



## CHAPTER FIVE

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPETATION

*“Although many of us have initiated programmes that seek to enhance the willingness of public servants to take responsibility and embody the vision and commitment of the political leadership, we continue to confront many instances where the commitment and the provision of resources does not translate into adequate action on the part of the public service. In building responsive governance, the challenge has shifted from responsive governance towards ensuring that we have a responsive senior leadership cadre in the public service”, Minister for Public Service and Administration, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, 2005: 12).*

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#### 5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters the changing environment of the public service, which is characterised by complexity, impermanence and multiplicity has been delineated. In particular, the pressing need and effective support for managerial capacity building of the senior public servants has become evident. This calls for effective preparation and management development of the senior public servants, as well as profound institutional investment in the strategies, procedures, structures, systems and resources. Undoubtedly, these ingredients are essential for a degree of order and consistency to achieve effective and coherent implementation of public policy.



To this end, therefore, this chapter builds on Chapter Four by providing an analysis and interpretation of the support for capacity building of the public servants in the North West Province. The theoretical literature in Chapter Three and the feedback from the senior public servants are the guiding forces for this analysis and interpretation. For effective analysis, however, the responses from the senior public servants will be used to support the arguments that relate to a particular issue. In this respect, the narrative, graphical and tabular data presentation styles are adopted. This chapter concentrates on the three main themes of capacity building support as premised in Chapter One. These are preparation, development and diagnostic mechanisms for systematic and holistic institutional support of the senior public servants. The linkage between strategic planning and human resource planning is the key to understanding these three themes.

## **5.2 Linkages between strategic planning and human resource planning**

The linkages between strategic planning and human resource planning in the South African public service have been identified and championed by the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service (15 November 1995) and the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997). In this regard, it has been established in Chapter Four that all the departments have written strategic plans. This was confirmed by all the respondents 31 (100%). Although the HR plans are not yet available in the departments, 14



(45.2%) of the respondents said that their departments have written HR plans, 10 (32.3%) said their departments do not have the HR plans, whilst 7 (22.6%) respondents are not sure about the existence of the HR plans in their departments. The same picture is painted by the respondents with regard to the existence of an HR strategy in their departments, though their departments do not have a written HR strategy. However, the linkage between the HR functions and the strategic planning within a department is essential to create a focus, consistency and purpose. This, in turn, is crucial for plans, patterns and perspectives that guide strategic actions and facilitate effective organisational and public management.

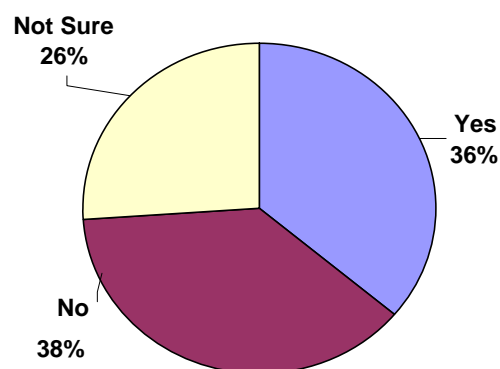
Matching the philosophy, policies, programmes, practices and processes exemplifies a fundamental alignment, stimulation and reinforcement of the core public administration values that are associated with increased performance at individual and collective levels. Therefore, HR systems and the organisational structure must be managed in a way that is congruent with the department's strategy and, by and large, the North West provincial strategy. However, the dearth of linkages between strategic planning and HR planning generally or HR plans specifically for senior public servants suggests an institutional disorganization, a cultural misalignment and misfit in the department, dysfunctional and conventional HR practices and the paucity of long term strategic leadership for the public service. For example, 17 (54.9%) of the senior



public servants are not optimistic about the existence of the HR plans or HR strategies in their departments, yet they are involved in the strategic planning process for their departments. Therefore, a discrepancy of this nature between the external environment and the internal organisation of the department, especially at the strategic level, may negatively influence the performance expectations of its members and misdirect its core purpose, and the growing service demands and challenges may remain unaddressed.

With the advent of public management and now that the public service is consequently showing more concern with longer-term strategy than ever before, the HR plan is a fundamental institutional support apparatus for addressing and positioning the needs and expectations of the different categories of the public servants at senior, middle and junior levels. For this reason, when the respondents were asked if their departments had written HR plans for senior public servants, they reported the following as shown in Figure 5.1.

**Figure 5.1: Does your Department have a written HR plan for senior public servants?**





The majority of the respondents representing 64% of those who are not sure and those who said no regarding the availability of an HR plan for the senior public servants is generally not positive. However, these responses are consistent with the reality presented in Chapter Four that all the case study departments do not have written HR plans for their senior public servants. In essence, without the HR plan for senior public servants, it is difficult to develop and foster current and future leaders who can manage the challenges inherent in a changing environment. The HR plan for senior public servants allows the public service to link their conditions of employment with the vision, mission, and strategic objectives of the department. Therefore, effective capacity building support requires HR plans to address the changing business of government, the evolving employment relationship and the shifting demographics of the SMS group.

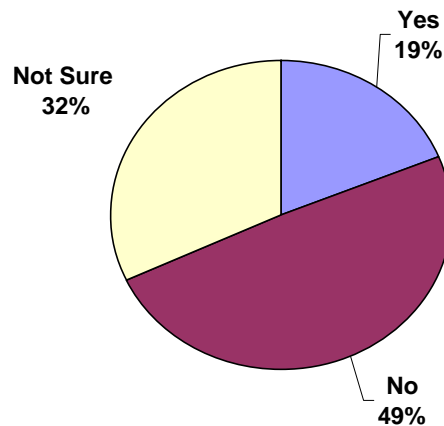
Furthermore, the HR plan for senior public servants is also important to establish human resources management strategies and programmes to support and develop leadership capabilities within the public service. Equally important, the plan should be a twelve-monthly cycle for managing important processes such as succession planning and performance management. In terms of this plan, education, training and development opportunities would be related not only to the current core competencies for SMS, but would also constantly adapt to the changing core business priorities of government.



### 5.3 Induction of senior public servants

As indicated in Chapter Three, induction is a systematic process by which the senior public servants are transformed from complete outsiders to participating and effective citizens of the department. In Chapter Four, the case study departments indicated that they do not have induction policies and itemised budgets to design and implement effective induction programmes for the senior public servants.

