FACTORS INFLUENCING THE MORALE OF EMPLOYEES AT THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this mini dissertation is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any degree at any University previously.

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RG Matsaung

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Date

DEDICATION

To my husband, Maboku, and my beautiful daughter, Azania, for their unconditional love and support throughout this process.
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was mainly to explore factors influencing the morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality (GTM). Morale is the psychological state of a person as expressed in self-confidence, enthusiasm, and/or loyalty to a cause or organisation and it flows from people’s conviction about the righteousness or worth of their actions and the hopes of considerable rewards (material or otherwise) in the future. The study was conducted at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality, Tzaneen Area in Limpopo. The investigation consisted of a literature review about morale in order to gain an understanding to answer the research question which is: What are factors influencing morale of employees at the GTM?

The sample of the study comprised 103 employees at the GTM including, directors, managers, supervisors and first line level employees. The samples were drawn from the population of the GTM using stratified random sampling and the required number of respondents was further selected proportionally from each stratum using random sampling. Quantitative research was performed utilising a questionnaire as a data collection tool. A theoretical background on morale, Employee Assistance Programme and working conditions of employees was provided through a literature study.

The empirical findings were gathered based on the information received from the respondents. The findings of the study were based on 97% of the questionnaires received and/or returned by the respondents. The findings were presented and analysed using tables, graphs, pie charts and also interpreted in words. The majority of the respondents who participated in the study, revealed that the expectation of receiving a desired reward contributes to high morale, with expected monetary rewards having a larger influence than non-monetary rewards, but praise for a job well done and a feeling of accomplishment were also indicated to contribute positively to employee morale.
The results also revealed that there is a significant correlation between positive attitudes toward work and morale, and a positive correlation between performance management, commitment, leadership, employees’ salaries, compensation, training and development with employee morale. The demographic characteristics were shown not to have a discernable influence on workplace morale. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations and conclusions were made regarding strategies to be implemented by both management and employees to deal with morale in the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.
KEY WORDS

Morale
Employees
Greater Tzaneen Municipality
Employees Working Conditions
Employee Assistance Programme
Retention
Loyalty
Productivity
Training
Municipal Manager
Municipal Systems Act
ACRONYMS

EAP: Employee Assistance Programme
GTM: Greater Tzaneen Municipality
OHS: Occupational Health and Safety
LRA: Labour Relation Act
BCEA: Basic Conditions of an Employment Act
HR: Human Resource
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CHAPTER 1

1. Introduction

This research proposal is a reaction to statements made at the October 2010 strategic planning session of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality (GTM). At the planning session, the then municipal manager raised concerns about the work morale of workers at GTM and called for research to shed light on the matter (GTM, SPS, 2010). The present investigator decided to pursue the topic as part of her postgraduate training in employee assistance, as the task team which was appointed to conduct the research did not materialise. The researcher further decided that the study should provide guidelines which can assist management and employees in strengthening work morale at GTM.

For the purpose of the present investigation, morale means the psychological state of a person as expressed in self-confidence, enthusiasm, and/or loyalty to a cause or organisation. Morale flows from people's conviction about the righteousness or worth of their actions and the hopes of rewards (material or otherwise) in the future (Wittmer, 2000:46).

2. Literature review

Linked to the above definition, morale is considered as the end result of many factors present in the workplace environment. Some of these factors are the work setting itself, worker satisfaction, salary, supervisory input, working conditions and status. Some of the signs of decreased morale include tardiness, absenteeism, apathy and moping, ‘backstabbing’, decreased quality of work, decreased productivity, and increased errors, accidents or injuries. Workplace morale is not a cause, but rather the result of many factors in the work environment (Wittmer, 2000:50). The root of the problem must be identified in order to unravel the factors that contribute to problems of workplace morale. Contributing factors include, but are not limited to (Wittmer, 2000:66, 94):
• Negative events (in particular dismissal).
• Promotion of an employee when others are overlooked.
• Arguments between staff and/or management.
• Challenges with the company's financial health.
• Too heavy workloads.
• Unappreciated or underappreciated work.
• Poor working conditions.
• Supervision that is rigid, demanding, direct or overly involved.
• Inadequate and weak supervision that does not provide the needed guidance or input.

Employee morale describes the overall outlook, attitudes, satisfaction and confidence that employees feel at work. When employees are positive about their work environment and believe that they can meet their most important needs at work, e.g. provision of appropriate resources to execute work and have open communication with management, then employee morale is positive or high. If employees are negative and unhappy about their workplace and feel unappreciated, and if they cannot reach the organisational goals and needs, employee morale is negative or low. Morale or the spirit-de-corps principle is one of the oldest ideas in administrative science. It goes back to the management practices of ancient civilizations, including the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians and Venetians. Morale is the idea that work is not really work, but an enjoyable source of pride. This is perhaps a vague statement because morale presents a positive and effective orientation towards reaching organisational goals, which is equivalent to the sociological concept of group cohesion. Morale entails the behaviour of employees wanting to belong to the organisations they work for (Bennett & Hess, 2001:38, Taylor, 2004:88; Tinchy, 2000:52, Seriovanni & Starratt, 2003:47).

Authors explain morale as the degree of enthusiasm and willingness with which the members of a group ‘pull together’ to achieve a goal.
The researcher agrees with this view, but adds that morale may be thought of not only as a group phenomenon but as an individual matter since group morale depends on the morale of each individual in the group.

This explanation cites the importance of morale in the organisation and its relevance in the organisational environment and its leadership. Poor or low morale stems from the negative feelings of employees such as dissatisfaction, discouragement or dislike of the job. Dash (2005:55), indicates leadership style, lack of incentive schemes, vague promotion guidelines, allocation of employee bonuses, lack of communications, unsafe work environment, dissatisfaction with salaries and unclear policies as other factors which could lead to morale problems in the workplace (Holliday, 2007:17; Sankey, 2011:43; Wittmer, 2000:195; Dash, 2005:16; GTM Occupational Health and Safety [OHS] Annual Report, 2010, GTM Exit Interview, 2010, GTM Attendance Register, 2010).

Bennett and Hess (2001:38) indicate that employers may not realise the financial cost the organisation bears when team members are unhappy. An effective leader knows how to check, maintain and, when necessary, improve staff morale. If managers can monitor staff morale, they might invest more in workers’ wellbeing when performance appears on the decrease. Price (2007:79) explains that leadership training courses facilitate an understanding of how to maintain high levels of morale in the workplace as part of the balance between the achievement of goals and the leadership of people.

A healthy morale in the workplace plays an important role in productivity and success. Very often employers underestimate the importance of building morale in the work environment. Managers are often too concerned about performance and results, thereby neglecting employee morale and team spirit. Still, the expected outputs of workers depend on adequate levels of workplace morale. Therefore, the following questions can be asked: How can one go about improving morale in the workplace? Does it take time or is it an instantaneous process? Can there be any ‘magic’ for instantly boosting the team spirit of employees? (Holliday, 2007:44; Sankey, 2011:13).
Bennett and Hess (2001:101) emphasise that the first step in improving staff morale is to create a culture where the team understands that their wellbeing and morale in the workplace is important. The researcher advises that in order to improve staff morale, organisations need to understand what the cause of low morale is in the first place. The researcher is also of the view that arguments between team members, supervisory actions that intimidate, or the possibility of losing a job is among the common reasons why staff morale will or may decrease. Heavy workloads or feelings of not being appreciated are other reasons why people leave the workplace (Price, 2007:98). Managers need to listen carefully to their staff and see if they can uncover reasons for decreased levels of morale in the workplace (Holliday, 2007:56). Possibly the easiest and fastest way to determine factors which contribute to low work morale is to simply ask the employee – ask what the cause of low morale is and what the employee believes can be done to turn it around. The researcher believes that obtaining information directly from the person who is experiencing the problem can often be an important key to solving the problem. Additionally, employees might experience a sense of pride, ownership and worth when managers ask them for their input (Holliday, 2007: 55). Dash (2005:105) mentions the following ways in which managers can effectively reach demotivated employees:

- **Show concern.** If employees believe that managers do not care about them, they project the same attitude toward the task at hand. A simple strategy in this regard is to address employees by their names and to ask for their own creative thoughts about the work they perform. Activities such as these promote a sense of ownership and involvement in the work process.

- **Provide appropriate feedback.** Employees need to be familiar with two crucial variables in the work-morale equation, namely what is expected of them and how well they are doing. Without such feedback, the employee will inevitably overwork or under work, think of their work as above average or below average, and may stray from achieving the supervisor’s goal.

- **Create goals.** Employers must create mutually acceptable goals. An employee without a clear understanding of the goals or without a sense of how their work
fits into the overall goal of the unit, department or section can easily waste time on tasks that are not consistent with the organisation’s objectives.

- **Offer recognition.** It takes just a few seconds to provide a positive remark such as ‘well done’, ‘great improvement’, ‘you are on the right track’ or similar phrases that communicate to the employee that the employer cares about the task and about them, and that improvements in productivity are recognised.

Taylor (2004:83) explains that improving employee morale has over the years been one of the major challenges of employers and management. When the morale of employees is high, productivity and attitude to work improves, but if the morale is low, the reverse becomes the case. Rosenholtz (2001:93) indicates that sometimes what is overlooked is that low employee morale is often made up of many smaller issues that, as they accumulate, cause morale to drop because they have been ignored in the past. Working on the morale of employees is the duty of those in supervisory positions (i.e. from the team leaders to the CEO), as part of their function is to pay attention to the wellbeing of workers.

A recent survey of participants at the World at Work Conference in San Diego shows that employee morale and engagement continues to be the greatest workforce challenge. Buck Consultants surveyed attendees at the Conference and more than 200 attendees shared their perceptions on the impact of morale on employees in the workplace. A total of 82% of those surveyed cited morale and engagement as the greatest, significant or moderate challenge faced by their organisations. Only 18% indicated it as not an issue. Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) were among the top five intervention strategies to ensure the wellbeing of a workforce (Fullan, 2004:89).

### 3. Theoretical framework

The researcher made use of systems theory because a workplace is a system which could be influenced by numerous factors, including the morale of employees. Systems theory is an interdisciplinary field and studies the nature of complex systems, society and science. More specifically, it is a framework by which one can
analyse and/or describe any group of objects that work in concert to produce some result (Hammersley, 2006:77; Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006: 101).

Systems theory covers a broad range of theoretical and methodological practices across many disciplines. Generally, systems theory is concerned with the structure of complex systems, with special emphasis on how individuals relate to each other and to the whole system. In the present investigation, this amounts to employees, supervisors, management and other administrative systems of GTM (Breakwell, Hammon, Fife-Schaw & Smith, 2007:55; Onwuegbuzie, 2000:68). The administrative systems which the researcher looked into includes the OHS, training and development, selection and recruitment, human resource and retention management systems in order to determine how they could have an impact on the morale of employees.

In the context of the this study, systems theory means understanding how individuals relate to each other and to their workplace as a whole and the effect social pressures and work demands have on individuals. The researcher employed systems theory in order to understand the interrelations between employees, management and systems in the workplace. The researcher determined how the system functions and what aspects of that system have a negative impact on the work morale of employees, through management responses and views. The researcher also suggested how improvements can be made to change the system as it bears negative influence and/or whether people have an influence on the system itself. The researcher applied systems theory to understand its structure and attempt to advocate policies and strategies that promote positivity in the workplace.

4. Rationale and problem statement

As mentioned above, concerns have been raised about the work morale among employees of GTM. Evidence points to attitudes of dissatisfaction with the workplace, often coupled with a desire to discontinue employment at GTM. In 2010, almost 45% of GTM employees resigned (GTM Employee Exit Interview Records, 2010). High rates of absenteeism, frustration among workers, lack of discipline, taking of early retirement and negative remarks during exist interviews added further
impetus to investigate the morale of the GTM workforce. Since work morale is influenced by numerous variables, it is not clear to what extent those identified at the 2010 Strategic Planning Session bear influence on the perceived levels of workers’ dissatisfaction. All possible influences had been identified, as well as the nature of their influence on work morale. With this in mind, the researcher focused on gaining a greater understanding of the factors that influence the morale of employees at GTM. The findings of this study would assist employees and management in addressing the root causes of morale problems as it provides guidelines to develop strategies to enhance the morale of employees.

5. Goal and objectives

The goal of the study was to explore factors influencing employees’ morale at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. The following objectives were pursued to achieve the goal of the investigation:

- To describe and conceptualise employee morale and the factors influencing morale in the workplace;
- To identify the levels of work morale among GTM employees;
- To explore factors influencing the morale of employees at the GTM; and
- To formulate formal guidelines to assist management and employees to manage morale in the workplace.

6. Research approach

The study followed the quantitative approach since the work morale of a large number of employees at GTM was solicited. In quantitative research, the researcher aimed to arrive at an understanding of facts from the outsider’s perspective by maintaining a detached, objective view, which in this study was the measurement of employee morale (Dash, 2005:17). Quantitative research involves counting and measuring of events and performing statistical analysis on a body of numerical data (Smith, 2004:49). The researcher agrees with Cassel and Symon (1999:93) that quantitative research is based upon formulating research questions and answering
them empirically on a specific set of data, which in this case were the responses from a survey questionnaire. Cassel and Symon (1999:84) further elaborate by saying that the main concerns of quantitative research is that measurement is valid and generalisable in its clear prediction of cause (workplace environment) and effect (workers’ morale).

The functional paradigm that guides the quantitative mode of inquiry is based on the assumption that a social reality (work morale) has an objective structure and that individuals (GTM workers) are responding agents to this objective environment (Morgan & Smircich, 2000:33). From the researcher’s point of view, quantitative research in the investigation was about asking workers at GTM for their opinions about workplace morale in a structured way in order to produce facts and statistics on the matter. In order to obtain reliable statistical results, the researcher surveyed the workers in fairly large numbers to ensure that they constitute a representative sample of staff at GTM.

The researcher took note of the following weaknesses associated with quantitative research (Kealey & Protheroe, 1996:54; Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 1999:22):

- Failure to provide the researcher with information on the context of the situation where the phenomenon occurs.
- Inability to always ensure an environment that is conducive for respondents to honestly and easily complete the questionnaires.
- Outcomes are limited to those outlined in the original research proposal.

However, the researcher is of the view that, although the quantitative research method has weaknesses, it has important strengths that has added value to the proposed study (McCotter, 2001:66; Niglas, 2007:79):

- The research problem was stated in very specific, definable and set terms, e.g. to explore factors influencing the work morale of workers at GTM.
- One can clearly and precisely specify the independent (e.g. the age of the respondents) and the dependent variables (e.g. attitude of respondents).
• By strictly following the research objectives, more objective conclusions can be arrived at and a number of hypotheses can be tested and compared to existing evidence on workplace moral.

