.2 Career development

The importance of career development has extensively been explored throughout the study. Chapter five stipulated that the Department has a lack of career development opportunities and as a result, skilled employees may seek development opportunities elsewhere. Every employee in an institution yearns for the opportunity to progress vertically along the career ladder and as it was indicated in the previous chapter; participants had argued that despite the level of management that a hard-working and committed employee occupies, he or she should be rewarded for their performance standards.

As a means of identifying the performance standards of public officials, the South African public service implemented the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS). Chapter two highlighted that the South African

government realised that if it were to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the public service, then it was imperative that the manner in which public officials were managed needed to be transformed. From the findings that were obtained in the previous chapter, it is evident that career development opportunities supersede any other value or factor which an employer deems would retain a particular employee or group of employees, such as improved remuneration and working environment. Therefore, the importance of placing an emphasis on career development should not be undermined by the Department.

In chapter one, it was stated that the creation of a sustainable pool of managers would enable the public service to fill their key senior positions with internal employees instead of having to buy external skills (Van Dijk, 2005:27). If the Department of Local Government and Housing can adeptly and successfully fill key senior positions by virtue of establishing a succession plan, particularly by focusing on the internal aspect of succession planning, than the Department would not have to engage itself in the war for talent with other institutions. Identifying potential recruits within the Department itself is a positive step in the overall career development process because it would enable the Department to recognise these individuals at an early stage, prior to senior officials deciding to leave the Department.

An effective succession plan should be established in accordance with the human resource management strategy of the Department as this would ensure that the Human Resource Management and Development Unit of the Department can constantly have the required number of competently skilled people, in the right positions at the appropriate time because as it was argued in the previous chapter, the Department often fails to fill key leadership positions in a period of less than three months. As it was reflected in chapter five, that 48% of the participants are between the ages of forty-six and fifty-five, therefore the need for succession planning becomes more apparent in cases whereby skilled professionals are approaching their retirement ages, this would ensure that the

stability of the Department is sustained in the long term, but more importantly that the delivery of services is not disrupted due to changes within the Department.

### 6.3.3 Feedback and supervision

It has been reiterated that the role of a supervisor in the development of a subordinate's career is paramount because this will predominately determine whether an employee remains or leaves the Department. A well-established and healthy working relationship between a supervisor and his or her subordinate will play an important part in enhancing the commitment and satisfaction that a subordinate has in performing their duties and tasks.

The ability of an employee to grow and aspire within the Department, as well as outside the Department is determined largely by the function that his or her supervisor plays because the reality is that not every supervisor may support the development of their subordinate, particularly if both individuals have an apprehensive relationship. The Department ultimately endures the possibility of employee turnover because it loses talented individuals. Aggrieved individuals may not necessarily decide to leave the institution immediately, however their level of commitment may drastically decline due to the negative attitude that they have towards their supervisor. This challenge needs to be addressed because in the long term the Department's capacity to deliver houses to citizens will negatively be impacted upon.

The implementation of effective mentoring and coaching programmes will undoubtedly assist the Department in solidifying the relationship, not only between supervisors and their subordinates, but also amongst the colleagues of the Department. The conception of a vigorous working environment in which employees can work harmoniously is important as this would ensure that the interpersonal relations amongst colleagues, despite their level of management or skill, do not hinder the institution from attaining its mandate and objectives. It is also important that these monitoring and coaching programmes are regularly

monitored, in order to rectify any potential or current challenges that the two individuals may experience or may be experiencing. Supervisors and subordinates should be provided with an opportunity to attend training and information workshops together, as this would develop their rapport.

Furthermore, the feedback process is an important tool primarily because it either encourages or discourages employees from behaving in a certain way. Simply stated, the process of feedback is a form communication between a supervisor and their subordinate. Traditionally, this form communication involved the supervisor merely informing his or her subordinate about their performance standards, as compared to predetermined standards. Conversely, the feed forward process is equally important because supervisors communicate expected outcomes, as well as the required performance standards of a particular set of tasks or duties, prior to his or her subordinate commencing the task in question. Not only does effective feedback empower individuals, it also demonstrates and characterises the leadership epitome of the Department. The PMDS was discussed in the second chapter of the study and it was highlighted that this particular system plays an essential role in identifying performance standards of officials.

#### **6.3.4 Best practices in managing succession planning**

The following best practices in managing succession planning are significant for the purposes of improving career and succession planning practices within the Department and should be considered vehemently (Sjoberg, no date:11);

- Receive active support from top leadership.
- Link to strategic planning.
- Identify talent from multiple institutional levels, early in careers or with critical skills.
- Emphasise developmental assignments in addition to formal training

- Address human capital challenges, such as diversity, leadership capacity and retention.
- Ensure that employees are prepared and trained for the job and responsibilities of the future.
- Allow for the transfer of knowledge from key people in the institution to their successors using techniques such as mentoring and on-the-job training.
- Provide growth opportunities that help motivate and retain current employees. Shifting the idea from job progression to job expansion.