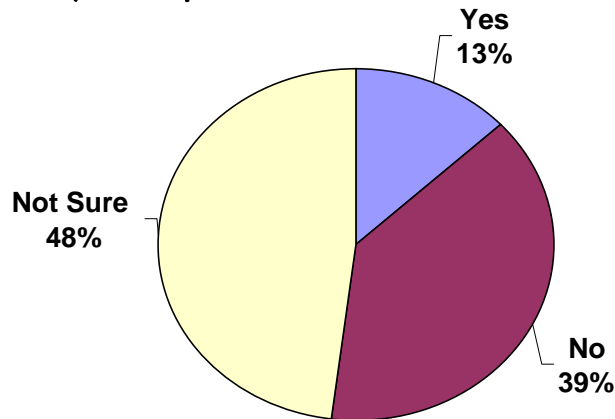
Figure 5.2 Does your Department have a written induction policy?



From Figures 5.2, it can be seen that the knowledge of the majority of the respondents is consistent with the views already expressed by the departments in the previous chapter with regard to the absence of induction policies. In the absence of induction policy, this figure suggests that the managerial expectations and needs of the North West public service and the personal expectations of the senior public servants may be incongruent, inconsistent and the importance of the induction policy in supporting the human resource function in the North West public service may not be realised.

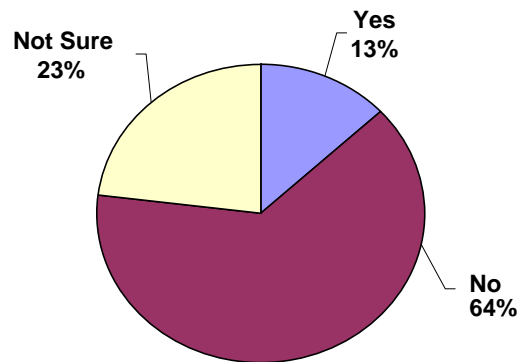


Figure 5.3 “Does your Department have an induction budget?”



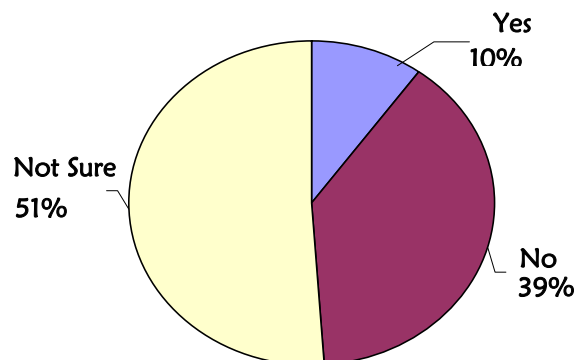
With regard to figure 5.3, the knowledge of the majority of the respondents is consistent with the views already expressed by the departments with regard to the absence of a dedicated (specific) induction budget. Furthermore, 7(22.6%) of the respondents said that their departments have an induction plan, 15 (48.4%) said that their departments do not have induction plan and 9 (29.0%) were not sure about the existence of an induction plan in their departments. Unless and until the key components that are associated with induction plan and budget are included in and form part of the organizational practices and procedures, the expectations of the senior public servants and the challenges that face the public service may not be two sides of the same coin that do not have equal and high value. This figure relates to some of the reasons for the lack of effective induction as expressed by Fogarty and Dirsmith (2001:249) in Chapter Three.

Figure 5.4 “Does your Department have a standard induction



With regard to Figure 5.4, the majority of the respondents (64%) agree that their departments do not have standard induction programmes. Notwithstanding, the lack of informed knowledge about the organizational processes, practices and programmes within the human resource departments (23%) clearly is a concern and call for strategic and effective human resource management in the public service. There is no substitute for a standard induction programme in the public service of the North West Province. The respondents were further asked if their departments evaluate the induction programme in terms of the following figure.

Figure 5.5 Does your Department evaluate its induction programme?







In terms of figure 5.5, the knowledge of the respondents about their departments is consistent with the views expressed by the departments in Chapter Four. The majority of the respondents (51%) are not sure if their departments evaluate the induction programmes. Similarly, 39% of the respondents indicated that their departments do not evaluate the induction programme. It is very important that the senior public servants report the same experience about the systems and practices that influence and are influenced by their operations and purposes in the public service. By evaluating the induction programme, the North West public service will be in a position to obtain feedback about how effective is the induction programme in supporting the goals and vision of the public service and ensure that information is obtained with a view to adjusting and improving HR services so that the induction policy can be supported effectively. Indeed, proper induction training is important for proper alignment and integration of the behaviour, actions and conduct of the senior public servants to the core functions and purpose of the public service.

In terms of figure 5.2 until figure 5.5, it may be reasoned that the current induction arrangements in the North West public service induce the senior public servants to adhere to public service practices and procedures of either the pre-1994 or post-1994 eras, with little or no real attention being given to instilling loyalty and commitment in the public service. Of course, the absence of a proper induction in the



public service may imply that the newly appointed public servants are left to be socialised within a culture of the pre-1994 homeland dispensation.

An ineffective induction programme increases the adjustment problems for the public servants by creating a sense of insecurity, and a lack of confidence and belonging for them; hence many respondents provided either no or not sure responses. Also, the implications of the lack of proper induction are also serious at the strategic public service level because the senior public servants are not only expected to adhere to the organisational practices and procedures, but also to display loyalty and commitment to the promotion of good governance and effective public management.

Without effective induction policy and programme, it is highly possible that, in a transforming public service, the pre-1994 culture may be a barrier to effective implementation of performance management in the public service. This point is raised because Robbins (2005:233) also argues that once a culture is in place, practices within the organisation act to maintain it by exposing employees to a set of similar experiences. For instance, 23 (74.2%) respondents reported that the HR department did not provide orientation programme dealing with the SMS handbook. This practice reduces the day-to-day value of the SMS handbook by making it ineffective to drive the general performance of



the senior public servants in the North West Province. Further, this limitation in the induction within the department generally suggests that, as and when major changes are taking in the public service, none of the public servants are being re-inducted. This picture, however, inexplicable validates the fact that induction is a much-neglected area of human resource management in the public service (Balkin et al, 1998: 258-260).

From the above picture, there is a need to ensure proper integration of the core HR functions that support the department and count for effective knowledge management in the public service. A proper induction is vital for the proper integration of the senior public servants into the right public service culture, so that the public service can monitor and evaluate their performance in the short, medium and long terms. It is also important that serious efforts be made to evaluate the induction programme with a view to determining whether objectives have been achieved and resources have been used appropriately. This, above all, is important to secure accountability, effectiveness and improvements necessary for proper induction in the public service.