• High levels of reliability and validity has been achieved by properly testing the research instrument prior to data collection; important themes can also be assessed in different ways.

• Subjectivity is minimised, which adds value when reporting the results to the management of GTM.

In addition, the quantitative approach allowed the researcher to arrive at more objective conclusions by minimising any subjectivity of judgment. The researcher did not consider what GTM employees supposedly think and feel, but have arranged empirical data so that one is able to reflect and acknowledge that different perspectives on workplace morale have merit, i.e. from directors, managers, supervisors and first line employees. The researcher also kept in mind the limitations of each argument, hence arriving at more objective conclusion. Subjective preferences have no place in quantitative research, implying that the researcher did not let emotions and/or personal experiences influence the results of the study (Frankfort-Nichmias, 1999:135; Robert, 2000: 55).

7. Research purpose

The main purpose of the investigation was to explore factors that may affect the work morale of employees at the GTM. No study of the present nature has been conducted thus far at GTM. While evidence was available about work morale from other settings, specific information regarding the situation at GTM was needed. An exploratory purpose was also required to gain insights and familiarise the researcher (and the eventual users of the information, i.e. GTM managers) with the present phenomenon (levels of work morale in the workforce). With exploratory research data is often quantitative and used to identify and obtain information on a particular problem or issue, in this case the morale of employees at GTM. The researcher also believes that the planning of exploratory research is flexible and can address research questions of all types, i.e. what, why and how. Furthermore, Marshall and
Batten (2004:55) indicate that exploratory research is used to clarify a perceived problem and is necessary to ensure that, if there is a problem, it is clearly understood before the organisation can mobilise resources to address the problem. In this regard, the researcher formulated guidelines to assist management and employees to deal and/or address potential deficits in workplace morale. The researcher emphasises the use of an exploratory study as it involves looking at all factors before acting on information.

The advantage of using exploratory research is that it helps to determine whether to proceed with a research idea and how to approach it. The proposed exploratory study was rooted in pre-existing data and literature as it assists in narrowing down the scope of the investigation. As such, the researcher conducted a thorough literature review before collecting data from GTM employees. The researcher believe that though exploratory research can have the disadvantage of not being useful for decision-making purposes (as is often the case with qualitative research that fail to comment on the scope of the problem), its advantage of seeking to explain what is happening in a particular situation is more important. In addition, the researcher views exploratory research as aimed at generalising from an analysis by predicting certain phenomena on the basis of general relationships, in this case the morale of employees in the workplace (Shuttleworth, 2008: 69; Niglas, 2001: 102).

8. Type of research

The study was applied in nature because the researcher focused on an existing problem in practice, namely the factors that influence work morale at GTM. Patton (2002:217) indicates that the purpose of applied research is to contribute knowledge that will help people (GTM employees) understand the nature of a problem (work morale) in order to intervene, thereby allowing human beings to be more effective in controlling their environment (workplace). The researcher agrees that applied research is aimed at solving practical problems of the modern world, rather than acquiring knowledge for knowledge's sake. The results was formally communicated via suitable platforms to the management and human resource divisions of GTM in an effort to facilitate interventions in a potential troublesome situation, i.e. demotivated and demoralised work morale (Marshall & Batten, 2004:15).
9. Research design

The research design opted for was the randomised cross-sectional survey. Surveys are particularly useful in determining people’s attitudes and opinions (De Vos, 2011:156). In order to execute such a survey, a questionnaire was developed and distributed among a sample of the GTM workforce for completion. The design was selected because data were needed to determine the incidence and distribution of, as well as factors influencing the work morale of employees at GTM (Babbie, 2001:79). In other words, a design is needed where experiences and views from employees could be determined in numerical form (De Vos, 2011: 156).

The cross-sectional survey yielded standardised data from a random sample of GTM employees, which was facilitated by drawing the conclusions regarding their work morale. In addition, a survey design facilitated investigation into the relationship between different work morale variables. However, as Mouton and Maraise (1990:96) warn, no causal relationships will be studied, since work morale could change over time. The survey took place at a specific point in time, although data collection took eight weeks to complete. This is a particular advantage of the cross-sectional survey design, as data were collected from a stratified selection of GTM employees within a fairly short period of time (Silverman, 2005:99). Another advantage of using a cross-sectional survey design was that a representative sample was drawn from the study population; therefore, the results of the survey was generalised to the GTM workforce as a whole (Dash, 2005:35).

10. Research methods

10.1 Research population and sampling

The research was conducted at the GTM. Authorisation to conduct research at GTM was given by the Municipal Manager (Addendum B). The population of the study was all the GTM employees. In order to gather the information needed to attain the objectives of the study, the Human Resource Department was consulted in order to obtain a list of employees as per work level/position in the municipality. The GTM
had 689 employees composed of employees functioning at different levels, i.e. 10 directors, 30 managers, 45 supervisors and 604 first-line level employees.

The quantitative research paradigm offers researchers a variety of sampling methods. For the purpose of the investigation, probability sampling with stratified random procedures was used (Strydom, 2011:228). During probability or random sampling each person in the population had the same known probability of being selected, which gave the researcher an idea of an estimated sample size before the study commenced (Grinnell & Unrau, 2005:280). This kind of sampling was mainly used to ensure that the different groups (directors, managers, supervisors and first line level employees) of a population (GTM workforce) acquired sufficient representation in the sample (Creswell, 2003:156-157). Half of the directors (five respondents), managers (fifteen respondents) and supervisors (twenty-three respondents) were selected, as well as 15% of first-line level employees (60 respondents). Therefore, a total number of 103 respondents (15% of the total study population) were asked to participate in the study. This number is considered sufficient to undertake the necessary univariate and bivariate analyses of workforce morale at GTM.

10.2 Data collection

Since morale is an intangible concept, it cannot be directly evaluated but it has to be measured. The researcher used a structured instrument in which various indicators of morale were explored. Researchers who employ the quantitative research approach commonly use questionnaires as a method of gaining information from a large number of participants. To enable generalisation and quantification of the results, the researcher asked closed and open-ended questions and provided a range of choices for participants to comment on. The researcher chose to use self-administered and face-to-face questionnaires as methods of collecting data because she believes that questionnaires are very effective and time limited. This is especially true for studies involving large sample sizes and large geographic areas such as GTM which employs 689 people (Torrance, 2005: 58; Davis, 2000: 73; Delport & Roestenburg, 2011).
Questionnaire data are fairly easy to analyse. Data entry and tabulation of all the questionnaires can be easily done with relevant computer software packages or manually. The researcher chose to use survey questionnaires because most people are familiar with questionnaires and have experience in the past of completing questionnaires and/or being interviewed. Self-administered questionnaires generally do not make people apprehensive (Wacks, 2009:48). This was also true to GTM employees as they normally complete the client satisfactory survey on a six month basis.

Questionnaires have a further advantage of reducing bias. There is uniform question presentation and no “middle-man” bias. The researcher’s own opinion did not influence respondents to answer questions in a certain manner as there were no verbal or visual clues to influence them. Self-administered questionnaires, in particular, are less intrusive than telephone or face-to-face surveys. When a respondent receives a questionnaire, he/she is free to complete the questionnaire at his/her own time. Unlike other research methods, the respondent is not interrupted by the researcher or data gatherer while completing the questionnaire (Niglas, 2001: 89).

The researcher took note of the following disadvantages and challenges associated with using self-administered questionnaires as data gathering method (Patton: 2002: 66):

- The researcher cannot construe an intimate understanding of respondents’ individual circumstances and problems regarding the research topic.
- The instrument must be clear to prevent confusion or misunderstandings regarding the instructions to follow.
- Respondents may not wish to complete the questionnaire if they think it will not benefit them in any way, or if it takes too long to complete the questionnaire.
- The researcher has limited control over low response rates, although attempts (such as follow-up letters) can be made to improve response rates and the turn-around time of sending back completed questionnaires.
Self-administered questionnaires were distributed to the sampled directors, managers and supervisors. The instruments were delivered to their offices in a sealed envelope and they were requested to return the completed questionnaires (again in a sealed envelope) to the researcher. Since some of the first line level workers are not fully literate, face-to-face interviewing were needed to gather information from them. The researcher made use of field workers from Treatment Epidemiology Control (TEC). These data gatherers are not in the employ of GTM, but works for an NGO in the greater Tzaneen area where they educate employees about their health. The researcher has arranged with TEC that some of their field workers will assist in the gathering of information for the survey. It is envisaged that the quality of data will be increased when GTM employees are interviewed by persons not in the service of the municipality. Confidentiality was increased (fortunately, the TEC officials are very familiar with issues of confidentiality as they abide by the code of conduct for health counsellors). As such, data gathering did not raise any conflict of interest or ethical dilemmas for the researcher. The field workers were oriented to the purpose of the study prior to the collection of data. Guidelines for interviewing were also provided.

The researcher developed the questionnaire based on literature about workforce morale. The instrument comprised of eight sections with clear instructions for the different profiles of respondents. Demographic information and knowledge about workplace policies were gathered. The latter is of particular importance in obtaining information from directors and managers, hence a dedicated section for their experiences and views. The instrument covered the themes of work, communication, leadership, performance management, training and development.

10.3 Data analysis

Once respondents completed the questionnaires, the researcher analysed their responses manually. Quantitative data analysis involves a systematic approach to investigations, during which numerical data is collected and transformed (Patton, 2002:432). Both univariate and bivariate data analysis took place, which requires the description and explanation of findings. Variables that were used in bivariate analyses included biographical information such as population group, age, gender
and post level at GTM. Numerical data were represented in the form of tables and graphs.

10.4 Pilot study

A pilot study was undertaken to pre-test the measuring instrument, which involved carrying out all aspects of the total data collection process on a small scale (Grinnell & Unrau, 2005:336). The pilot test provided the researcher with the opportunity to detect and remedy any potential problems with the questionnaire. Shortfalls in the instrument may include questions that respondents do not understand; ambiguous questions; double-barrelled questions; and questions that will make respondents uncomfortable when answering. The researcher pilot tested the questionnaire with twelve respondents, three from each stratum involved. These completed questionnaires were not included in the final data base. There were no adaptations to questionnaires, based on the feedback from the pilot test.

11. Ethical considerations

Ethics are norms or standards of behaviour that guide moral choices about researchers’ behaviour and their relationships with others (Cliffs, 2011:88). A primary consideration in any study is to conduct the research in a responsible manner (Elliot & Lukes, 2008:103; Marshall & Batten, 2004:89). For the purpose of this study, the ethical issues discussed below were taken into consideration (Strydom, 2011:115–126; American Sociological Association, 2012):

11.1 Informed consent

The researcher selected respondents and distributed informed consent forms to respondents. The following elements were taken into consideration and explained clearly to the respondents in an informed consent letter:

- the purpose of the research, expected duration, and procedures;
their right to decline to participate and to withdraw from the research once participation has begun without any penalties;
reasonably foreseeable factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate such as potential risks, discomfort, or adverse effects;
any prospective research benefits;
limits of confidentiality;
incentives for respondents (none); and
whom to contact for questions about the research and research respondents’ rights.

Securing informed consent from respondents is a matter of fully disclosing the procedures of the proposed research to proceed with the study (American Sociological Association, 2012:17).

11.2 Violation of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

Anonymity refers to researchers analysing data without the possibility of contacting actual people who provided information (Ting-Toomey, 1994:56). Once the questionnaires have been returned, there are no specific traces to contact specific respondents, as the survey questionnaire is anonymous. For the purpose of this research, in order to protect the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, the researcher ensured that the instructions on how to complete the survey questionnaire were clearly indicated so that respondents who can read and write can complete them without asking questions. With the assistance of field workers, anonymity was stressed. Also, confidentiality is strengthened by field workers not being in the employ of GTM. Respondents were not requested to provide their names on questionnaires.

Raw data of the study was submitted to the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria for storage (15 years).
11.3 Publication of the findings

Respondents were informed that a copy of the report will be submitted to the Human Resource Department of GTM so that all participants may have access to it. The researcher is of the opinion that providing this report to participants will give them an opportunity to know how they have contributed towards the research findings. The researcher did ensure that the report is clear and that no one is deceived in terms of the findings.

11.4 Avoidance of harm

This ethical issue ensures that the research brings no harm to respondents. In order to avoid harm to respondents, the researcher informed respondents beforehand about the potential effect of the research to enable respondents to make their decision whether to continue participating in the research or to withdraw from it. There was no harm to respondents in the study.

11.5 Deception of respondents

Deception occurs when the respondents are told only part of the truth, or when the truth is fully compromised. The researcher is of the opinion that deception should not be used in an attempt to improve response rates. The respondents were given their informed consent form to sign before participating in the research. The researcher revealed all relevant information to respondents as deemed necessary, irrespective of whether the information influenced respondents about whether to participate or to withdraw. In this study there was no deception of respondents.

11.6 Action and competence of the researcher

The researcher was fully aware of her ethical responsibility regarding the respondents and the subject of workforce morale. The researcher was also aware of the values, norms and climate of GTM as she has been working there for almost four years; therefore, maintaining objectivity was not a challenge.
11.7 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation was clearly explained on the cover page of the questionnaire and in the informed consent letter.

12. Limitation of the study

No major problems or limitations had been experienced. Although the sample consisted of 103 from 869 (11.85%), the response rate was quite high; 100 out of 103 (97%). Due to the uniqueness of the specific setting, namely a local municipality with unique variables like specific working conditions, specific management and supervisory styles, it would not be appropriate to generalise the findings of the study which has a mini dissertation as part of a coursework programme.
CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW ON EMPLOYEE MORALE

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will look at conceptualising employee morale and the factors influencing the morale of employees in the workplace. The researcher will also discuss the importance of morale in the workplace, what causes morale and how the organisation can deal with these causes. In view of the challenges and consequences attached to morale in the workplace, through this study, the researcher aims to provide source of information to the Greater Tzaneen Municipality and other municipalities as a whole. The information provided by this study can be applied in addressing morale issues and other performance related issues. The purpose of the study is to obtain reliable information from employees in order to develop appropriate strategies for dealing with morale in the workplace in order to create a positive, supportive, secure, stimulating and productive healthy workplace environment.

2.2. Description and definition of morale

Morale is defined differently by different authors. The researcher will look at the definitions provided by two authors, i.e., Haddock and Seroka. These two authors define morale as an intangible concept which refers to how positive and supportive a group feels towards the organisation to which they belong, and the special feelings members of the group share with each other such as trust, self-worth, purpose, pride in oneself achievement, faith in leadership and organisational success. The definition also refers to the general level of confidence or optimism experienced by a person or a group of people, especially if it affects discipline and willingness (Haddock, 2010:58, Seroka 2009:55).