The abovementioned factors should be incorporated into the strategic human resource management plan of the Department because this would give it a competitive advantage due to the fact that, very often public service institutions fail to develop and implement effective succession plans to their retention practices. If the DLGH focuses on its succession strategies then the challenge of filling key positions would not be as overwhelming as it otherwise would have been if it did not have a strategy in place. The success or failure of the implementation of these best practices is highly dependent on the Department's ability to make such practices their own. This would ensure that the process of implementing these practices would be understood by all of those involved.

#### **6.3.5 Other factors for consideration**

Thus far, four key factors have been discussed in this chapter, namely; the ambiguity of the Policy, career development, feedback and supervision, as well as succession planning. This section will briefly highlight other possible factors that should be considered for enhancing the effectiveness of the Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department. These factors are tabulated and explained in table 6.1 below:

**Table 6.1: Others factors for consideration**

FACTOR	EXPLANATION
<p><b>Encourage talented officials to further their studies in line with their areas of responsibility</b></p>	<p>By encouraging talented officials to study further, the creation of a learning organisation is inevitable, particularly if these individuals are still at an early stage of their careers. However, it is more important for the Department to reward individuals for their efforts by allowing them to fill key posts after they have completed studying and partaken in various training programmes.</p> <p>If the Department fails to deliver on this incentive, then it will ultimately experience labour turnover because rival institutions may offer individuals opportunities to study further.</p>
<p><b>Top leadership and/or management should communicate challenges, as well as show a positive attitude towards the contributions of key personnel</b></p>	<p>Communication is one of the most critical pillars of any institution that wants to be successful in terms of attaining its aims and objectives. Therefore, top leadership plays an important role in communicating various challenges to its employees, as well as reminding them that these challenges require a collective exertion from everyone within the institution.</p> <p>The elimination of communication boundaries in the Department is important because it would encourage employees to make contributions towards some of the challenges that the Department is confronted with.</p>
<p><b>Understanding your employees</b></p>	<p>Institutions that fail to understand the personal desires and ambitions of its employees will struggle to attain the required job satisfaction levels from these individuals.</p>



	<p>As it was previously mentioned, employees want their contributions to be valued by managers and supervisors, if this recognition does not materialise, then that particular individual may feel that their efforts and contributions are not valued.</p> <p>A positive working environment needs to be created as this would enhance the satisfaction that employees have in their area(s) of responsibility. Diversity management is imperative if the Department is to understand the needs and motivations of its employees. The Department has to establish an institutional culture that is unique from other institutions.</p> <p>It might also be useful if the Department observes how other departments have successfully implemented their retention strategies.</p>
<p><b>Monitoring and evaluation</b></p>	<p>In order for a policy or process to be successful and effective, it needs to be monitored and evaluated at regular intervals to ensure that it is meeting predetermined outcomes and standards.</p> <p>The key role players responsible for the formulation and implementation of the Policy need to work congruently if the Policy is to effectively attain its career and retention objectives. These role players may include the human resource management unit of the Department, senior management officials and policy officials. The Policy should be reviewed regularly and changes should be implemented where required.</p>

	<p>Exit interviews will assist the Department in identifying the causes of skilled labour turnover because departing employees will indicate some of the reasons why they are leaving. More importantly, the Department should follow-up and resolve these reasons.</p> <p>Turn policy into practice; a policy can only be considered to be successful and/or effective if the institution can attain the predetermined objectives of the policy.</p>
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The abovementioned factors in table 6.1 should be considered when the Career and Retention Management Policy is to be reviewed and implemented successfully. However, as well as more importantly this implementation should be done according to the broad strategic plans of the Department.

#### 6.4 CONCLUSION

The Career and Retention Management Policy of the Department of Local Government and Housing is ineffective and will continue to be a detriment to the Department's ability to attract skilled and talented employees, as well as retain the skilled and talented employees that are currently employed in the Department.

Senior managers are identified as one of the most critically skilled group of employees in the public service. Enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the South African public service delivery system is one of the key reasons why the SMS was introduced. The study has indicated that senior manager or skilled labour turnover is caused by several factors, namely; a lack of career development opportunities, poor leadership and supervisor style, poor remuneration, competition from private sector and unacknowledged contributions. These factors are controllable and the Department should attempt to ensure that it addresses these challenges before they become a hindrance in

the Department achieving its mandates and objectives. The study highlighted that a loss of skilled personnel has a negative impact on the quality of services provided to the populace of Limpopo.