Therefore, HR department must play a strategic role in helping the senior public servants to adapt to the new culture of public service performance management by implementing systematic induction training. There is also a need for the proper induction of public servants



who are transferred, promoted or demoted within and between the departments in the North West Province public service. Arguably, an effective induction is vital to create a fit between the expectations of the senior public servants about the current and future public service and the expectations of the public service about the current and future senior public servants by showing them how they fit into the job and how their jobs fit into the overall vision of the government of South Africa.

#### **5.4 Training and development of senior public servants**

From the beginning, it is very important that the training and development efforts be linked to the department's objectives, goals and business strategies, if they are to add value to the maintenance and achievement of the processes, practices and systems. Although the case study departments have training policies and plans which generally apply to all employees regardless of employment category, 15 (48.4%) respondents agreed, nine (29.0% respondents' disagreed and seven (22.6%) respondents were not sure about the existence of a written training and development policy. With regard to the existence of a written training and development plan, 17 (54.8%) respondents agreed, seven (22.6%) disagreed and seven (22.6%) were not sure about the existence of a written training and development plan in their departments. It is evident that the respondents do not have similar knowledge or experience about the internal training arrangements and



organisation in their departments. This may be attributable to the lack of an effective induction and policy communication in the departments.

In addition, training is strategic when it: develops essential worker capabilities; encourages adaptability to change; promotes ongoing learning in the organisation; creates and disseminates new knowledge throughout the organisation and facilitates communication and focus (Mathis and Jackson, 2003:276). However, 13 (41.9%) respondents said that their departments had a written training and development strategy, 10 (32.2%) disagreed and only eight (25.8%) were not sure about the existence of training and development strategy in their departments. However, it has been found in Chapter Four that there are no training and development strategies for the senior public servants. In the absence of any HR plan, and specifically for senior public servants, it is unlikely that the departments can establish their training and development strategies that accommodate their training and development needs at organisational and operational levels. Furthermore, without a training and development strategy the departments are unable to reflect on and evaluate the impact of training and development on the performance of the senior public servants, and how new knowledge and skills are affecting and contributing to their goals, objectives and missions. This highlights the concern about the lack of knowledge and understanding about what senior public servants



expect from their departments and similarly what they think the public service expects from them.

Given this picture, when asked if they experience links being established between training and development activities and their work and career, 18 (58.1%) said yes, 10 (32.3%) said no and three (9.7%) said were not sure. Furthermore, when the senior public servants were asked if they are consulted about the training and development policy, strategy, plan and budget in their departments, 18 (58.1%) said yes, 12 (38.7%) said no and one (3.2%) was not sure. Notwithstanding the numbers of those who are consulted or not consulted, there is a need to ensure that the internal elements accomplish the strategic objectives of the departments by ensuring that the interrelationship between them is sound and effective.

Furthermore, five (16.1%) of the respondents trust that their departments have a written quality assurance policy which supports the induction, training and development of staff, 15 (48.4%) said no and 11 (35.5%) were not sure if their departments have a written quality assurance policy which supports the induction, training and development of staff. Similarly when asked if their departments have a written quality assurance manual which supports induction, training and development of staff, three (9.7%) respondents agreed, 15 (48.4%) respondents disagreed and 13 (41.9%) were not sure. The majority of



the respondents believe that there are no written quality assurance policies and manuals that support the induction, training and development of staff.

However, an indispensable element of effective managerial capacity building and support is the alignment between the philosophy, policies, programmes, practices and processes in the public service. The need for an overarching quality improvement regime cannot be overemphasised as part and parcel of institutional monitoring and evaluation systems. Given this reality, 18 (58.1%) of the respondents believe that their departments are committed to effective management development and training of the senior public servants, nine (29.0%) disagreed and four (12.9%) are not sure about the commitment of their departments to effective management development and training.

With regard to the training and development of the senior public servants, the examination gives an indication that gaps do exist between the championed policies relating to training and development and the operational management practices in the public service. In Chapter Four it has been established that the Human Resource Development (HRD) is responsible for the successful development and implementation of the training and development policy. In this regard, the HRD in these departments has engaged, to some extent, in the process of setting objectives for the successful implementation of training and

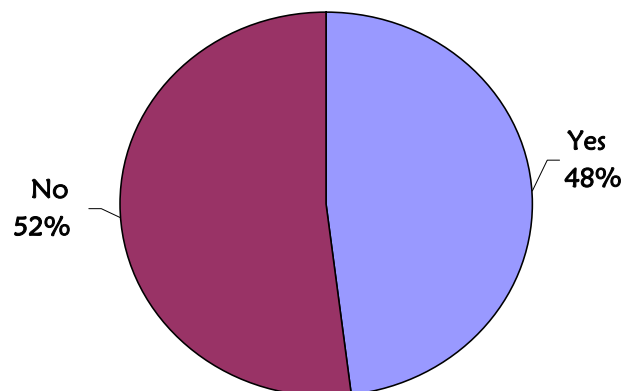


development, yet is unable, to any great extent, to evaluate achievements in relation to the strategic focus and purpose of the departments. Consequently, the experience of the respondents with regard to the planning and facilitation of development would tend to support their lack of confidence in the relevance to their needs of their departments' approach to management development.

#### 5.4.1 Approaches to management training and development

In Chapter Three, it was established that the approaches to capacity building require that senior public servants accept the need for continuous professional development throughout their working lives. In addition, it was argued that the public service must utilise individuals' new capacity (Rist, 1995: 17), but this may be inhibited by the public service policies and practices (Crisp et al., 2000:39).

**Figure 5.6: Are you presently studying for a further qualification?**



Almost 50% of the respondents are presently studying for further qualifications. The qualifications that are presently being studied and the total number of participants are as follows:





- (1) Master of Public Administration, MPA (6).
- (2) Doctor of Philosophy, PhD (3).
- (3) Master of Business Administration, MBA (2).
- (4) Master of Philosophy, MPhil (1).
- (5) Master of Education, M.Ed (1) and
- (6) Certificate in Accounting, CIA (1).