Morale is the state of mind or attitude of an individual or group towards the work and environment, meaning towards the superior, colleagues and goals of the organisation as well as the task assigned. A favourable attitude is an indication of
high morale, while an unfavourable attitude indicates low morale. Morale is an important factor which contributes to the willingness of people to work, leads to their happiness and determines their productivity. It is regarded as a significant variable which determines the success of an organisation. With high morale, people work willingly and enthusiastically towards the achievement of organizational goals. Furthermore, high morale leads people to attach greater importance to group goals as compared to their personal goals. It also reduces absenteeism and labour turnover. On the other hand, low morale leads to inefficiency, waste, low productivity, unrest and indiscipline among employees. The researcher is of the view that morale pertains to the attitude, mental and emotional well-being of an employee to the task he or she is expected to perform. Good morale is a state of well-being that stems from a sense of purpose and confidence in future. The researcher also believes that good morale depends on the role of conception, performance and satisfaction. Morale is intimately related to self-respect, which in turn, contributes to a positive self-image (Senge, 1990:55; Seroka, 2009:6; Haddock, 2010: 55).

Morale is more influenced from the top down (management) than from the bottom up (first line employees). There is no single factor that consistently explains good or poor morale; it is a combination of related factors and these factors result in good or poor morale (Finger, 2005:66). The researcher agrees with Finger (2005) by adding that morale may be thought of, not only as a group phenomenon but as an individual matter. Furthermore group morale depends on morale of each individual in a group. These concepts are the basis of morale in the organisation and its relevance in the organisational environment and its leadership. The researcher further indicates that morale is how individuals feel about their work and the organisation. If morale is low, participation is likely to be limited to doing what is required or otherwise expected. Conversely high morale suggests that individuals will participate with enthusiasm and a sense of commitment (Finger, 2005:66, David & Gary, 2010: 56)

2.3. The importance of morale in the workplace

Morale can be the fuel that drives an organisation forward; or the fuel that feeds the fires of employee discontent, poor performance and absenteeism (Ewton, 2007:55).
Neely (1999:55) explored the relationship between morale and productivity, as well as possible measures that a supervisor can take to improve employee morale. In the research the results revealed a pattern that links the productivity of employees with their level of morale (Neely, 1999:59). Ewton (2007:45) emphasises the fact that employee morale is associated with absenteeism, which has been reported to cost large businesses in the United States $760 000 per year in direct payroll costs, and even more when lower productivity, lost revenue, and other effects of low morale are considered. With low morale comes a high price tag. The Gallup Organisation (2007) estimates that there are 22 million actively disengaged employees costing the American economy as much as $350 billion dollars per year in lost productivity including absenteeism, illness and other problems all of which result in employees being unhappy at work, leading to low morale.

This can also be the case at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality where the organisation is experiencing a high rate of absenteeism, illnesses and high rate of incidents/injuries on duty which could lead to negative morale (GTM, OHS Annual Report, 2010, GTM, HR Annual Report, 2010). These indicators could translate into thousand of rands which the organisation is losing in replacing employees who are off from duty either due to illness or injury. Millett (2010:55) mentions six reasons why staff morale is important, which are:

- improved productivity;
- improved performance and creativity;
- reduced number of leave days;
- higher attention to details;
- a safer workplace; and
- increased quality of work.

High morale of employees leads to staff coming to work on time, improved communication, and reduced time wasted on office gossip, improved recruitment, retention and more creativity. The researcher is of the view that high morale can energise and improve productivity of employees and can create a positive working environment. Furthermore, unhappy employees are affected by aspects of the work environment, such as morale, motivation and lack of communication which are some
of the reasons cited for employees leaving organisations in South Africa. It is advisable for the organisations to determine the effects and causes of morale so that it can be effectively managed.

2.4. Factors resulting in low morale

Morale can have a detrimental effect on an organisation’s productivity. According to Dallas (2010:16) and Neely (1999:59), the factors discussed below are effects of low morale in the workplace;

- **High absenteeism**

A high incidence of workers not coming to work can have an effect on productivity in the workplace.

- **Customer complaints**

If employees work with customers on a regular basis and customers frequently complain, the effect could be damaging, as the organisation may lose many customers. Customer may cite examples of being treated rudely or indifferently or may complain about a lack of follow-up on a question or problem. This type of behaviour leads to dissatisfied customers and ultimately, a loss of business.

- **Poor attitude**

If he/she is openly hostile or bitter, an employee can display a bad attitude. He/she may not offer contributions during meetings or may be reluctant to help other employees. He/she may also display a lack of enthusiasm toward his/her job and may perform only the minimum duties that are required to maintain employment.

- **Poor work quality**

Poor quality of work can have an effect in the organisation, especially from a worker who was once a top performer. The worker may have been passed over for a promotion or is perhaps no longer challenged by his/her job and has lost interest. For newer employees it could be the result of inadequate training or a lack of understanding of the job requirements.
Another reason for low morale is poor leadership qualities of the immediate supervisor. A study of leadership in the Canadian workforce reported by Psychometrics Canada (2010) revealed that poor leadership has negative effects on employee morale. The study further advises that leaders should be more effective in addressing issues of morale, should talk less and listen more, establish clear expectations, have more informal interaction with staff, clearly communicate how the organisation plan to manage change, assign tasks to staff based on skills rather than office politics, hold people accountable, give employees more responsibility, overcome resistance to change, and defer to people with great expertise. The researcher agrees with the study conducted by Psychometrics Canada, by adding that some of the leadership skills that are critical in enhancing morale of employees are good communication, the ability to deal with change, manage people well, set goals and solve problems (Schuler, 2004:15, Psychometrics Canada, 2010: 48).

Stevens (2009:59) indicates that organisational culture and change both also affect employee morale and lower productivity. According to Stevens (2009:89), other factors resulting in low morale include leaders not serving as role-models, little or no accountability, lack of career and succession planning, too many silos and departmental infighting. White and White (2009) agree with the factors mentioned by Stevens by further claiming that leadership culture of command and control weighs heavily against employee morale. Distrust of management, poor interpersonal relations and inflexible working conditions could also affect the morale of employees in a negative way (Dye & Garman, 2006:89). Workforce Performance Solutions, (2006) further outlines that departmental closures, labour negotiations, contract disputes, high employee turnover rates, changes in leadership, unclear expectations and corporate directions could also cause low morale of employees.

March and Simon( 1999: 68) emphasise that there is a correlation between morale and productivity, but Perrow (1986) disagrees by indicating that the two are not necessarily related, although common sense would seem to indicate that as one goes up, the other goes down. Perrow further strengthens his argument by citing an example that, people often hear that low morale of employees causes a low level of productivity. The researcher disagree with Perrow by indicating that this is not always true, the truth is that there are basic organisational problems leading to both
low productivity and low morale. These basic problems may be employees' lack of certainty about their jobs and the failure of employees to buy into the mission, statement and goals of the organization. It is evident from the literature that morale of employees is very important in the organisation and if not managed effectively, it could lead to adverse effects on productivity and the overall performance of the organisation (Mazin, 2010:59, DPSA, 2006:10).

2.5. Measures to put in place to avoid low morale in the work environment

Kaczmarczyk and Murtough (2002:170), indicate that there are measures which employers may put in place to avoid low morale of employees in the workplace. Those measures are listed below.

• **Good working conditions**

Good working conditions include the provision of health services, employee’s safety, welfare services, regulation of working hours and a proper wage policy. All these help in creating job interest among the employees.

• **Enlarging the Job**

Rotate employees so that they will not feel demoralised. Employees should be rotated frequently to various departments hence learning new skills pertaining to those departments.

• **Praising employees**

If employees are praised by their seniors about their job performance, then they have a sense of belonging and importance and it boosts their morale.

• **Freedom of employees**

Employees should be given freedom in their jobs. This makes them perform their work with confidence.
• **Good treatment of employees**

If managers and/or supervisors continuously interrupt employees when performing their job, employees may have a negative attitude. Managers should not abuse employees as this diminishes their respect which in turn leads to low morale.

• **Provision of financial and non-financial incentives**

When employees are assured of job security, given benefits, their social status recognised, credited for the work done, then they have satisfaction in their work which in turn leads to high morale.

• **Allowing employees to participate in management**

This is the most effective way of making employees work better and to eliminate negative attitudes towards their work. It creates confidence and a sense of belonging.

• **Solving employees’ grievances**

If the management is concerned in dealing with employees’ grievances, then low morale will be minimised.

• **Proper promotion of employees**

If employees are promoted without any prejudice, they have a positive attitude towards their job and the organisation, and this may increase their productivity.

### 2.6. Factors resulting in high morale

Topchik (2003:18); Ewton (2007:58) and Stevens (2009:26) identify factors which could lead to the promotion of good morale in the organisation and these authors mention that they are all consistent with the principles of leadership. Those factors are discussed below.
• **Objectives of the Organisation**

If the organisational goals are considered by the employees to be useful and important, morale generally tends to be high.

• **Leadership**

The effectiveness of a leader in providing a satisfactory work environment is another important factor in morale building. If leadership enables the subordinates to achieve their goals and aspirations, there is a positive impact on morale.

• **Group Members**

High morale also results from the nature and behaviour of co-workers in the group. If members of the work group are cooperative and there is mutual faith and understanding among them, morale is likely to be high.

• **Job Satisfaction**

The jobs assigned to employees are performed well if these employees derive personal satisfaction from the work they do and are proud of it. Satisfying jobs contribute towards high morale, particularly when the employees have opportunity for self-development.

• **Structure of organisation**

The organisational structure defines the lines of superior subordinate relations. If the authority and responsibility are clearly defined and there is free and frank communication between the superior and the subordinates, the situation is extremely conducive to building high morale.
• Compensation

Satisfactory levels of wages and salaries, as well as a system of rewards and incentives for higher efficiency, are basic requirements for employee satisfaction; thus the morale tends to be high when fair compensation and rewards are assured.

• Advancement and promotional opportunity

An organisation in which capable employees have opportunities for advancement in their career through promotion is highly preferred by ambitious people. The scope of promotion to a position of higher responsibility and remuneration is a positive factor that determines high morale among employees.

• Living Conditions and health

The living conditions of employees which contribute to their physical and mental health also affect morale indirectly. People who live under satisfactory conditions naturally have a better attitude towards their work thus leading to high morale.

• Working Environment

Conditions in the work place have a direct impact on morale. Provision for safety, health care, and welfare of employees help a great deal in building up their morale.

2.7. Measures to put in place to maintain high morale of employees in the workplace

Quinley (2003:87) and Lee (2006: 349) indicate that there are measures employers may put in place to maintain high workplace morale. Those factors are considered below.
• **Maintaining the implementation of health programmes**

Employers maintaining the implementing of health programmes for workers tend to have happier and healthy employees. Many employees find themselves worried about the cost of health care for themselves and their families. Employers taking an active role in setting up health care programmes show that they value their employees thus keeping morale high. At the same time, employers benefit from setting up health programmes by having lower absentee rates, as well as increased productivity and fewer workplace accidents.

• **Actively engaging employees**

Another way employers can maintain workplace morale is by actively engaging employees. Employees experience engagement when their input is sought and when recommendations and suggestions receive careful consideration. The Gallup survey revealed that employees who are given greater responsibility and freedom are more engaged at work than employees who are only given narrow limits.

• **Sustaining a workers’ committee**

Employers should create a committee consisting of employees at various levels, including managers, tasked with identifying safety concerns and possible solutions and the committee must be sustained at all times. They should give employees a time frame to formulate a list of concerns and recommendations. This will create a feeling of empowerment amongst employees, which will raise morale.

• **Publish internal articles**

Publishing an internal memo or document explaining what steps the organisation will be taking to address any safety concerns identified by the committee will surely sustain workers’ morale. The memo should explain that the safety of employees is a priority and taking action is critical, because failure to act, it will give an impression that employers are conveying the message that employee safety does not matter.
• **Maintaining safety Incentive programmes**

Incentive programme for employee cooperation in safety programmes or new measures aimed at increasing employee safety will boost employee morale in a positive way. The incentives could consist of recognition and that will almost certainly boost employee morale.

• **Conduct periodic safety training**

Employers should conduct periodic training to teach employees how to do their jobs as safely as possible, as well as explain important information such as how to deal with workplace violence or harassment.

• **Creating open door safety policy**

Creating open channels by which employees feel free to report safety issues as they arise will surely keep employee morale high. A safety suggestion box or designated safety manager can help create the feeling that the organisation truly cares about employees.

2.8. **Improving employee morale in the workplace to enhance productivity**

An unhappy employee is an unproductive employee. Businesses need to pursue policies to help their organisation become a more enjoyable place to work. Not only will employees start to look forward to their workdays, but the organisation itself will benefit from newly found efficiency. The researcher believes that leaders must show appreciation and boost employee morale by being friendly and interested in them. A warm smile and a sincere query about how one is doing will in turn motivate employees. The researcher further encourages employers to learn to know the names of employees as it will inspire them. Encouraging social interaction between employees and immediately resolving conflict is another way of enhancing productivity in the workplace (Bowles & Cooper, 2010:15; Stevens, 2009:159; Sankey, 2011:56).
Social interaction positively influences cooperation and a general enthusiasm about coming to work every day. Isolation, on the other hand, causes depression and a lack of motivation. The researcher believes that offering rewards in the form of incentives to well performing employees may boost employee morale, leading to an increase in productivity. Dealing with people and their productivity is a huge part of the responsibility assigned to all managers. Employees often find their morale affected by the management style of their supervisors. It is important for managers to realise that a one-size-fits-all approach to management is inadequate for the simple reason that all people are different. The researcher is of the view that different personalities respond to different management styles, therefore getting to know individual employees will help a manager determine how best to use various management controls to motivate different employees and boost their morale. This notion centers on the issue of communication. A close employee-management relationship opens the door for trust and familiarity between managers and their employees (Herzberg, 2003:19, Bruce, 1999:56).

In a study that explores the relationship between employee self-esteem and different types of management styles, referred to here as supervisor powers, Fedor et al., (2001:29) examine the uses of different powers, as:

- referent power (power based upon the manager’s attractive characteristics);
- expert power (power based upon the manager’s expertise and knowledge); and
- coercive power (power based on the manager’s ability to inflict aversive outcomes or punishments).