Various intervention strategies were recommended for enhancing or improving the effectiveness of the Career and Retention Management Policy. The Policy has to be reviewed, as participants have indicated that the content of the Policy is ambiguous and has a broad-spectrum in terms of its applicability. The Department of Local Government and Housing has to provide more career development opportunities for its employees, particularly its skilled employees, supervisors and subordinates require a vigorous working relationship if they are to work harmoniously, the private sector poses a considerable threat to the Department's capacity to develop, attract as well as retain talented individuals. The development of a dynamic and positive working environment is imperative, as this would determine the relations amongst employees. Furthermore, the study has highlighted that skilled employees are not necessarily "pushed away" from the Department by poor remuneration; however financial incentives play a significant role, principally because employees want to be rewarded for their hard work.

The study has identified and explored various factors that are responsible for skilled labour turnover in the Department of Local Government and Housing. The Career and Retention Management Policy needs to be reviewed as the study has proved that it is not effective in terms of meeting its aims and objectives. The abovementioned recommendations should be considered for enhancing the effectiveness of the Policy.

## APPENDIX 1: SELF-ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

**Faculty of Economic and Management  
Sciences  
School of Public Management and  
Administration**

### THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING, LIMPOPO PROVINCE

This study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and the answers you give will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on the answers you give. [Kindly note that consent can not be withdrawn once the questionnaire is submitted as there is no way to trace the particular questionnaire that has been filled in.]

Please tick the box to indicate that:

You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

### SELF- ADMINISTERED QUESTIONNAIRE:

#### SECTION 1: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Please place a (X) next to the appropriate answer.

1. **Gender:**

<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>

2. **Age:**

<i>25 and under</i>	<i>26-35</i>	<i>36-45</i>	<i>46-55</i>	<i>Over 56</i>

3. **Number of years employed in public service:**

<i>1-5 years</i>	<i>6-10 years</i>	<i>11-19 years</i>	<i>20+ years</i>
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**4. Education level:**

<i>Less than a secondary school qualification</i>	<i>Secondary school (specify grade)</i>	<i>Diploma</i>	<i>University degree</i>	<i>Postgraduate degree</i>

**SECTION 2: CLOSED QUESTIONS**

**Please note:** place a (X) in the box below the relevant option.

5. If you had a choice, how much longer do you envisage working for the Department?

<i>Less than 6 months</i>	<i>7 months to 1 year</i>	<i>1 to 2 years</i>	<i>3 to 5 years</i>	<i>More than 5 years</i>	<i>Until I retire</i>

6. Which one of the following categories best describes your current situation?

<i>I am not looking for another job</i>	<i>I am occasionally looking into other job opportunities</i>	<i>I am continually seeking other job opportunities</i>

7. Do you personally identify with the vision, mission and goals of the Department?

<i>Agree</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Disagree</i>

8. With the skills and qualifications that you possess, how easy would it be for you to find an equivalent or better job if you chose to leave the Department?

<i>Very easy</i>	<i>Not sure</i>	<i>Very difficult</i>

9. The purpose of this question is to comprehend the factors that would make the respondent want to leave the Department, i.e. what would the “push factors” be?

You are requested to **rank each of the factors in terms of priority**. Please tick the most appropriate number with **1 being the lowest priority and 5 being the highest**. Please place a **(X)** next to the relevant number to indicate your choice.

i) <i>Poor remuneration</i>	1	2	3	4	5
ii) <i>Poor working environment</i>	1	2	3	4	5
iii) <i>Lack of career development opportunities</i>	1	2	3	4	5
iv) <i>Poor leadership/ management style of supervisor</i>	1	2	3	4	5
v) <i>Age/ Retirement</i>	1	2	3	4	5

Other factors? Please list.

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### SECTION 3: OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

10. How long have you been an employee of the Department of Local Government and Housing? Please place a **(X)** next to the appropriate answer.

<i>Less than 6 months</i>	<i>7 months to one year</i>	<i>1 to 2 years</i>	<i>3 to 5 years</i>	<i>6 to 9 years</i>	<i>More than 10 years</i>

11. What are your areas of responsibility within the Department?

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12. What do you find most satisfying about your job? Why?

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13. What role have your supervisors played in supporting you in your career?

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**14.** Have you previously been employed by any other national or provincial government department? If yes, what were your reasons for leaving that particular department?

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**15.** Do you think that the Public Service has the capability to effectively retain public servants, particularly those from the Senior Management echelon? Please motivate your answer.

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**16.** What are the main challenges facing a department when attempting to retain its highly skilled employees?