**Table 5.1 “The management or executive programmes that the respondents attended in the last two years”**

Programmes	No of respondents
Project Management	6 from 2003 to 2006
Financial Management	6 from 2003 to 2006
Mentoring	1 from 2005 to 2006
Change Management	1 from 2005 to 2006
Excellence in Budgeting	1 from 2005 to 2006
Management and Leadership for Women	1 from 2005 to 2006
Event Management	1 from 2005 to 2006
Skills Development Fund	1 from 2005 to 2006
Internal Audit Management Procedures	1 from 2005 to 2006
Public Finance Management Act	1 from 2005 to 2006
Finance for Non Financial Managers	1 from 2005 to 2006
Contract Management	1 from 2005 to 2006
Presidential Leadership Course	1 from 2005 to 2006
Harvard Senior Executive Programme	1 from 2005 to 2006

Table 5.1 reveals that some of the programmes that the participants attended in the last two years fall within the competency band of the SMS, for example Project Management, Financial Management and



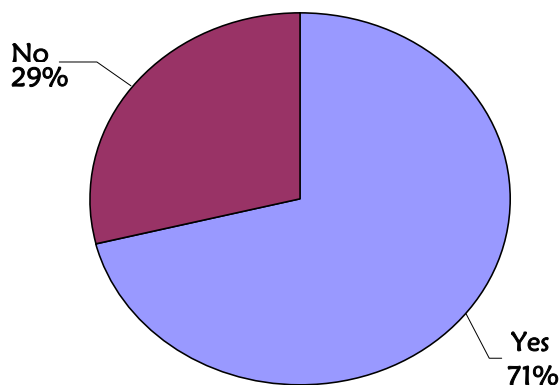
Change Management, and the Presidential and Harvard Senior Executive Programmes. However, there are more than ten respondents who have not attended any executive programmes in the last two years. It is vital to reiterate the central argument that has been advanced above: strategic management aims to extend the strategic vision and objectives throughout all units of the North West Province, fundamentally encompassing every administrative function and system. It recognises the central role played by individuals and groups and the influence of the organisational culture (Toft, 1989: 6-7). However, without long-term strategic direction, integration, and alignment, the training and development needs are achieved only at personal level and the learning assumptions, priorities and ambitions may not holistically serve and address the needs of the public service. There is a need for a comprehensive needs assessment that provides coverage of the SMS competency and enables the department to build collective training and development profiles and subsequent training and developmental approaches for the senior public servants. This approach confirms the commitment to long-term planning and successful HR planning within the public service. This point is made here because 15 (45.2%) of the respondents reported that they decide on the management development and training as development opportunities arise, seven (22.6%) each year for that year, nine (29%) each year for the next three to five years.



Given the above picture, it is argued that an overarching concern for establishing management development and training programmes should be the extent to which the long-term goals of the departments both influence, and are influenced by, the development of senior public servants. This argument certainly places a much required emphasis on the need for a management development and training approach or programmes that are comprehensive and holistic with the potential to impact on strategic improvements within the public service of the North West Province.

The respondents were also asked a number of questions to determine the support they receive from their departments with regard to on-the-job approaches to development and training. These are set out in terms of figures 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12 as follows:

**Figure 5.7: Have your job responsibilities ever been enlarged or enriched since you joined the Department?**

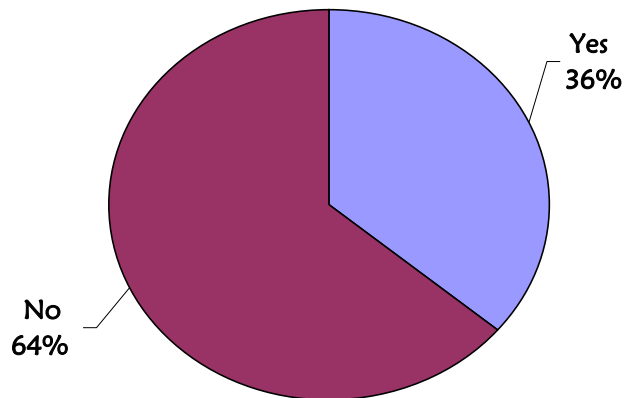


In terms of Figure 5.7, the majority of the respondents (71%) agree that their job responsibilities have been enlarged or enriched since they



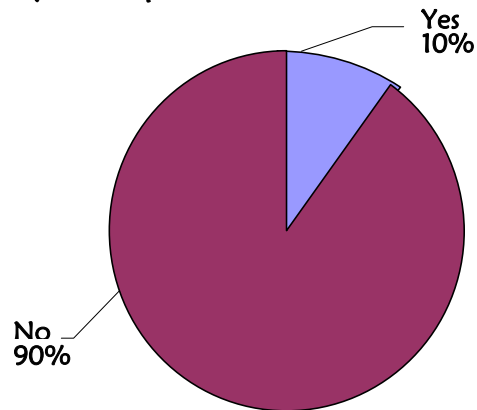
joined their departments. This figure shows that job enlargement strategy which is directed at increasing the number of tasks that the senior public servants perform is highly valued in the public service. This strategy is desirable because of the fact that the government is characterised by complexity and multiplicity which incessantly require enlarged set of tasks at senior management level.

**Figure 5.8: Have you ever been rotated to any sections since you joined your Department?**



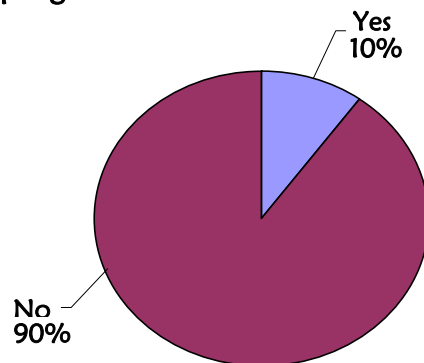
Contrary to the previous figure, the majority of the respondents (64%) report in terms of Figure 5.8 that they have never been rotated to any section since they joined their departments. Job rotation can be a good public service strategy especially when managed as part of the training and career development system of the senior management service.

**Figure 5.9: Have you ever been assigned a Departmental coach since you joined your Department?**



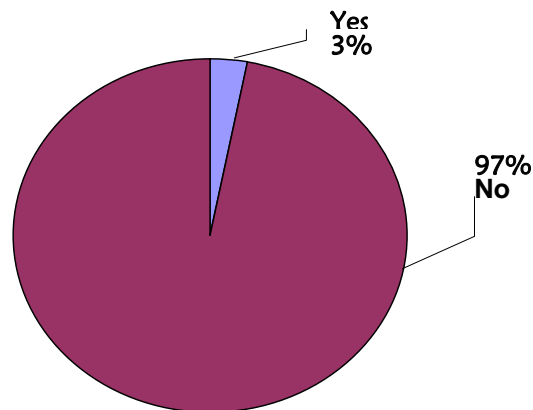
In terms of Figure 5.9, the majority of the respondents (90%) have not been assigned a departmental coach since they joined their departments. The importance of coaching does not relate to seniority but to the public service's objective of managing the performance of its senior management personnel with a view to achieving its goals and objectives. Through coaching, performance problems may be noticed and analysed at an early stage. This is very important given that the performance of all senior public servants must be reviewed and evaluated effectively and systematically in order to assist them to perform their jobs collectively, strategically and effectively.