While hypothesis of the study of Fedor et al., reveals the use of coercive power as negatively affecting employee morale proved inconclusive, they were able to conclude that when supervisors exercised expert or referent power, both of which require effective communication to be successful, the impact on employee morale and self-esteem was positive. Tourish (2004:294) refers to another type of management style that is usually thought of as negatively affecting employees as micro managing. Tourish argues that micro-managing is the surest way to kill staff...
spirit and commitment and that managers need to clarify the goals and ground rules of the organisation. The researcher agrees with Tourish because the essential problem with micro-managing is that it does the opposite of empowering employees, as it makes them feel as if management does not trust them to perform their duties skillfully or accurately. The researcher is also of the view that this can be problematic especially for employees who report to managers who may be unfamiliar with their scope of work and therefore may not fully appreciate the skills, knowledge and services they brings to the organisation.

In order to improve employees’ productivity and morale, it is important for managers to allow employees to help set the organisational goals. According to Stevens (2009:03), employees will work harder to reach goals if they are involved in setting them and Schein (1992: 88), mentions that employees who are left out of the loop, especially when changes are going on, can be left feeling cynical about future endeavours, their supervisors and the company. The researcher agrees with the author because if employees are kept uninformed, they may also assume the worst that their jobs are at risk. Managers need to stress both the positive and negative aspects of change and be honest about the company’s future without necessarily lowering employee morale. Open communication should especially be a priority when introducing any new initiatives.

The researcher agrees that informed employees are happier employees as they function better because they feel like part of the team and adjust to change more easily. The researcher is also of the view that a work environment where management supports professional growth makes employees feel that the company is committed to them, hence uplifting their morale and productivity. Tourish (2004:294) states that employees are less focused on the immediate paycheck if they feel they work in an organisation that encourages growth and provides opportunities for training and education and skill improvement.

Tourish (2004:295) further urges managers not to reduce their education budget thereby creating a workplace that produces overworked employees who have no time for learning and reflection. Tourish elaborates that providing ample staff
development and training opportunities for employees can not only boost their morale, but also allows them to stay current in the ever-changing information. The researcher agrees with Tourish because keeping up with new technologies will help employees provide better service to their organisations. If management’s goal is to maintain high employee morale within their organization, part of the process will involve empowering employees to act independently when appropriate and providing them with adequate training opportunities. Giving employees the room to grow professionally which includes allowing them to make mistakes will increase their self-esteem and self-efficacy, thereby boosting their morale (Stevens, 2009:28). The majority of the issues related to worker productivity stem from enthusiasm or the lack thereof. Individuals simply go to work despite their abhorrence of their employer, the monotony and the products, hence there is no passion or pride (Sankey, 2011:15).
3. LITERATURE STUDY ON EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES WITHIN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

3.1. Introduction

During the early industrialisation period employees at work were treated as separate entities from their personal lives. This means that, whatever problems employees had at home were up to the employees to solve, and employers were not interested to associate work life and personal life. In South Africa, the new public management system has since its inception, increasingly acknowledged the impact of employees’ welfare on their working life.

This has been given further recognition by section 26(a) of the Local Government Act, now the Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000), which requires the municipality to place special emphasis on its most critical development and internal transformation needs, in the drafting of its Integrated Development Plan (IDP). Matlala (1999: 24) states that failure by organisations to adopt employee assistance programmes into their culture will inevitably lead to the escalation of sickness and the deterioration of organisational performance. The researcher will extensively discuss: the concept of the employee assistance programme, highlighting the typical dimensions of EAP by providing an overview of it within the context of local government, its legal mandate, goals and functions; secondly, the importance of the employee assistance programmes more specifically to local government employees’ and finally examples of employee assistance programme services extensively under the local government context in order to be able to establish formal guidelines to assist management and employees to manage morale in the workplace as one of the objectives of this study.

3.2. An overview of EAP in the local government

The new Public Management System emphasises the adoption of EAP by the Local government, i.e. municipalities. The researcher concur with the system act (No 32 of
2000) as the adoption of EAP will enable employees to be on par with service delivery without the interference of personal and/or family related problems. Many employers establishes employee assistance programme (EAPs) as they recognise the need to change the way employees’ problems are addressed. EAPs offer employers effective strategies to improve productivity in their organisation. Employee Assistance Programmes are employee benefit programmes offered by many employers and are intended to help employees deal with personal problems that may adversely impact their work performance, health and well-being. EAPs generally include assessment, short-term counseling and referral services for employees and their household members. Most organisations adopt an EAP in order to maintain a productive, effective and functional work environment (Hiatt, Hargrave & Palmtree, 1999:40; Bratton & Gold, 2007:503).

Hargrave and Hiatt (2004: 37) mention that one of the primary values of the EAP is the ability to deliver early intervention and timely problem resolution to significantly reduce the range of operation and health care costs to employers. EAP generally include short-term counselling and referral services for employees and their families. The researcher believes that EAP is an integral part of an organisation's risk improvement plan, which assists the organisation in minimising health and productivity problems. Organisations that implement EAP are in better place of seeing improved employee morale, increased productivity, lower absenteeism and lower overall health care utilization (Erfurt, 1992: 25; Attridge, Amaral & Mark, 2003:30; Hargrave & Hiatt, 2004: 40; Phillips, 2004:68).

Erasmus et al., (2005:89) mention examples for which EAPs in the local government provide support for, and those examples 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 relationship issues;
• work relationship issues; and
• concerns about aging parents.

The 2004 State of the Public Service (SOPS) report reveals that, HIV/AIDS, absenteeism due to sick leave threatens to place enormous pressure on the workplace. In 2005, the report revealed that 10% of public servants may be affected by HIV/AIDS. It was further observed and suggested that EAPs are still only weakly integrated into workplace programmes in the SOPS report of 2006, while the 2007 SOPS report suggests that a richer appreciation from human resources components is needed due to the strategic importance of their functions to the functioning of departments. Werner, Haasbroek and Schultz, (2008:98), mention that human resources is the greatest resource that any organisation can have, be it a public or private organisation. This is supported by the fact that all other resources in an organisation for example financial, materials and assets, require the attention of staff members or employees; without which the other resources become futile. The researcher however argues that the statement only holds water if human resources are well managed in the organisation. The 2008 SOPS report states that the scourge of troubled employees is a recurring challenge for the Public Service and that it needs to be addressed as the Public Service is the largest employer in the country (State of the Public Service Report, 2004-2008).

3.3. Definition of Employee Assistance Programme

The EAP has evolved over the years and the scope and range of services it covers can be witnessed in various definitions by different authors. The definitions which will be highlighted by the researcher will be presented to demonstrate how the EAP is defined in modern times and how the definitions have evolved over time. EAPA-SA (2010) mentions that Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) serve organisations and their employees in multiple ways, ranging from consultation at the strategic level about issues with organisation-wide implications to individual assistance to employees and family members experiencing personal difficulties. As workplace programmes, the structure and operation of each EAP varies with the structure, functioning, and needs of the organisation(s) it serves.
In general, an EAP is a set of professional services specifically designed:

- to improve and/or maintain the productivity and healthy functioning of the workplace and to address a work organisation’s particular business needs;
- through the application of specialised knowledge and expertise about human behaviour and mental health.

Some EAPs provide counselling services for employees and their families who need help with personal problems while maintaining the well-being and productivity of employees, providing confidential assistance and short-term counselling to those experiencing personal and/or work related problems. It is from these services that the researcher presents definitions of the EAP by two authors, EAPA-SA, 2010 and Nel et al., 2008.

The Employee Assistance Programme is a workplace programme designed to assist: (1) work organisations in addressing productivity issues, and (2) "employee clients" in identifying and resolving personal concerns, including health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal issues that may affect job performance EAPA-SA, 2010).

Nel et al., (2008:318) define an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) as a structured intervention that offers a broad range of services aimed at identifying individual problems, such as substance abuse and financial, relationship, and mental problems that adversely affect employee well-being and job performance. Although EAPs tend to take on different forms in different organisations, in local government they are broadly used as follows: deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic; reduce excessive substance abuse; eliminate all forms of harassment including sexual and racial harassment; and to avoid situations where there is a propensity for violence, conflict and rage (Nel et al., 2008:319).
These definitions outline the traditional EAP as they have occurred since its inception as a programme that deals with employees' problems that impact negatively on job performance. The definitions also deal with the legitimacy of employee's intervention to find solutions for employees with personal problems. Pravesh (2010) asserts that modern EAP definitions demonstrate the evolution of EAPs and reflects the modern workplace. Pravesh (2010) further mention that EAP has become broader in focus and range of services to a more proactive focus including not just the therapeutic services but also prevention and education; covering a range of bio-psychosocial and organisational productivity issues.

3.4. Importance of the EAP in the organisation

The role of the EAP has changed drastically since its inception, as previously was known as a programme for employees with alcohol problems. These days, the EAP assists employees with almost any behavioural and/or personal problems. EAP helps businesses and organisations address productivity issues by helping employees to identify and resolve personal concerns that affect job performance. Through prevention, identification and resolution of these issues, the EAPs enhance employee and workplace effectiveness and are a vital tool for maintaining and improving workers’ health and productivity, retaining valued employees and returning employees to work after illnesses or injuries (Phillips, 2004: 64; Mannion, 2004:76).

The Office of Disability Employment Policy (2010:55) highlights that employers have found proactive and preventive efforts to help employees identify and resolve personal issues before they have serious medical, family and/or workplace consequences as making financial and business sense. There are specific core activities of the EAP which represent the essential components of the Employee Assistance Profession. These specific core activities of EAP services include assessment, brief-focused consultation or referral for appropriate diagnosis, treatment and assistance. Additionally, the EAP may assist in the formation of linkages between employees, their families, and available community resources that provide necessary services, follow-up, and a wide range of employee support services (ODEP, 2010: 55, Phillips, 2004: 66, Mannion, 2004:86).
Rama (2011:66) mentions several reasons why organisations need EAP. The aspects of its importance are discussed below.

- **Improve productivity**

  Employee Assistance Programmes are designed to improve the productivity of employees. When an employee is dealing with personal issues such as mental illness, family problems or substance abuse, the result is often a drop in productivity at work. EAPs provide the company with prevention techniques, assessment protocols and health management services.

- **Reduce company costs**

  When an employee is suffering personally, it is likely that his/her work output will be affected too. The bottom line is when work output is impacted, the company incurs financial losses. Employee Assistance Programmes are designed to reduce the impact of the psycho-social or physical problems which employees face in order to reduce the financial impact on the company.

- **Increase company morale**

  A happy and healthy employee is a productive and effective one. EAPs ensure that employees are well taken care of as individuals in order to perform as part of the team. An EAP provides prevention and management services that ensure employees are happy and healthy. The added advantage is that employees know that the company supports them; therefore they feel a connection to the work they are doing and are more committed to achieving desirable results.

- **Reduce absenteeism**

  Absenteeism costs most organisations money and can be devastating to business. EAPs reduce the amount of time employees take off work. These programmes aim to provide a range of prevention and treatment options for employees and their families. In the event that time off work is required, the amount of that time is greatly reduced and the employee is able to return to work with renewed strength.
• **Reduce turnover**

A high turnover of employees can be costly for any company. EAPs effectively reduce the turnover of employees by managing work-related and personal stress. EAPs improve the working environment in terms of morale and company support, ensuring that employees are well looked after and less likely to leave their jobs.

• **Reduce accidents at work**

A person suffering from stress-related symptoms will often experience difficulty with concentration, mental focus and physical functioning, leading to accidents and/or incidents at work. This can be a dangerous combination in any environment. An EAP is equipped to prevent this from occurring or at least prevent it from recurring. EAPs look after the mental health and ability of employees ensuring that they are able to function at the required level.

• **Resolution of work-related problems**

External stress often results in a reduction in work-place performance. Problems within the working environment lead to absenteeism, high turnover and low morale. EAPs look after the physiological health of employees, developing strategies for coping with external stress as well as work-related stress. An EAP will help employees develop the skills they need to cope with all types of work-related stress and in turn this reduces the impact of work-related stress.

• **Improved work performance**

Companies employing the services of a professional EAP have not only experienced increases in productivity but also in the quality of work. Work performance is greatly
affected by stress and personal problems leading to decreased productivity. An EAP manages these problems and ensures employee issues are quickly resolved.

Dickman (1988: 7) mentions five major reasons for the organisation to implement EAP programme as being:

- cost reduction;
- rehabilitative rates;
- enhancement of labour management relations;
- no lose situation; and
- human aspects

3.5. The EAP’s legal mandates and its rationale

There are several laws which influence the development of the EAP and also for the organisation to avoid legal action. The following are some of the mentioned influential pieces of legislations.

- The Occupational Health and Safety Act, no 85 of 1993, states that an employer shall ensure that the workplace in which employees are working must be safe and without risk to their health and safety.
- The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, no 75 of 1997, highlights the basic conditions of employment for every employee, i.e. leave days, sick leaves, study leave, family responsibility leave, etc.
- The Skills Development Act, no 97 of 1998, promotes an improvement of quality of life for all workers, delivery of services and provides an employee with the opportunity to acquire new skills.

Organisations may be subjected to legal mandates should they fail to address the human resources. Many organisations adopt an EAP for several reasons. Sussal (1992:36) mentions that there is definitely money saved when an EAP is implemented in terms of recouping days formally lost due to absenteeism, medical
problems and incidents. Sussal further states that the success of the EAP in the workplace is dependent on having mutually co-operative interdependent relationship.

3.6. Goals and functions of EAP

Bruce (1990:123) lists EAP goals and also indicates that all EAPs share the following goals:

- to identify employees whose personal or health problems are interfering with their job performance;
- to motivate individuals to seek and accept appropriate help;
- to address underlying stresses in the workplace; and
- to assist both managers and employees in achieving health and productivity.

Core Technology Functions

Since EAP services are, by design, broad in scope, the following represents the Core technology functions of EAP service delivery as defined by the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA). These are

- consultation with, training of, and assistance to work organisation leadership (managers, supervisors and union stewards) seeking to manage the troubled employee, enhance the work environment and improve employee job performance; and outreach to and educate employees and their family members about availability of EAP services;
- confidential and timely problem identification/assessment services for employee participants with personal concerns that may affect job performance;
- use of constructive confrontation, motivation and short-term intervention with employee participants to address problems that affect job performance;
- referral of employee clients for diagnosis, treatment and assistance, plus case monitoring and follow-up service.
• consultation to work organisations in establishing and maintaining effective relations with treatment and other service providers and in managing provider contracts;
• consultation to work organisations to encourage availability of and employee access to employee health benefits covering medical and behavioural problems, including but not limited to, alcoholism, drug abuse, and mental and emotional disorders; and
• identification of the effects of EAP services on the work organisation and individual job performance.