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**17.** Are you aware of the existence of the Career and Retention Management Policy in your department?

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**18.** If you answered yes in question 18, are you able to identify any challenges pertaining to the content or implementation of the Policy? Please specify.

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**19.** If any challenges were identified, what do you think can be done to address those challenges in the existing Career and Retention Management Policy?

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**20.** In your opinion, if skilled people leave the employment of the Department, what type of impact would this loss have on the Department?

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**21.** Why do you choose to remain employed at this particular Department?

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- 22.** If you have any other comments regarding career and retention management practices within the Department, please write these in the space provided below:

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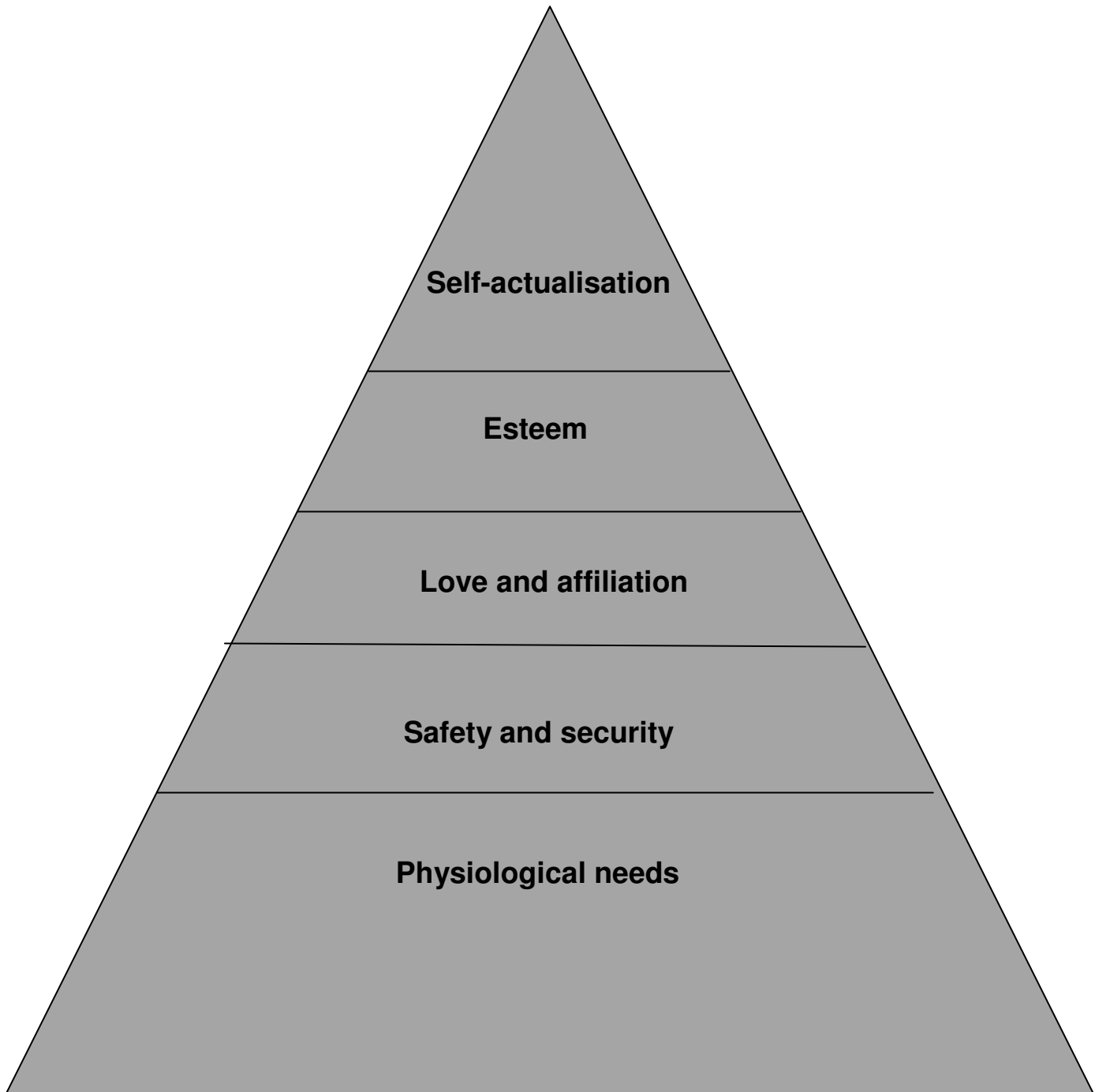
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**Your contributions to this study are sincerely appreciated. Thank you!!**



## APPENDIX 2: MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



Source: redrawn from- Bergh, Z and Theron, A.2003. Psychology in the work context. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

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