**Figure 5.10: Does your Department have a formal mentoring programme?**



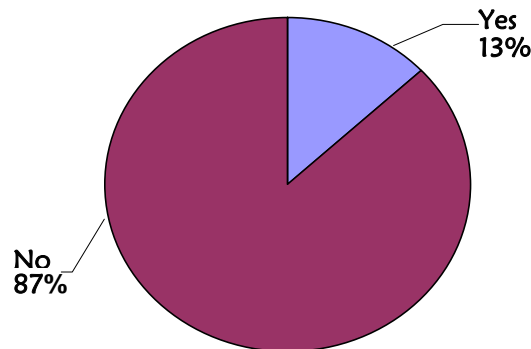
Similar to the previous Figure, the majority of the respondents (90%) reported that their departments do not have a formal mentoring programme. The views of these respondents are consistent with the views expressed by the Departments in Chapter Five. Indeed, mentoring offer an active learning approach to senior public servants learning as indicated in Chapter Three.

**Figure 5.11: Have you ever been assigned a mentor since you joined the Department?**



The fact that the case study Departments do not have mentoring programmes in place is evident from Figure 5.11 which clearly indicates that (97%) of the respondents have never been assigned mentors since they joined their departments. The views of the respondents represent the state of affairs with regard to mentoring in these Departments and further confirm that mentoring is a much-neglected learning approach at the senior management level in the public service of the North West Province. Mentoring does not only contribute towards a culture of collective learning, but also offers the possibility of improving both the overall availability and access to learning in the public service.

Figure 5.12: Have you ever been seconded to any Department since you started your career in the public service?



Furthermore, figure 5.12 represents the views of the respondents regarding secondment in the public service. The majority of the respondents (87%) have not been seconded to any departments since they started their careers in the public service. The views of the respondents are consistent with the case study in Chapter Four and further confirm that the public service is not yet integrated and is unable to create opportunities that allow senior public servants to collectively learn and relearn within and between the departments.

Based on Figures 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10, 5.11 and 5.12, it is worth making further critical observations. The views of the respondents about on-the-job management development and training reveal considerable discrepancies, which are associated with the lack of formalisation of these approaches in the public service. The high level of those who indicated that they had not been mentored or coached when they joined their departments, shows a missing link between induction and development and the need to ensure that there is proper adjustment and socialisation. Without a framework for training and development



of the senior public servants, it is hard to provide holistic and consistent institutional support for the development and enhancement of the competencies in the public service. Along these lines, however, it should be very easy to answer if the senior public servants are well empowered and more prepared to facilitate change and service delivery.

Further questions were asked with regard to off-the-job approaches to management development, as per Figures 5.13, 5.14, 5.15 and 5.16 as follows:

**Figure 5.13: Does your Department arrange in-house seminars or workshops or conferences?**

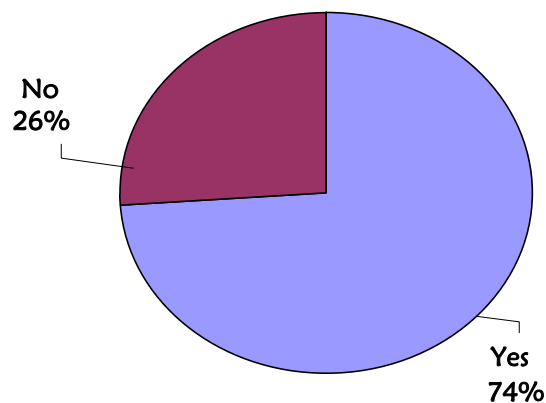
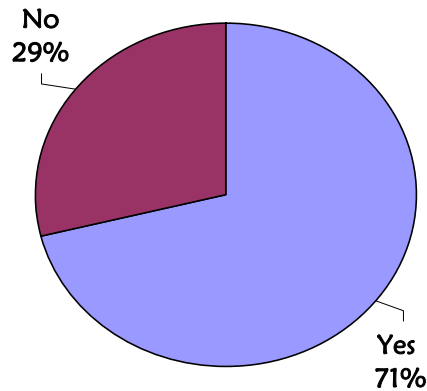


Figure 5.13 reports the views of the majority of the respondents (74%) that their departments arrange in-house seminars or workshops or conferences. The figure suggests that seminars, workshops and conferences are highly valued by both the departments and their senior public servants. However, those who do not agree (26%) either do not have knowledge or experience that directly relate to seminars, workshops or conferences.

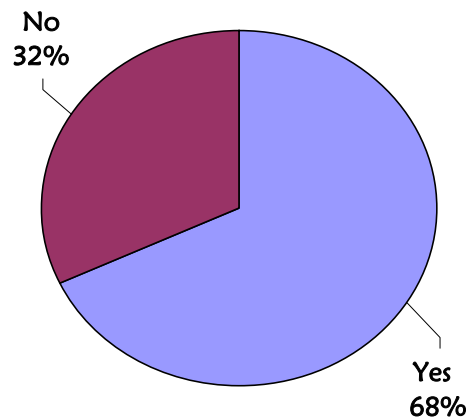


**Figure 5.14: Do you participate in external workshops/seminars/conferences for your Department?**



In line with Figure 5.13, the majority of the respondents (71%) participate in external workshops, seminars and conferences. They are important for obtaining, sharing and exchanging information and are highly valued by the Departments.

**Figure 5.15: Have you conducted any seminar/conference/workshop for your Department?**



With regard to Figure 5.15, the majority of the respondents (68%) have conducted a workshop, seminar or workshop for their Departments. In this regard, respondents do not only attend workshops, seminars or conferences but they are given opportunities to share and exchange information with their colleagues. Therefore, by following this



approach, the Departments are able to promote a learning culture and save time and money. This approach must be made a requirement in order to allow (32%) of the respondents to also contribute their experience and knowledge collectively, systematically and effectively.

From a quality perspective, the arrangements for organising, participating in and conducting workshops, seminars and conferences must be supported by policies and plans with a view to ensuring that they contribute to the rigour of the SMS competency framework (decision-making and communication skills, for example), successful mentoring programmes and leadership succession planning within the public service. Furthermore, the systematic acquisition, transfer and utilisation of new knowledge is an inevitability for successful policy implementation in the public service.