3.7. EAP services

EAPs are unique in that they provide services to individual employees, family members and to the employer/work organisations as a whole. ODEP (2010) mentions the following services as applied to individuals and the organization.

EAP services to individuals include:

• mental health-related services and referrals;
• drug and alcohol related services and referrals;
• services and referrals related to personal issues such as divorce and parenting;
• information on work/life supports such as care giving for elderly parents and financial planning;
• wellness and health promotion services such as smoking cessation and weight reduction; and
• work-related supports like career counselling.

EAP services to organisations include:

• education and handling mental health, stress and addictions in the workplace;
• addressing workplace violence;
• safety and emergency preparedness;
• guidance on communicating in difficult situations, such as mergers, layoffs, or when employees die on the job;
• absence management; and
• meeting needs of specific workers such as those returning of a sick employee.

The researcher is of the view that many employers are actively integrating services and resources to support overall employee physical and mental health. Employers also expand EAP services to include disease management, preventive health and coordination with a broad range of other work/life and human resource initiatives.

3.8. Benefits of EAP

The EAP in the organisation benefits everyone, i.e. management, union and employees. The implementation of an EAP in the workplace provides a unique opportunity for improving employee morale and the existing mental health system. An improved mental health system will benefit not only employees, but the organisation as well.

Klarreich, et al., (1985:381) and Van den berg (2000:16) stipulate the benefits of EAP to employees, employer and the organisation as discussed below.

3.8.1. Benefits of an EAP to organisations

3.8.1.1 Cost effectiveness

The major rationale for the EAP lies in its cost savings to an organisation in terms of lost productivity, medical expenses and abuse of leave, such as sick leave. Managers and supervisors spend much time in disciplinary hearings trying to work out what to do with a troubled employee, but instead could use the EAP to save time. Managers may assist employees through the EAP instead of terminating his/her services.
3.8.1.2 Enhance corporate image

The implementation of an EAP in the organisation conveys a positive message about the organisation, as it shows that the organisation has social responsibility towards its employees.

3.8.2 Benefits of an EAP to management

The EAP assists management in identifying, confronting and treating employees with personal, emotional and social problems. It provides employers with the opportunity to assist employees to address their problems. The EAP reinforces basic management principles, particularly those relating to supervisory roles and responsibilities. It must be noted that, because employers are concerned with control of job performance standards, the EAP provides a supplemental mechanism that reinforces basic management practices.

3.8.3 Improve labour management relations

Good behavioural health in the workplace is a positive influence on labour-management relationships, thereby increasing productivity, reducing employee turnover, and creating a sense of identity between employee and employer (Turner & Keegan, 2005:249). It is important that the union be involved when an EAP is introduced for them to be part of the programme. An agreement must be drawn up between labour and management on the policy and procedures of the EAP, in order to have a good relation between employers and union to minimise grievances, appeals and arbitrations.

3.8.4 Benefits of an EAP to employees

Van den berg (2000:23) mention that employees benefit from the EAP due to the following reasons.

- Employees are given a chance to rebuild their lives.
They have an option other than continuing living with the problem.
They have a chance to save their lives and those of their dependants.
They maintain a positive physical and mental condition.

3.8.5 Benefits of an EAP to union

According to Dickman et al., (1988:123) EAP is consistent with the union mission, which is to assist its members. When the union supports the EAP, it essentially portrays a caring attitude towards helping its members.

3.8.6 Increased co-operation

EAP involve key personnel through supervisory training. The training focuses on intervention techniques, referral procedures, signs to look for in a troubled employee, and reviews of company policies and procedure. When union and management work together to help troubled employees and their families through the effectiveness of an EAP, workers’ morale tends to increase and be more positive (Dickman et al., 1988:55).

3.8.7. Increased staff productivity

If employees are faced with problems, it can affect their concentration at work and can result in lower productivity and time off from work.

3.8.8. Prevention of small issues growing into big ones

Dealing with problems when they arise can prevent small problems growing into significant ones, which can lead to prolonged absenteeism.

3.8.9. Reduced staff turnover and absence

Having access to a confidential Helpline staffed by people who understand EAP helps people to address their problems more effectively and may help to improve staff productivity and morale.
4. LITERATURE STUDY ON THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYEES WITHIN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

4.1. Introduction

The Constitution of South Africa (act 108 of 1996) envisages a robust local government system, which can provide democratic and accountable government for local communities to ensure the provision of services to communities in a sustainable manner; promote social and economic development and promote a safe and healthy living environment for employees. The workplace environment impacts employee morale, productivity and engagement, both positively and negatively. Poor working conditions result in low morale.

The workplace environment in a majority of organisations is unsafe and unhealthy. These conditions include poorly designed workstations, unsuitable furniture, lack of ventilation, inappropriate lightning, excessive noise, insufficient safety measures in fire emergencies and lack of personal protective equipment. Employees working in such environment are vulnerable to occupational disease and it can impact on their performance and morale should safety factors not be addressed. The researcher is of the view that many organisations do not believe that employee safety can lead to low morale in the workplace, and low morale in turn can lead to decreased productivity and high employee turnover. Therefore; by showing employees that the organisation does care about their safety and taking tangible steps to improve safety, employers can also raise morale and, along with it, high productivity (The Constitution of South Africa, 1996: 151-164; Arnold, 1998:33; Richter, 2001:79; Prem, 2007:56).

4.2. Definition of a municipality and its function as the organ of state

The Municipal Systems Act (Act no 32 of 2000) defines the legal nature of municipalities as part of a system of co-operative government. It also clarifies the rights and duties of the municipal council, local communities, and the municipal administration (i.e. municipal employees). Clarifying the rights and obligations of
different parties is an important step towards strengthening the democratic contract at the local level. The Municipal Structures Act defines a municipality as the structures, political office bearers and administration of the municipality; a geographic area; and the community of the municipality. In other words, a municipality consists of a municipal institution (political and administrative structures), and the people who live in the local area. The term can also be used to refer to a local area which falls within a municipal boundary (Municipal Systems Act, 32 of 2000).

The municipal institution is an organ of state, which exercises legislative and executive powers. Municipal powers are exercised in a system of co-operative government which allows the three spheres of government to work together effectively. Matlala (1999) indicates that, to enable co-operative government, municipalities are consulted on a range of national and provincial issues. However, it is not always practical to consult hundreds of municipalities on an individual basis. Municipalities are therefore represented in national processes through organised local government. Municipalities participate in organised local government structures so that their views are represented in national processes. Participation in organised local government allows municipalities to draw on each other’s experiences and develop common approaches and find solutions to common problems (Reid, 2008:49).

4.3. Effective Municipal Governance

The effectiveness of municipal governance depends on a wide range of factors, and these include political, social and economic. It also depends upon the skills and motivations of its political leaders, officers, staff and other stakeholders. But structures, processes and resources are factors contributing to effectiveness. The key factor affecting municipal effectiveness is mainly performance (Myers, 2000:29; Bratton& Gold, 2007:44).
In terms of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, every municipality must establish a performance management system. The performance management system must be suited to the municipality’s circumstances and be in line with the priorities, objectives, indicators and targets contained in the municipal integrated development plan. With performance management, municipalities can monitor and measure performances of staff, the organisational culture, and the attitudes and practices which inform how municipal staff works on a daily basis. Municipalities must promote a culture of performance management in their structures, and staff in order to enhance organisational and employee morale. In other words, municipalities must encourage working practices which are economical, effective, efficient and accountable.

Performance management is an interactive process of setting targets, monitoring performance and taking steps to improve performance within the municipality. Bratton and Gold (2007:56) mention that performance management is the key component towards effectiveness at municipalities which can help municipalities to work more effectively towards meeting development challenges, as it allows them to assess the impact of the various strategies they are pursuing. It can also enhance accountability and a safer work environment, because it allows municipal councillors and staff to monitor whether they are receiving value for money spent on various services.

4.4. Municipal frameworks

Kleinman (2000:49) mentions that the critical areas that need to be addressed in order to promote effective working environment, conditions and municipal governance with transparency and accountability are as follows.

- Institutional Framework

The following aspects need to be addressed in order to have a functional organisation, e.g. constitutions, laws, by-laws, rules, regulations, power sharing and reporting relations between formal and informal institutions or organisations.
• Organisation Building framework

Municipal areas need to have a clear mission, vision and shared goals, defined roles and responsibilities, authorities, coordination and convergence mechanisms. Policies addressing systems-planning, decision-making, budgeting, information management, accountability and quality control systems. Leaders at municipal institutions must ensure that the staff members are equipped with the right skills and attention should also be given to key priorities and staffing, i.e. recruitment, promotion, performance development and appraisal, career planning, etc.

• Human resource development framework

This involves the development of quality personnel, knowledge and skills, designing incentives and disincentives, facilitating orientation and attitude, changes and motivation.

4.5. Roles and responsibilities

The Municipal Systems Act (Act 32 of 2000) states that a council may pass by-laws for their municipalities respecting the following matters:

- the safety, health and welfare of employees and the protection of people and property;
- activities of employees and non employees;
- nuisances, including unsightly property;
- transport and transportation systems;
- businesses, business activities and persons engaged in business;
- services provided by or on behalf of the municipality;
- public utilities;
- wild and domestic animals and activities in relation to them;
- the enforcement of by-laws.

The municipality must adopt appropriate procedures providing for fair, efficient, effective and transparent personnel administration, including:
• the recruitment, selection and appointment of persons as staff members;
• service conditions of staff;
• the supervision and management of staff;
• the monitoring, measuring and evaluating of performance of staff;
• the promotion and demotion of staff;
• the transfer of staff;
• grievance and disciplinary procedures;
• the investigation of allegations of misconduct and complaints against staff;
• the dismissal and retrenchment of staff.

These staff procedures must be consistent with applicable labour legislation, i.e. Labour Relation Act, 66 of 1995 Basic Conditions of an Employment Act, 1997 and Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993. The municipal manager must ensure that every staff member and every relevant trade union has easy access to copy of these staff procedures. Provision must be made to ensure that staff members who cannot read understand the municipality’s staff procedures. The researcher believes that giving staff these procedures to learn, will ensure transparency and trust between employer and employee, thus increasing morale.

4.6. Occupational Health and Safety at municipal levels

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OHS Act, 85 of 1993), employers are required to provide a safe workplace for their employees. Employees who are concerned about an unsafe condition may file a complaint with the Department of Labour (DOL), which will conduct an investigation and advise employers on how best can they comply.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 85 of 1993 and the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 both give employees the right to refuse to work in conditions they believe are unsafe. Employees must have a reasonable, good-faith belief that the work and workplace will be safe, and that the law protects them when they are at work. The researcher's view is that, though most employers are probably committed to employee safety, situations often occur that may jeopardise the safety and health of
employees. Fundamental or indirect problems may unintentionally arise that could affect the health and safety of employees and fellow co-workers.

Studies conducted by the United States Department of Labor show a link between workplace morale and workplace accidents. The researcher also believes that employers who desire to decrease accident rates and reduce workplace stress might improve worker morale to accomplish their goal. The researcher is also of the view that productivity diminishes due to workplace environment, meaning that the quality of the workplace environment impacts on the level of employee motivation and subsequently lowers their morale. Creating work environment in which employees are productive is essential in increasing profit for the organisation (Higg, 2002; 55; Buhter, 1997:02).

One of the earliest elements linking workplace accidents to decreased morale came from the Gallup Organisation. The Gallup Organisation created the Q12 survey (2010), based on twelve questions asked to employees. The results showed that workers with low morale, known as "disengaged workers," had more illnesses, accidents, felt less loyalty to their employers and produced less than workers with high morale. The Gallup Organisation designed the survey for quarterly use, keeping track of the data. The researcher conducting the survey found that as morale increased, accidents decreased and workers took fewer sick days and had a greater feeling of loyalty to their employers. The researcher is of the view that if increased morale reduces workplace accidents, employers looking to lower the number of workplace accidents should consider improving employee morale. The researcher further wish to highlight that one of the most effective ways to improve employee morale is by providing a safe working environment. When employees know that management cares about their safety their morale is likely to be better than that of those employees working for employers unconcerned with safety issues. At the same time, employees working in safer workplaces tend to have fewer accidents caused by disengaged employees (Gallup, 2010; US Department of Labor, 2000; Brad, 2008; Wayne, 2008).
4.7. Causes of workplace accidents

Unsafe working conditions often do not materialise overnight. Accidents and hazards in many cases evolve as a result of fundamental organisational problems. Other factors such as inexperienced and untrained workers operating equipment and business operations during environmental disruptions such as storms or earthquakes can also result in hazards on the job (Bureau of Labour Stats, 2007:15).

Unsafe acts such as the improper use of equipment, improper lifting, and inappropriate responses to potential accidents can contribute to hazards at work. Some behaviours of people in the work area can indirectly make the environment unsafe. Improper disposal of refuse can create a trip hazard while failure to maintain a vehicle can result in a crash. No matter what the source of the hazard is, workers should all take it upon themselves to report conditions that make the workplace unsafe (Finch & Phillips, 2005:89).

4.8. Steps to follow when reporting unsafe conditions

The following processes should be followed when reporting unsafe conditions as mentioned in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (85 of 1993: 8: a-g).

- **Take immediate action**

If an urgent hazardous condition occurs in the workplace, it must be reported immediately. Depending on the severity of the situation, employees may personally need to stand nearby to make sure people do not get hurt.

- **Follow procedures.**

Every organisation has its own procedure for reporting unsafe practices and conditions, therefore employers must ensure that every employee in the organisation is familiar with those procedures.
• **Contact the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).**

Employees have the right to report unsafe working conditions in their workplace or report employers who are not following the occupational health and safety procedures and standards. Reports can be made anonymously, although the law protects employees who report violations from job termination and other forms of victimisation. Should a hazardous situation occur, the Occupational Health and Safety Administrator must be contacted immediately and/or before the end of the shift, meaning before an employee can knock off, even if it is not a major incident, to ensure that it is recorded.
CHAPTER 3

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE MORALE OF EMPLOYEES AT THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of empirical data on factors influencing the morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality (GTM)

3.1 Introduction

In an attempt to explore factors influencing the morale of employees at the GTM, data was collected from a stratified random sample of employees at the GTM, with the inclusion of management employees. The samples were divided into four strata, i.e. directors, managers, supervisors and first-line level employees.

3.2 Research methodology

The type of research followed in this study was exploratory. The research design used was a randomised cross sectional-survey design. The researcher applied quantitative research as the research approach and a self-developed questionnaire as the data collection instrument. In order to facilitate the understanding of respondents, a clear instructions and motivation for completing questionnaire were highlighted on the front page of the questionnaire. The total population of the study consisted of 689 employees of GTM. A total sample size of 103 was drawn using stratified random sampling from the population representing all levels of employees at the GTM.