**Figure 5.16: Are you a member of any professional body or organisation?**

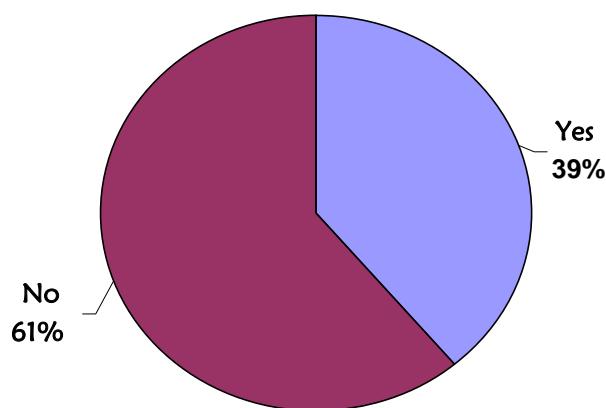


Figure 5.16 reports that the majority of the respondents (61%) are not members of any professional body or organization. Public administration is a professional discipline which must be practiced based



on professional knowledge and accumulated experience. As indicated in Chapter Three, it is important that senior public servants are members of a professional body in order to promote their own development and commitment to careers in the public service. The professional bodies create many opportunities for learning, networks, and exchanging information which relates to the trends and best practices in the management of the public services. Such bodies are also guardians of the ethical conduct and behaviours of public officials. For this reason, there is a need to promote a culture of sharing information, development and enhancement of leadership competencies and effective knowledge management through a tailor-made professional body for the public servants (considering that 39% respondents who currently belong to their own professional bodies).

Generally, the approaches to management development and training should occur in a public service culture that is aware of what they are and prepared to resource them so that they can prosper. In fact, these approaches to management development and training require investment in planning, time and money to demonstrate that there is a real commitment and accountability to growing management and leadership capability at SMS level, or even across the public service. With a clear vision and coherent framework, the institutional support relating to these approaches may be strengthened. In other words, the approaches to managerial capacity building require a value-orientated



approach concerned with effectiveness, efficiency, value for money and time as well sustainability with a view to realising their purposes and impact on the vision of the public service.

Furthermore, when asked if they got time to consider their own development needs, 20 (64.5%) respondents said no and 11 (35.5%) said yes. When asked what was most likely to stop them from spending time on their own development, 13 (41.9%) said workload; seven (22.6%) said no money in the budget; four (12.9%) said lack of support/interest from their seniors; three (9.7%) said lack of support from the HR department; three (9.7%) said lack of career opportunities; and one (3.2%) said no opportunity to apply what acquired. Without effective internal management and organisation, it is possible that the workload in the public service may be uneven. For example, at the time of collecting data from the HRD, a total of twenty (20) SMS positions were vacant in these departments. This could be a contributing factor to the increasing workload within the SMS level in the departments which could impede the current senior public servants from spending time on their own development. In this respect, there is an urgent need for the departments to realise the value of career succession planning as this will create opportunity for public servants with potential to understudy roles to which they aspire. Of course, developing a pool of public servants that can step into vacated SMS



roles is a form of management support that can benefit both the individual and the public service.

Above all, it is argued that with greater integration between planning, management control and the organisational structure; greater integration between financial, communication and information support is possible. But the perceived lack of support/interest from the seniors, Human Resource Department support and career opportunities may detrimentally impact on how management development is being approached in the public service (at individual or organisational levels) and increasingly raise major issues about how careers are determined, planned and shaped in the public service. Considering the constitutional principles that currently advocate public management in South Africa in Chapter One and these barriers to effective management development and training, there must be a clear context and understanding of what it means to be a senior manager in the public service of the North West Province.

#### **5.4.2 Delivery and assessment of training and development**

It was established in Chapter Four that the Human Resource Development (HRD) is responsible for the training and development function in the provincial departments. It was also established that most, if not all, training and development needs for senior public servants are undertaken and supported by external service providers, and there are



no electronic databases exhibiting current accredited service providers to promote and support sound institutional public private partnership in the light of the challenges and needs of these Departments. It was also noted that the departments do not ensure that the new skills and knowledge learned or acquired by the senior public servants are well applied, as there are no systems for information sharing, reporting and recording in place. Moreover, there are no systems to transfer the skills and knowledge learned or acquired by the senior public servants. Again, there are no systems in place to transform individual knowledge into public service results. With this picture in mind, it was also necessary to determine the attitudes of the senior public servants towards management development. When asked if they did agree management development and training objectives with their seniors, 22 (71.0%) said yes, six (19.4%) said no and three (9.7%) were not sure. Likewise, when they were asked if the HR practitioners play a role in this respect, out of 31 respondents, 12 (38.7%) said yes, 13 (41.9%) said no and six (19.4%) were not sure.

Accordingly, a large number of respondents 22 (71.0%) agree personal objectives with their seniors before embarking on any development opportunity, seven (22.6%) did not agree with their seniors, while two (6.5%) were not sure. With regard to the diagnostic methods used to determine if it is time for the senior public servants to be trained and developed, 12 (38.7%) said there are systems in place, 15 (48.4%) said



that there are no methods and four (12.9%) were not sure if the are methods in place to determine if it is time for them to be trained and developed.

Although the respondents have positive understanding and relationship with their seniors about training and development, their perceptions about the support from HR and the systems for triggering development and training are not positive. The importance of systematic integration and alignment of the management development and training function within the public service of the North West Province is fundamental with a view to matching desired outcomes with the processes to achieve them. An effective training and development needs assessment process must be supported by the HR with learning systems that enhance the development and attainment of new knowledge and competencies required for effective performance in the public service. There is a need to ensure that the performance management system is linked to and contributes to the development, maintenance and evaluation of the desired competencies in the public service. Importantly, this will ensure that what the public service accomplishes through the strategic management process and HR planning, as well as systems, and how quickly these accomplishments are to be achieved, are tied to its capability. This point leads to the next section on the analysis of the diagnostic mechanisms to support holistic and effective capacity building of the senior public servants.



## **5.5 The diagnostic tools to evaluate the support for capacity building**

It is evident from Chapter Four that the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and the Senior Management Service (SMS) competency framework are highly regarded tools in determining and evaluating the performance the senior public servants to achieve the vision of the North West public service. The views of the respondents regarding the two tools are analysed at this point.