3.3 Pilot study

According to Williman (2005:282), it is necessary to pre-test a questionnaire on a small number of people, in order to ensure that there are no problems of comprehension or any other source of confusion. For this study, the researcher pilot tested the questionnaire with 12 respondents, three from each strata involved. The
12 respondents were contacted in advance and given questionnaire by the researcher to confirm their understanding of and ability to answer the questions.

De Vos (2005:205) highlights that a pilot study can be used to ensure that the procedures are suitable, valid, reliable, effective, and free from problems and errors. De Vos further states that pilot study serves as a precautionary measure to avoid or solve problems that may arise from the study. No modifications to the questionnaire were introduced and the researcher applied the questionnaire in its original format to the main study.

3.4 Description of empirical survey

Data was gathered from 103 employees of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. For those who could not read and write, questionnaires were distributed via TEC workers during October 2012 for completion. Of the 103 questionnaires distributed 100 were returned fully completed.

3.5 Ethical issues addressed

- Informed consent

Respondents were requested to read the informed consent letter carefully, to sign both copies, keep one, and return one with the completed questionnaire. In order to ensure confidentiality the respondents were asked not to attach the consent form to the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to return the completed questionnaires by dropping them at HR in a box marked OHS/EAP next to the secretary’s office, and consent forms in the box marked HR Suggestion Box next to the HR Manager’s office.

- Violation of privacy, confidentiality and anonymity

In order to protect the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of respondents, instructions on how to complete the survey questionnaire were clearly indicated so that respondents who could read and write could complete them without asking questions. With the assistance of field workers, respondent who could not read and
write were assisted and the anonymity was stressed with them. Confidentiality was also strengthened by the fact that field workers were not employees of GTM. Respondents were requested not to provide their names on questionnaires.

- **Deception of respondents**

In this study no one was deceived. The researcher distributed the questionnaire with the informed consent letter and respondents had to make a decision to participate; no one was forced to participate by being promised to gain anything. The researcher revealed all necessary background information to respondents on the first page of the questionnaire as well as in the informed consent letter.

- **Voluntary participation**

All respondents who participated to the study did that voluntarily. The researcher did not force any participation. The questionnaires were distributed and brought back without any need to remind respondents to return them.

3.6. Research findings

The questionnaire was divided into eight sections, supervisors and first line employees completed sections 1-7, while managers and directors completed only sections 1 and 8. The research findings are presented below.

3.6 SECTION 1

3.6.1 Demographic information

Altogether 103 questionnaires were distributed to employees of the GTM, and 100 questionnaires were returned back fully completed.

- **Demographic details**

As shown in Tables 1-5 the respondents’ data relates to job titles, gender, age, years in employ and sections in which they were working at the time.
Table 1: Number of respondent per job title

Question 1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First lines</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion on Table 1
The majority (60%) of respondents were first line employees, followed by supervisors at 23%. Managers and directors were in the minority, which was in line with the actual composition of the workforce.

Table 2: Gender

Question 1.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>3 (75%)</td>
<td>1 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>10 (77%)</td>
<td>3 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>10 (44%)</td>
<td>13 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First lines</td>
<td>41 (68%)</td>
<td>19 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64 (64%)</td>
<td>36 (36%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates that 64% of respondents were males and 36% were female. Most of the males, 68%; were from the first line level employees and most of the female, 32% were also from first line level employees. This could be attributed to the fact that most posts for first line employees are occupied by males as this work requires hard labour.
Table 3: Age of respondents

Question 1.3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>20-30</th>
<th>31-40</th>
<th>41-50</th>
<th>51-60</th>
<th>60+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>13(13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>3(3%)</td>
<td>11(11%)</td>
<td>5(5%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>23(23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First lines</td>
<td>6(6%)</td>
<td>33(33%)</td>
<td>12(12%)</td>
<td>7(7%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>60(60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ages of respondents were asked by the researcher in order to find the level of understanding of respondents on morale and other aspects of morale. From the information on table it is clear that the Greater Tzaneen Municipality have employed majority of employees which are within the ages of 31-40, therefore majority are not aged (too old) at GTM.

Table 4: Number of years in employ

Question 1.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>1-5</th>
<th>6-10</th>
<th>11-15</th>
<th>16-20</th>
<th>20+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N=100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>6(6%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>13(13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>9(9%)</td>
<td>6(6%)</td>
<td>3(3%)</td>
<td>3(3%)</td>
<td>23(23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First lines</td>
<td>19(19%)</td>
<td>15(15%)</td>
<td>6(6%)</td>
<td>14(14%)</td>
<td>6(6%)</td>
<td>60(60%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23(23%)</td>
<td>26(26%)</td>
<td>20(20%)</td>
<td>21(21%)</td>
<td>10(10%)</td>
<td>100(100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of the employees, 26%, had six to ten years working at the municipality. This could be due to the fact that GTM had lot of resignations.
Table 5: Section in which employees are working

Question 1.5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>MM</th>
<th>CFO</th>
<th>EE</th>
<th>ES</th>
<th>CS</th>
<th>Corp</th>
<th>PED</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Directors</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>3(3%)</td>
<td>4(4%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>5(5%)</td>
<td>5(5%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
<td>3(3%)</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First lines</td>
<td>1(1%)</td>
<td>5(5%)</td>
<td>12(12%)</td>
<td>18(18%)</td>
<td>21(21%)</td>
<td>0(0%)</td>
<td>3(3%)</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2(2%)</td>
<td>9(9%)</td>
<td>20(20%)</td>
<td>26(26%)</td>
<td>26(26%)</td>
<td>7(7%)</td>
<td>10(10%)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 indicates how respondents were selected using stratified random sampling. From the table, large numbers of respondents, 20%, 26% and 26% were from Electrical Engineering, Engineering Services, and Community Services respectively, which coincided with the fact that these departments employ the largest numbers of first line level employees.

3.7 SECTION 2

3.7.1 Work-related questions

Question 2.1, 1-17

Respondents were requested to indicate their level of satisfaction with regards to the following by responding by Yes or No:

Figure 1: Work-related morale. N=83
The graph above illustrates the following:

The concepts indicated in Figure 1 above reveal the importance of morale in the organisation and its relevance in the organisational environment and its leadership. Morale is more influenced from the top down (management) than from the bottom up (first line employees). There is no single factor that consistently explains good or poor morale; it is a combination of related factors and these factors result in good or poor morale (Finger, 2005:66).

- **Excitement and pride over work**

Data from Figure 1 clearly indicates that the majority of first line level employees do have morale problems. The results indicate that most 50(60%) of employees do not take pride in their own work and that their working circumstances in general are not challenging. Moreover, 66(79%) of respondents reported that their daily tasks are not exciting and this may have a detrimental effect on their morale. These percentages clearly indicate that there are indeed unfavourable attitudes among individuals and/or a group towards their work environment. David and Gary (2010:44) further indicate that morale is how individuals feel about their work and the organisation. The literature indicates that a favourable attitude is an indication of high morale, while an unfavourable attitude indicates low morale. The results clearly indicate that the attitudes of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality employees display low morale.

- **Atmosphere and supervisor support in the work environment**

The atmosphere in which employees are working could help in creating job motivation amongst employees. Data from Figure 1 indicates that the majority 62(74%) of employees are not satisfied with the atmosphere in which they are working. Tourish (2004:55) highlights that good working conditions help in creating job interest among the employees, which in turn boosts their morale. Furthermore, the results show that 63(76%) of respondents reveals that working relations between supervisors and themselves (employees) are not good, as they (employees) indicated that supervisors do not support employees in their work. The effectiveness of a leader and immediate supervisor support in the workplace helps in providing a good work environment and trust amongst employees (Stevens, 2009:14). Stevens
further emphasises that supervisor support, providing good working environment and favourable conditions to employees are other important factors in building morale.

- Management engagement, working conditions and employee recognition over work

Schein (2000:63) points out that, when employees are assured of job security, given benefits, their social status recognized when they are credited for the work done, their ideas and suggestions in the workplace taken into consideration, then they have satisfaction in their work which in turn leads to high morale. The aforementioned is not the case at the GTM as 43(51%) of responses received from the survey indicate that their own opinion does not count at work. The study further reveals that management does not engage with nor involve employees in any decision taken in the organisation, they just decide and give instruction for implementations. Management does not in any way recognise the importance of employees’ work and ideas to the building and/or purpose and goals of the organisation. One respondent indicated that ‘It discourages a lot to raise issues and only find out that they are being thrown into the delete basket. Managers do not value opinions from ordinary employees. You must hold a title before you can be heard’. The results also reveal that 70(84%) of employees are not satisfied with the conditions under which they are working, and Haddock (2010:66) indicates that creating good working conditions for employees will not only boost their morale but will make employees feel that the organisation truly cares about them. Haddock (2010:67) further advises that creating open channels by which employees feel free to report safety issues as they arise, will be sure to keep their morale high. A safety suggestion box or designated safety manager can help create the feeling that the organisation truly cares about employees.

- Quality of work

Poor quality of work can have an effect in the organisation, especially from a worker who was once a top performer. The worker may have been passed over for a promotion or is perhaps no longer challenged by his/her job and has lost interest (Dallas, 2010:16). The results of the study reveal exactly what Dallas is indicating, because 68(82%) of the respondents indicated that neither they nor their colleagues
are committed to doing quality work, while 12.0% responded that they do not know if their colleagues are committed to do quality work or not. Another respondent, wrote

‘All the things mentioned makes you feel that what is the use of even trying to do a good job and deliver a good service to the community because you are going to have to wait for weeks/months to get the job done - if at all. Everything you want to do is a struggle and service delivery is severely hampered. You are feeling ashamed to tell anyone you are working for the municipality because people have the perception that all people working for the municipality are lazy and don’t care about their work. They don’t realize the struggle it is to get your job done without the support from above (top management) and with limited resources’. The statement is also supported by the 68(81%) of respondents who indicated that they are not appreciated for the work they are doing and that managers never recognise and/or give praise for the good job done. If employees are praised by their seniors about their job performance, then they have a sense of belonging and importance and it boosts their morale (Kaczmarczyk & Murtough, 2002:170).

• Rewards, recognition and compensation

Nearly 76(91%) of respondents responded that they are not satisfied with the salaries they are getting and that they are not receiving compensation in any form for the extra mile they go in doing their work. Ewton (2007:58) indicates that satisfactory levels of wages and salaries, as well as a system of rewards and incentives for greater efficiency as part of employee compensation, are basic requirements for employee satisfaction. Thus morale tends to be high when fair compensation and rewards are assured.
3.8 SECTION 3-5

Question 3.1 – 5.5

3.8.1 Communication, Leadership and Performance management
Respondents were requested to indicate their level of satisfaction on the above mentioned topic by agreeing or strongly agreeing, disagreeing or strongly disagreeing and the results appear in Figure 2.
Figure 2: Communication, Leadership and Performance Management. N=83
FACTORS INFLUENCING THE MORALE OF EMPLOYEES AT THE GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Granny Matsaung, Masters Student from the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria, also the Occupational Health and Safety Officer of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

Granny Matsaung is sitting at the HR Department, office no: 2 and her contact details are as follows:

082 549 2782 (cell), 015 307 8388 (tell) and granny.matsaung@tzaneen.gov.za (e-mail).

The goal of the study is to determine factors influencing the morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

Please note the following:

- 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 for the answers you give.
Instructions

- Please rate the level of your satisfaction by making tick in the boxes of your choice.
- It will only take you 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire.
- Do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire.
- Managers and Directors to answer only section 1 & 8.
- First line employees to answer all questions up to section 7.
- Use a pen when completing the questionnaire.
- Please return your response to the HR Division in the box marked OHS/EAP next to the HR secretary’s office, not later than ________.

NB. You are requested to read the enclosed consent forms. Kindly sign both, return one simultaneously with the questionnaire and keep one for yourself. Ensure that the consent form is not attached to the questionnaire in order to ensure confidentiality. Drop the consent form in the box marked HR suggestion box next to the HR Manager’s office, HR 6.
Section 1

1. DEMOGRAPHICS
   1.1. Job title
   What is your job title at Greater Tzaneen Municipality?: ____________________________

   1.2. Gender
   Please state your gender: ____________________________

   1.3. Age
   How old are you?: ____________________________

   1.4. Years in employment
   How long have you been employed at Greater Tzaneen Municipality?: __________ years

   1.5. Section
   In which section are you working?: ____________________________

Section 2: Morale

Morale is the state of the spirits of an employee or group of employees as exhibited by confidence, cheerfulness, discipline, and willingness to perform assigned tasks.

Please mark Yes or No with a tick

2.1. Work

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Work questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Is your usual day at work challenging and exciting?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Are you proud of the work you do?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Does the atmosphere in you</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.2. Recognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13 In the past two months, have you received recognition or praise for doing a good job?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 Do you feel appreciated at work?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 2.3. Money

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Are you satisfied with the salary you get?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Do you feel that the money you get is enough to take care of your family?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Do you receive compensation for the good work you do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please describe your own morale and motivate your opinion:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Please describe morale in the workplace in general and motivate your opinion:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Any additional comments:

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

---

**Section 3: Communication in the department**

Communication is a two-way process of reaching mutual understanding, in which participants not only exchange information but also create and share meaning.

**Please tick the appropriate column**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1. Communication between you and your supervisor is good.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2. I know what is expected of me at work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3. I can talk to my supervisor with ease.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4. I can communicate freely in group meetings.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5. My supervisor communicates well with everyone.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6. I receive feedback regularly from my manager on the work I do.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7. My manager involves me in the goal setting of the organisation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8. My supervisor supports me whenever I need his support in my work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please comment: ____________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
Section 4: Leadership

Leadership is described as the process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.

Please tick the appropriate column

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1. My manager always encourages me to work harder.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2. In the organisation, we are encouraged to make recommendations to management.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3. I am encouraged to share ideas with management.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4. Management take note of what employees are suggesting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please comment: 

-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Section 5: Performance management

Performance management is the systematic process by which an organisation involves its employees, as individuals and members of a group, in improving organisational effectiveness in the accomplishment of the organisational mission and goals. Employee performance management includes:

- Planning work and setting expectations,
- Continually monitoring performance,
- Developing the capacity to perform,
- Periodically rating performance, and
- rewarding good performance.

Please tick the appropriate column

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.1. My supervisor has a clear understanding of my skills and abilities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2. I have received written performance criteria that hold me accountable and responsible for my work.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3. I am satisfied with the continuous feedback on my performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4. If I have a problem doing my job I know that my supervisor will help me solve it.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5. In the past twelve months my manager did talk to me about my performance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please comment: ____________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
Section 6. Training and development

Training and development refers to the training provided to employees to increase skills and knowledge.