### **5.5.1 PMDS: linking development and performance**

As far as performance review is concerned, 29 (93.5%) respondents remarkably review their performance with their seniors; two (6.5) respondents do not review their performance with their seniors. Furthermore, 22 (71.0%) respondents maintained that the performance appraisal process helps them to identify their professional training and development needs, eight (25.8%) said no and one (3.2) was not sure. When asked if the development activities they take part in are assessed in relation to their performance on the job, 17 (54.8%) respondents agreed, 12 (38.7%) disagreed and two (6.5%) were not sure. Similarly, 17 (54.8%) respondents reported that the Performance Management and Development System has made a difference to how their development needs are addressed, 12 (38.7%) said it has not made differences and two (6.5%) were not sure if the system has made a difference to how their development needs are addressed.





Performance appraisal is about being able to demonstrate accountability. It is also about being able to evaluate and make judgements about performance so that developmental objectives can be set and achieved. In this respect, the majority of the respondents review their performance with their seniors (93.5%) and maintained that the performance appraisal process helps them to identify their professional training and development needs (71%). With regard to the development objective of the system, only 17 (54.8) respondents appreciate that the development activities they take part in are assessed in relation to their performance on the job. However, an effective performance appraisal system is one that has gained senior public servants' commitment and is valued. It is in the partnership roles of appraisee and appraiser that genuine professional mentoring and coaching can occur. Therefore, PMDS requires strategic training and development support with plans and approaches that enable the public to understand the linkages and relationships between development and performance of the senior public servants as well as to measure the impact of development on the achievement of the objectives of the public service.

Another salient feature of the PMDS is that the senior public servants must sign performance agreements. In this regard, 24 (77.4%) have signed performance agreements with their departments, seven (22.6%) have not signed the performance agreements with their departments.



Similarly, when asked if their departments abide by the terms of the performance management agreement they have signed, 20 (64.5%) respondents said yes, eight (25.8%) respondents said no and three (9.7%) respondents were unsure if their departments are abiding by the terms of the performance management agreements they have signed.

Bearing in mind the analysis about the importance of effective induction training for building loyalty and commitment, it is further argued that if the North West public service expects to nurture and communicate its vision and as well as long-term plans, then it should, unquestionably, be able to rely on performance appraisal information to judge the capacity of its departments to implement plans and to indicate gaps that could be addressed in a holistic management development and training programme, thus catering for many dimensions of individual and organisational development.

It was argued in Chapter Three that the management development and training activities must result in new skills and knowledge that can be used and reused in the future, and effectively impact on the strategic and operational objectives of the departments. Therefore, the respondents were asked if the management development activities they undertake make any difference to the achievements of their performance targets. Out of 31, the majority (20 or 64.5%) said yes, seven (22.6%) respondents said no and four (12.9%) were not sure if



the management development activities they undertake make differences to the achievements of their performance targets.

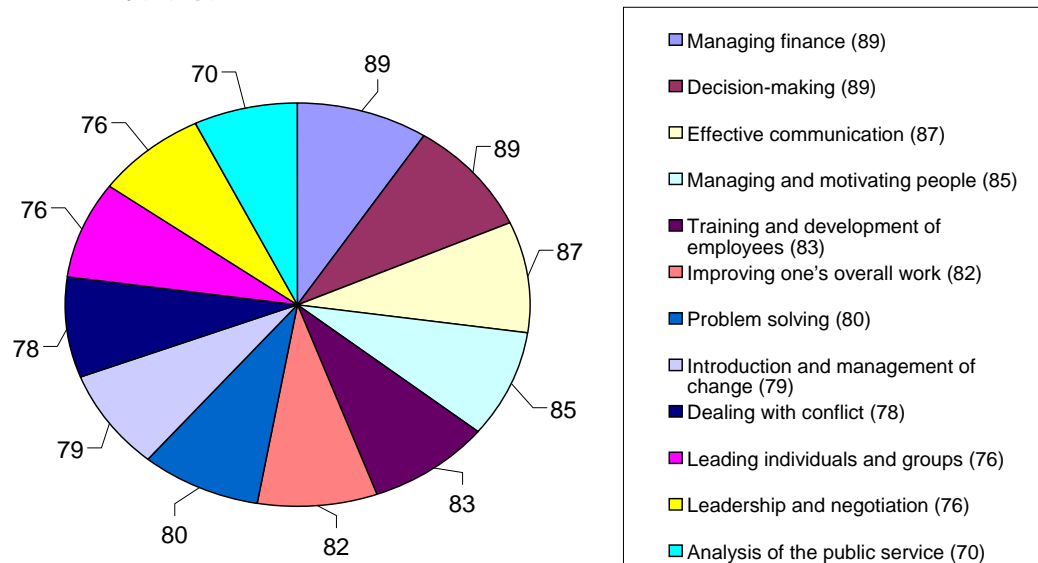
However, when asked if the development activities they undertake are assessed in relation to the work they may do in the future, 15 (48.8%) said yes, 13 (41.9%) said no and three (9.7%) were not sure. Thus, 17 (54.8%) respondents said that the departments' approach to management development is relevant to their needs, nine (29.9%) said no and five (16.1%) were not sure if their departments' approach to management development is relevant to their needs. Likewise, when asked if their departments made use of the management development they have undertaken, 15 (48.4%) said yes, 12 (38.7%) said no and four (12.9%) were not sure. With regard to career progressions, 23 (74.2%) respondents indicated that the development activities they undertake are related to the skills they need to progress their careers, seven (22.6%) respondents disagreed and one (3.2%) was not sure.

Generally the implications of the above responses are evident. When the senior public servants are unable to trust or value the performance appraisal system and opportunities for growth and development are circumvented, then direct links between the motivation in the department and the senior public servant cannot be established. Lack of proper integration and alignment within the HR with a systematic long-term approach that promotes effective linkage to selection, induction,



development and performance within the public service is a major barrier for effective implementation of the PMDS. Consequently, the approaches to training and development lack measurable and sustainable impact on the performance of the senior public servants and generally the capability of the public service. Moreover, there are interrelationship problems, which indicate that there is a lack of effective communication and feedback between the senior public servants and their departments. Therefore, rather than mere compliance with systemic requirements in the public service, the performance management system requires the commitment of the departments to the ideal of integrating accountability and developmental purposes to serve both the senior public servants and the North West public service. Here, the images of effective public service leadership must be connected to the notions of defining the vision and setting team goals, gaining commitment in implementing planned change and fundamentally understanding the contribution of organisational culture to the achievement of the North West provincial strategy. Furthermore, the respondents were asked what level of skills and expertise they required in order to remain effective in the public service. In this regard, descriptive statistics was employed and revealed the following skills and expertise as set out in Figure 5.17.