**Please tick the appropriate column**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.1. During the past year, I did receive refresher training on how to perform my job well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2. in the past year I had the opportunity to grow and learn</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3. In the past year I did attend conference(s) related to what I do at work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please comment:

---------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------
---------------------------------------------------------------------
Section 7

General question

In a scale of 1-5, rate the following items in terms of its importance, based on its influence on your work morale.

Key: 1 – not at all important

2- Somewhat important

3 - Important

4- Quite important

5- Very important

Tick box of choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.1. Your salary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2. Knowing you do a good job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3. Being told you do a good job</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4. Rewards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5. Promotion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6. Training and Development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kindly provide us with recommendations on how your morale can be enhanced in the workplace.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Kindly provide us with recommendations on how the morale of the workforce can be enhanced in the workplace.

Thank you for taking this time to complete this questionnaire.
Section 8

NB: To be answered only by Directors and Managers

Please answer the following questions

8.1. Do you have a policy for assisting employees on personal issues that may affect their performance at work?

Answer and comment:

8.2. How do you resolve employees' work related problems?

Answer and comment:

8.3. How do you manage critical incidents at work?

Answer and comment:

8.4. Do you have measures in place for identifying employees experiencing personal problems which may impact their productivity?

Answer and comment:

8.5. How often do you conduct performance appraisal with first line employees?

Answer and comment:
8.6. How do you communicate issues such as future work prospects, success and failure of the organisation with employees?

Answer and comment: 

8.7. How do you enhance employee development in the organisation?

Answer: 

8.8. How do you manage absenteeism in the organisation?

Answer and comment: 

8.9. Have you ensured that regular reviews of working performance have been undertaken in the past year?

Answer and comment: 

Please rate the following (make a tick)

8.10. How would you rate employee motivation in the organisation?

- Above average ☐
- Average ☐
- Below average ☐

8.11. How would you rate the team working skills in the organisation?

- Excellent ☐
- Average ☐
• Below average □

Comments:

General questions/comments

8.12. How do you handle pressure in your work?

Answer and comment:

8.13. Is there anything management of the organisation can do to help employees to handle work related stress?

Answer and comment:

8.14. Please describe morale in the workplace in general and motivate your opinion:


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8.15. Kindly provide us with recommendations on how morale can be enhanced in the workplace.


Thank you for taking this time to complete this questionnaire.
To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that in May 2013 I did the proofreading and the language editing for the final chapters i.e. Chapters 3 and 4 of the dissertation of

RAESIBE GRANNY MATSAUNG
Student Number 10266888
Entitled Factors influencing the morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality

This document is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (EAP)
In the Faculty of Humanities in the Department of Social Work and Criminology
At the UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

I have now proofread and edited all the chapters of the work, but I have done this in sections rather than seeing the entire work in one piece. I have not edited the final list of references. This editing principally involves proofreading, language, style and grammar editing; and also checking the text for clarity of meaning, sequence of thought and expression and tenses. I have also noted any inconsistencies in thought, style or logic, and any ambiguities or repetitions of words and phrases, and have corrected those errors which creep into all writing. I have written the corrections on the hard copy and have returned the document to the author, who is responsible for inserting these. Please note that this confirmation refers only to editing of work done up to the date of this letter and does not include any changes which the author or the supervisor may make later.

May 2013

Bernice McNeil

Proprietor: Bernice McNeil BA Hons, NSTD

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5 September 2012

Dear Prof Lombard,

Project: Factors influencing the morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality
Researcher: RG Matsaung
Supervisor: Prof LS Terblanche
Department: Social Work and Criminology
Reference number: 10266888

I am pleased to be able to tell you that the above application was approved (with comment) by the Postgraduate Committee on 14 August 2012 and by the Research Ethics Committee on 30 August 2012. Data collection may therefore commence.

Please note that this approval is based on the assumption that the research will be carried out along the lines laid out in the proposal. Should the actual research depart significantly from the proposed research, it will be necessary to apply for a new research approval and ethical clearance.

The Committee requests you to convey this approval to the researcher.

We wish you success with the project.

Sincerely

Prof John Sharp
Chair: Postgraduate Committee &
Research Ethics Committee
Faculty of Humanities
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
e-mail: john.sharp@up.ac.za
10/01/2012

Our Ref: Prof Terblanche
Tel. 012 4203292
Fax. 0866287488
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Ref: Raesibe Granny Matsaung
Tel: 082 549 2782
Fax: 015 307 8380
E-mail: granny.matsaung@tzaneen.gov.za

The Municipal Manager
Greater Tzaneen Municipality
P.O Box 24
Tzaneen
0850

Dear Mrs TC Mametja

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PERFORM EMPIRICAL RESEARCH BY:
MRS R G MATSAUNG (10266888)

The above named student is registered for the following programme at the Department of Social Work and Criminology, University of Pretoria: M Soc Sci (EAP)

The student is required to write a mini-dissertation, resulting from a research project, under my supervision. The research will only proceed once a Departmental Research Panel and the Faculty Research Proposal and Ethics Committee have approved the proposal and the data collection instrument(s). The following information from the research proposal is shared with you, although a copy of the research proposal will be provided to you if needed:

- The envisaged title of the study is:
Factors influencing morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality: An Employee Assistance Perspective

- The goal of the study is:
To describe factors influencing employee’s morale at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

- The objectives of the study are:
• To investigate whether Greater Tzaneen Municipality employees experience low or high morale.
• To identify factors influencing morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality;
• To write guidelines for management, explaining ways to improve the morale of the employees.

• The envisaged target group of the study is:
  • 5 directors, 15 managers, 23 supervisors and 57 labourers

• The student wish to do the empirical part of the study through means of:
  • A survey according to a structured questionnaire

This request will not result in any demands on you or your staff. No costs will be incurred by this request. Possible benefit for your organization is summarised as follows:
• The findings and guidelines of this study will assist both employees and management to deal with the root cause in order to develop strategies to enhance and maintain the morale of employee;
• Employees with high morale will be more productive in the workplace.

The student undertakes responsibility to provide you with a copy of the final report, if required. It would be appreciated if you seriously consider and grant permission to the student to proceed with the project, at your earliest convenient date.

Kind regards

PROF L S TERBLANCHE
SUPERVISOR
GROTER TZANEEN MUNISIPALITEIT
GREATER TZANEEN MUNICIPALITY

18/01/2012

Ref: Municipal Manager’s Office

University Of Pretoria
Faculty of Humanities
Department of Social Work & Criminology
Pretoria
0001

PERMISSION TO PERFORM EMPIRICAL RESEARCH: MATSAUNG
R.G (10266888)

Your letter dated 10/01/2012 refers. Kindly note that permission is granted/ revised for Mrs R.G Matsaung to conduct empirical research at Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

Kind regards

Mrs. TC Mametja
Municipal Manager

© University of Pretoria
25 September 2012

Ms RG Matsaung
PO Box 1026
TZANEEN
0850

Dear Ms Matsaung

TITLE REGISTRATION: FIELD OF STUDY – MSOCSCI IN EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES

I have pleasure in informing you that the following has been approved:

TITLE: Factors Influencing the morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality

SUPERVISOR: Prof LS Terblanche

I would like to draw your attention to the following:

1. ENROLMENT PERIOD
   (a) You must be enrolled as a student for at least one academic year before submission of your dissertation/essay.
   (b) Your enrolment as a student must be renewed annually before 31 March, until you have complied with all the requirements for the degree. You will only be able to have supervision if you provide a proof of registration to your supervisor.

2. APPROVAL FOR SUBMISSION
   On completion of your dissertation/essay enough copies for each examiner must be submitted to Student Administration, together with the prescribed examination enrolment form signed by you, which includes a statement by your director of studies that he/she approves of the submission of your dissertation/essay.

3. NOTIFICATION BEFORE SUBMISSION
   You are required to notify me at least three months in advance of your intention to submit your dissertation/essay for examination.

4. INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING THE PREPARATION OF THE DISSERTATION/ESSAY AND THE SUMMARY APPEAR ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS LETTER.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

for DEAN: FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
10/01/2012

Our Ref: Prof Terblanche
Tel. 012 4203292
Fax. 0866287488
Email: lourie.terblanche@up.ac.za

Ref: Raesibe Granny Matsaung
Tel: 082 549 2782
Fax: 015 367 6330
E-mail: granny.matsaung@tzaneen.gov.za

INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

Dear Respondent

You are invited to participate in an academic research study conducted by Granny Matsaung, Master's student from the Department of Social Work and Criminology at the University of Pretoria.

**Title of the study:** Factors influencing morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

The purpose of the study is to determine the organisational factors which may influence the morale of employees, be it negative (low morale) or positive (high morale).

Please note the following:

- 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 for the answers you give.

**NB.** Kindly note that consent cannot be withdrawn once the questionnaire has been submitted as there is no way to trace the particular questionnaire that has been filled.

Your participation in this study is very important. You may, however, choose not to participate and you may also stop participating at any time without any negative consequences. You will not receive any payment for participating in this study.

Please note that questionnaire will be send to you in due course, complete the questionnaire as honest as possible and drop in the suggestion box on your floor or in the...
HR Department marked 'OHS/EAP'. Completion should not take more than 10 minutes of your time.

The results of this study will be used for academic purpose and may be published in an academic journal and be displayed in the Library of the Greater Tzaneen Municipality. We will provide you with the summary of the findings on request. Raw data from the study will be stored at the University of Pretoria for a period of fifteen years from completion of the study.

Please contact my study supervisor Prof L.S.Terblanche at lourie.terblanche@up.ac.za, if you have any questions or comments regarding the study.

Please sign the form to indicate that:

- You have read and understand the information provided below.
- You give your consent to participate in the study on a voluntary basis.

________________________________________  ____________________________
Respondent's signature                     Date
Declaration of consent

I have read and understood the information provided above. I therefore consent voluntarily to participate in the study: Factors influencing morale of employees at the Greater Tzaneen Municipality.

Name of participant:-------------------------------------

Signature:-----------------------------------------------

Date:--------------------------------------------------

Name of researcher:-------------------------------------

Signature:-----------------------------------------------

Date:--------------------------------------------------
The graph below illustrates the following:

- **Communication in the workplace**

Figure 2 reveals the importance of communication and good leadership in the organisation in order to eliminate morale issues. One cause of conflict and low morale at work is the way people communicate with each other, and particularly the way managers communicate with their subordinates (Haddock, 2010:59). The results in Figure 2 clearly indicate that communication at the GTM is a problem. This is shown by 44(53%) of respondents who disagree that communication with their supervisors is good.

Senge (1990:49) and Seroka (2009:73) indicate that employee morale, job satisfaction and employee engagement issues have one thing in common, i.e. communication. Seroka (2009) further asserts that employees who receive regular workplace communication feel the company appreciates and values their contributions enough to keep them informed about organisational changes, workplace policies, company success and other matters about the business and the overall workplace. One respondent commented by saying ‘**I believe communication is one of the useful tools to improve productivity and employee morale within the workplace. Without communication there is no way we can achieve organisational/departmental goals**’. Implementing a communication system requires understanding workforce needs, current communication deficiencies and consistent improvements aimed at developing workplace communication (Seroka, 2009:47).

- **Regular feedback of employees from management and support**

Terri (2009:14) advises that managers should not underestimate the power that praise has on employee morale. When employees are complimented and given regular feedback on how they progress with their work they get a warm, fuzzy, magical feeling inside especially if it comes from senior management. Terri adds that manager’s job becomes easier because positive reinforcement of actions gets those actions repeated. Terri confirmed the importance of praise but the majority of
respondents 55(66%) confirmed that they do not receive regular feedback. Arnold, (1993:57) supports what Terri is claiming by indicating that employees will begin to seek out more ways to earn praise by working harder and more productive, if management always show appreciation for what they do. Arnold further elaborates by saying 'Let staff know you take pride in them and their efforts, make a deal over success, and acknowledge successes openly'.

- Employee involvement and engagement on goal setting of the organisation

In order to improve employees’ productivity and morale, it is important for managers to allow employees to help set the organisational goals. According to Stevens (2009:03), employees will work harder to reach goals if they are involved in setting those goals. The results from the study in Figure 2 show that 68(81%) of respondents are not involved in the goal setting at the GTM and 79(95%) indicates that they are not engaged nor are they encouraged to work harder. Employee engagement is further stressed by the Gallup organisation (2007: 18) which indicates that another way employers can maintain workplace morale is by actively engaging employees. Employees experience engagement when their input is sought and when recommendations and suggestions receive careful consideration. A strong majority of GTM workers 73(87%) of respondents indicated that suggestions employees make are not taken into consideration. The Gallup survey further reveals that employees who are given greater responsibility and freedom are more engaged at work than employees who are only given narrow limits.

Figure 2 also shows that the majority 79(95%) of respondents are in strong disagreement that employees are encouraged to share ideas with management, this is followed by 73(87%) of respondents who also strongly disagree that they are encouraged to make recommendations to management. One respondent commented by saying ‘We are not even allowed to attend a simple thing like short listing and interviews for a labourer position in our division or team. Our recommendation/ideas are not important although we are the service division and know the work’. Kaczmarczyk and Murtough (2002:170) mention that allowing employees to participate in management is the most effective way of making
employees work better and of eliminating negative attitudes towards their work. It creates confidence and a sense of belonging, but this is not the case at the GTM when noting that a massive 79(95%) of respondents who say the opposite of what the authors mention.

- **Performance management**

Performance management is the key outcome of high morale that is the reason why it should be taken so seriously. Managing employee performance every day is the key to an effective performance management system which could lead to a more productive workforce with improved morale (Bruce, 1999:630). Results from Figure 2 reveal that 62(75%) of respondents indicated that they do not have written performance criteria which hold them accountable and responsible for their work. Bruce (1999) further elaborates by saying that setting goals, making sure one’s expectations are clear and providing frequent feedback all help employees perform most effectively. The results further reveals that the majority 55(66%) and 68(81%) state that they have not received any feedback on their performance and that their managers do not talk to them about their performance. One respondent commented by saying ‘**There is no performance management taking place in this municipality**’.