Figure 5.17: “The level of skills and expertise which the senior public servants require in order to remain effective in the public service”



From Figure 5.17, it can be seen that the respondents attached a high value to the task orientated skills, people orientated skills and self-development needs with a view to being effective in the public service. In this regard, there are clear indications that the respondents are aware of their own training and developments needs. Equally, it can be said that all the skills are perceived as those which contribute to their effectiveness at work and which allow them to display their increased level of competence. Managerial effectiveness is largely determined by the degree of effectiveness of the support system, which is available to them. In this respect, it is possible to explore these training and development needs and suitable tailor-made management training programmes to reflect the need for a balanced and progressive mixture of the above skills.



### 5.5.2 The SMS competency framework

It has been established in Chapter Four that there are no follow-ups and proper monitoring of the implementation of the SMS competency framework. It was also established that since the introduction of the SMS competency framework in the public service of North West Province, no department has done an assessment of it. Moreover, there is no information in place regarding how the SMS competency framework supports the individual and collective performance of the senior public servants in these departments. The pertinent question relating to this section is: what features does the SMS competency framework reveal about the building of contemporary South African senior public servants? Put differently, is the SMS competency framework a living HR tool for the development and performance of the senior public servants in the public service?

In order to provide answers to the above question, the respondents were asked a number of questions to ascertain their responses with regard to the introduction, implementation and assessment of the SMS competency framework in their departments. When asked if they had been given a copy of the SMS handbook by their departments, 20 (64.5%) said yes and 11 (35.5%) said no. Out of 31 respondents, 23 (74.2%) reported that the HR department did not provide an orientation programme covering the SMS handbook, only seven (22.6%) said yes and one (3.2%) was not sure if the HR department



had provided an orientation programme for the SMS handbook. With regard to the assessment of the SMS competencies, 16 (51.6%) indicated that the HR department had not communicated information regarding the assessment of the competencies based in the competency framework before the actual assessment, 14 (45.2%) said yes and one (3.2%) was not sure. Similarly, 24 (77.4%) respondents said that the HR department did not inform them about the assessment of the competencies before they were assessed, seven (22.6%) said they were inducted. In general, the views expressed by the departments in Chapter Four regarding the introduction of the SMS competency framework are consistent with those of the majority of the respondents. The implications are given below.

Out of 31 respondents, 21 (67.7%) reported that the assessment of competencies is informed by the strategic plan of their departments, five (16.1%) disagreed and five (16.1%) were not sure. Equally, when asked if the assessment of competencies is informed by the operational plan and processes, 23 (74.2%) respondents said yes, five (16.1%) said no and one (3.2%) was not sure. The respondents were also asked if the assessment of the competencies is linked to their actual performance in their departments. Out of 31 respondents, 25 (80.6%) said yes, five (16.1%) said no and only one (3.2%) was unsure. The same question was extended to the actual performance of other senior public servants in their departments and 19 (61.3%) said yes, eight (25.5%) said no and



four (12.9%) were not sure if the assessment of the competencies is linked to their actual performance of other senior public servants in their departments. With regard to feedback about the assessment of the competencies in their departments, 19 (61.3%) said yes they obtained feedback, 11 (35.5%) said no and one (3.2%) was not sure. Similarly, when asked if they had SMS competency assessment reports covering the results of the previous assessment, 13 (41.9%) respondents said yes, 17 (54.8%) said no and only one (3.2%) was unsure (It must however be noted that the data were collected during the assessment therefore the situation has changed).

When asked if the assessment of the competencies is quality assured by their departments, a larger percentage of the respondents 15 (48.4%) said no, six (19.4%) were unsure and 10 (32.3%) said yes. Although 26 (83.9%) of the respondents said that they have personal development plans and five (16.1%) said they do not have the personal development plans, 20 (64.5%) reported that their HR departments do not assist them in meeting the actual performance level after the assessment of their performance, eight (25.8%) said the HR departments assist them and three (9.7%) were not sure. Thus, nine (29.0%) respondents considered their internal HR personnel competent to assess their competencies, 14 (45.2%) respondents considered their internal HR personnel incompetent to assess them and eight (25.8%) were not sure





if the internal HR personnel were competent or incompetent to assess their competencies.

The evidence above suggests a number of problems with regard to the introduction, implementation and evaluation of the SMS competency framework in the public service of the North West Province. This evidence is consistent with some of the research findings by Miller et al (2001) in Chapter Three. The SMS competency framework should be used in the recruitment and selection of the senior public servants and their personal and career development in the public service. It is the starting point for the vacancy profile. The SMS competency framework is also an instrument, which can be used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the senior public servants, if highly valued by the HR department. This information can be used in constructing personal development plans. Of course, coaching, training and learning by experience are the most important elements of the personal development plans. Above all, the competency framework can be used in the context of career development. Senior public servants can discuss their future careers, starting from an appreciation and evaluation of the different competencies in the framework. These benefits of the SMS competency framework cannot be realised by the public service of the North West Province if it is perceived as not orientated towards the current and future the needs of the public service.



Furthermore, the SMS competency framework starts from a new vision of the public service and the requirements for senior public servants. Therefore, senior public servants should not only be experts in the policy field, but should have management and leadership skills and capabilities. This implies a change in the organisational culture within the North West public service. In particular, there is a need for a major paradigm shift from a functional to a competency-based approach within the HR divisions in the North West public service.

## **5.6 Summary**

This chapter outlined the findings of the study conducted to evaluate the support for managerial capacity building of the senior public servants in the North West Province. The major findings of the study reveal that the institutional support requires a coherent and effective framework for capacity building of the senior public servants. There is evidence that the public service is supporting senior public servants with induction, development and training and assessment of their performance in the public service. However, the absence of proper alignment, planning, strategies and systems counteracts the significance, sustainability and impact of the institutional support, which could contribute towards overcoming the challenges and the achievement of the vision of the public service.



Some of the findings of this research are consistent with the examination already made by the Provincial Review Report (1997), the State of Performance Management in the Public Service (2001), the Report on the Implementation and Promotion of Batho Pele (June 2004) and the State of the Public Service Reports (2003, 2004, 2005 and 2006). Thus, this chapter has clearly reported the capacity gaps which affect the effective support for managerial capacity building and how these gaps may influence the performance of the senior public servants in the public service of the North West Province.