David and Gary (2010:66) highlight that, the employee’s performance review will give both the manager and the employee a snapshot of the employee’s overall performance over a specific time-frame. David and Gary (2010) further indicate that what is important about the employee performance review is that it reinforces what the expectations are, if they have been achieved and whether the employee has excelled in work over his/her peers in the workgroup. By implementing an effective performance management programme, the organisation can positively influence employee productivity and decrease organisational turnover which in turn will increase employee morale (Dallas, 2010:92). Another respondent commented by saying ‘**I for one like to know where I stand and if I am doing the job that is expected of me. I wish to excel and be a top performer, however, if I don’t know what the expectations or goals are, how do I know if I am meeting the performance that is expected of me? If I am not receiving periodic feedback**
on my performance with goals, standards, and expectations, how can my supervisor fairly rate my performance? Knowing what is expected of me and wanting to go beyond that, increases my satisfaction with my job and my morale within the organisation'. From the results in Figure 2 and the comments of respondents, it is clear that employees at GTM are eager for management to implement the performance management system.

3.9. SECTION 6

Question 6.1 – 6.3

3.9.1. Training and development of employees.
Respondents were requested to indicate their level of satisfaction with regard to training and their developments by answering yes or no.

Figure 3: Training and development
N= 83

- I did receive refresher training during the past year: 95%
- I had the opportunity to learn and grow in the past year: 96%
- I did attend conference(s) related to what I do at work in the past year: 80%

- Training and development of employees
Both employers and employees have a responsibility to create an atmosphere that encourages high morale. The employer can implement programmes and make an effort to recognise workers that go above and beyond the call of duty. Worker recognition programmes, incentives and training plans are worthwhile investments for increasing the morale in the workplace (Herzberg, 2003:82). Figure 3 highlights the importance of training in the development of employees at the GTM. The results in Figure 3 clearly indicate that training division at GTM has a lot of work to do, as the results from the study reveal that employees really need training. This is shown by 79(95.2%) of respondents indicating that they have not received refresher training in the past year. Hargrave and Hiatt (2004:86) indicates that most training programmes are designed to give employees the tools they need to do good jobs. This keeps employees motivated to do the best jobs possible. When organisations send seasoned employees to yearly training classes, it keeps them up to date on new organisational developments and also serves as a refresher course on the organisation's main principles and philosophies. This can help burned-out employees get back on track and eliminate bored and unproductive attitudes.

One respondent further commented by saying “I have never been to any training since I was employed but every week you find that when looking for your manager or director in the office they are not there, when you ask they are attending training or a workshop or conference in Johannesburg or Durban. Training at GTM is only meant for management because all they are interested in is travelling allowances, while we are suffering doing the job we are not trained in”. Tourish (2004:294) states that employees are less focused on the immediate pay check if they feel they work in an organisation that encourages growth and provides opportunities for training and education and skill improvement.

Tourish (2004:295) further urges managers not to reduce their education budget thereby creating a workplace that produces overworked employees who have no time for learning and reflection. The results in Figure 3 further reveal that 66(79.5%) of respondents indicate that they have not had the opportunity to attend conferences related to own work. Tourish (2004) advises that providing ample staff development and training opportunities for employees can not only boost their morale, but also allows them to be familiar with the ever-changing information. The majority
80(96.4%) of respondents also reveal that they have not had the opportunity to learn and grow in the past year. According to the Business Performance Management (2009), companies with good reputations know how to motivate and create team environments. Training programmes can help create a team atmosphere by teaching employees how to work together and how to solve problems as a group. Comprehensive training programmes also teach employees the proper company protocols, such as database management, and the company mission and statement. This helps to build confidence in the team, because team members can feel confident in their co-workers' skills.

3.10 Section 7

Question 7.1 – 7.6

3.10.1 Factors influencing workplace morale

Respondents were requested to rate the following items in terms of their importance, based on each item's influence on their work morale.

1. Salary;
2. Knowing they do a good job;
3. Being told they do a good job;
4. Rewards;
5. Promotion; and
6. Training and development.
Figure 4: Factors influencing workplace morale

N=83

Note: Responses in the following categories were combined for the purposes of this report as follows: Important, quite important and very important.

The results shown from Figure 4 indicate that the majority 72 (86%) of respondents indicated that the salary, training and development are the very important aspects in the workplace. These aspects correlate with the 96% of respondents who indicated in the survey that they had not had an opportunity to attend training and/or workshops related to what they do at work, and the 91% that responded that they are not satisfied with the salaries they are getting and that they are not receiving compensation in any form for the extra mile they go doing their work.

Figure 4 also reveal that the majority 70 (84%) and 67 (80%) of responded found it important to be told that they do a good job and being rewarded. As mentioned previously it is very important for managers to praise employees and/or show interest in what they do. A simple comment such as well done and/or good work will surely assist in improving employee morale. The results also show that promotion and...
knowing that they do a good job are both really quite important for them, this is revealed by the 52 (62%) and 19 (22%) of respondents respectively.

4. SECTION 8

4.1.1 Introduction

The researcher distributed the questionnaire to 20 respondents (5 Directors and 15 Managers) but only 17 (13 managers and 4 directors) responded. For the purpose of this study the researcher focused on the views of management regarding the systems within GTM and the respondents’ knowledge, understanding and effective use of different systems, i.e. OHS and EAP, training and development, recruitment and selection and performance management as well as the Human resource management system.

Question 8.1

Policy relating to resolving employees personal problems

N=17

The majority of respondents 15 (88%) indicated that they use EAP policy to guide them in dealing with employees who have problems including those that impact productivity. Erasmus et al., (2005: 68) highlights that many employees, at some point during their career, develop a personal problem for which they could use counselling or medical assistance. Erasmus further states that EAP is there to provide confidential professional help to employees facing personal problems that might impact on their performance, their health and well-being, the safety of other employees, or security. One respondent commented: ‘We do have EAP policy approved by Council which will guide us on how to deal with employees that have personal problems which may impact on their performance’. Nel et al., (2008:322) also mention that problems in the workplace can often be prevented by timely and appropriate response to warning signs that an individual is under stress or
having trouble handling personal problems. What the authors are indicating is in line with the goals of GTM EAP policy, which are as follows:

- to identify employee personal problems at an early stage before there is a serious impact on the job;
- to motivate employees to seek help through easy access to assessment and referral;
- to direct employees to the best source of help and high-quality providers;
- to limit health insurance costs through early intervention;
- to reduce workers' compensation claims by encouraging easy access to help; and
- to provide employees with support.

**Question 8.2**

**Figure 2: Resolution of employees’ personal work-related problems. N=17**

EAPs generally include short-term counselling and referral services for employees and their household members. The response rate of the survey shows that most 10
(58%) of management prefers to refer employees with work-related problems to EAP Office. The GTM EAP policy outlines the following types of referrals.

In an EAP, there are three types of referrals:

- self-referral where the employee seeks help on their own;
- informal referral where a supervisor, friend or co-worker recommends the EAP;

N.B. Please note that no record of these two types of referral will appear in the employee's personnel file.

The third type, i.e.

- formal referral is based on job performance and the supervisor recommends the EAP. This recommendation may or may not appear in the individual's personnel file depending on the situation. Often, no notation is made unless there is a need for formal disciplinary action. What is discussed during the sessions, however, will not be reported to the employer in either case.
Reporting an incident is an important part of an effective occupational health and safety programme. It helps identify work-related health and safety hazards, risks and dangers. The purpose is to identify the causes of incidents (Boshoff, SA Labour Guide, 2008:55). The majority of respondents 11 (64%) showed that they use OHS programme to guide them in dealing with critical incidents at work. One responded said ‘We use OHS policy and refer employees with critical injuries to the OHS Office’. This is also in line with the OHS Act, 85 of 1993, section 24 which identifies incidents which need to be reported as:

- when a person dies;
- when a person becomes unconscious;
- suffers the lost of a limb or part of a limb;
- is injured or becomes ill, or is likely to die or suffer permanent physical defect;
- unable to work for 14 days or longer because of a work related incident; and
- when a major incident occurs.
Question 8.4

Figure 4: Communicating issues such as future work prospects, success, and failure of the organisation with employees

From Figure 4, 12 (70%) of respondents stated that they do communicate such issues with employees during the divisional meetings. This is in line with Business Administration Organisation (2010:101) which stresses the importance of communication in the organisation, indicating that communication is important to organisations of any size. They further mention that if organisations want to promote communication, employee meetings are perfect for this task. The statement made by the Business Administration Organisation is confirmed by Haddock (2010:69) who says employee meetings provide the opportunity for employees and employers (i.e. managers) to sit down and discuss day-to-day operations, organisational goals and organisational concerns.

The results further reveal that 35% of respondents mentioned that they do ensure that regular reviews of working performance are done by discussing performance in
their departmental meeting. This is also in line with the article by the (Workforce 2009:66) that insists that managers must discuss ways in which the employee's performance exceeded, met or failed to meet expectations during their meetings.

Question 8.5

Figure 5: Enhancing employee development in the organisation. N=17

The majority of respondents 15 (82%) from Figure 5 indicated that the GTM management enhance employee development through training and development. One responded wrote ‘Training and development is one platform we use at the GTM through which we enhance employee development’. Surprisingly the statement and results received from management on training and development differ from the responses received from the employee survey which indicated a massive 96% who indicated that they had not had the opportunity to learn and grow, and 86% that indicated that training and development is very important to them.
The majority of respondents 11(64%) indicated that they manage absenteeism by using the Act. The SA Labour Guide indicate that the very basis of the employment contract (whether written or not) is that the employee has to:

- come to work; and
- be on time.

In order to perform the duties which he/she has been hired to do he/she must remain at the workstation for the contracted number of hours per day in order to perform the requisite duties. If the employee does not do that, he/she cannot fulfil his/her contractual obligation, and is therefore in breach of contract. This obligation, i.e. to come to work and stay on the job whilst at work; does not only come out of the Employment Contract. It arises also from three other sources: Common Law (e.g. LRA, BCEA), Statutes, and Company Rules and Regulations. Other respondents
(6%, 11% and 9%) mentioned using HR systems, EAP and no work no pay as other means of managing absenteeism in the workplace.

Question 8.7

Figure 7: Employee motivation in the organisation. N=17

Morale and motivation are two of the cornerstones of any successful business and accompanying work environment (Stevens, 2009:55). From Figure 7, nine (52%) of respondents indicated that motivation of employees at GTM is only average, while 35% show that it is below the average rate. Tourish (2004:23) further states that in the context of the workplace, motivation can be defined as the employee's intrinsic level of enthusiasm and drive to accomplish a job or task. As stated on humanresources.com, motivating employees about work is the combination of fulfilling the employee's needs and expectations from work and workplace factors that enable employee motivation.

One of the most effective methods of building morale and motivation in the workplace is for management to lead by example and demonstrate their commitment to the idea that business and its success are built on a partnership between them.
(management) and employees (Tourish, 2004:59). Employees need to be encouraged to share experiences and knowledge, share ideas and innovate. Management should encourage communication and ensure that there is a forum for discussion and training. All of these are excellent ways to boost morale and build motivation.

**Question 8.8**

**Figure 8: Team working skills in the organisation. N=17**

Skills improvement for employees often changes their ability to perform their jobs well. Figure 8 reveals that 11 (66%) of respondents indicated that the employees' team working skills at GTM is at an average rate (66%). With enhanced skills comes a greater capacity to adapt to change, to learn at work and to respond to competitive challenges. As a result, employees gain rewards and recognition from their employers in the form of better pay, promotion, job security and career opportunities (Kaczmarczyk and Murtough, 2002:182).

Kaczmarczyk and Murtough (2002) further mention the benefit of workplace employees' team working skills. They indicate that improving employees' basic team
working skills allows employees to complete the same tasks faster and more accurately, leading to:

- increased output of products and services;
- reduced time per task;
- reduced error rate;
- reduced wastage in production of products and services;
- better health and safety record; and
- increased quality of work.

The authors further highlight that better skills tend to improve employees’ attitude to work and their fellow workers and increases their willingness to learn new things on the job that tends to:

- improved employee morale/self-esteem;
- reduced absenteeism;
- increased retention of employees;
- better team performance;
- improved labour-management relations;
- improved ability to cope with change in the Workplace; and
- positive attitude to lifelong learning.

5. Summary

This chapter dealt with the empirical study on factors influencing the morale of employees at the GTM. The researcher discussed the results of the study based on the research question, which was done through reflection on the opinion of respondents to the questionnaire they were asked to complete. Gibson (2000:5) indicates that in a nomothetic approach to data analysis, the approach show the correlation between people, events, settings and explains them in terms of their common features. Gibson (2000) further emphasises that it is important to represent the views of respondents as accurately as possible.
The questionnaire which was distributed contained sections where respondents had to comment and motivate their answers, and then their response were analysed. The researcher did not in any way change the comments of respondents but presented them as they were written in the questionnaire. In the final analysis, the study provided the researcher with evidence that there are indeed morale problems amongst GTM employees and that these affect their work performance. These effects can be seen as having a negative influence on productivity and other service delivery.
CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will discuss the results gathered after exploring factors which influence morale of employees at the GTM. The goals and objectives of the study will also be commented on. The study focused on factors influencing the morale of employees at the GTM. Attention was focused also on different systems used within the GTM and an exploration of management's understanding of those systems. The researcher will further provide conclusions and recommendations as guidelines which could assist management and employees at the GTM to deal with morale in the workplace. This chapter will serve as the final evaluation of the research process and the results obtained.

4.2 Conclusions and recommendations

- Excitement and pride over work

Conclusion

The results indicated that majority of respondents do not take pride in the work they do nor are they excited about their daily tasks.

Recommendations

Not taking pride in what one does can be seen as having a detrimental effect on the organisational image. It is therefore recommended that management must show employees how important work is for success by occasionally holding meetings and seminars where employees can ask questions and look at the actual graph of the organisation’s growth for employees to see how important it is for them to take pride in what they do.
• **Atmosphere and supervisor support in the work environment**

Conclusion

How employees feel about their jobs is greatly influenced by the work environment and/or the atmosphere. The majority of respondents are not satisfied with the atmosphere in which they are working. Immediate supervisors’ support also acts as advocates for employees, in most cases by gathering and distributing the resources needed for employees to do their good job.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- management implement systems to ensure that employees develop satisfaction in the atmosphere under which they work; and
- management assist in training the first-line supervisors in the use of problem solving skills to address employee concerns and to display the interpersonal skills required to engage employees and enhance their self-confidence.

• **Management engagement, working conditions and employee recognition in their work**

Conclusion

Employees are the greatest asset of an organisation. Therefore, valueing their suggestions, thoughts and opinions can provide significant insights into organisational performance and achievements of its goals. The views assessed indicated how employees perceive their working conditions as well as recognition by management employees’ work. An analysis of survey responses showed that employees are concerned with aspects of management neither engaging nor valuing
their opinion within the organisation and this strongly relates to low employee morale. Overall, employees voiced concerns that management does not value what they suggest.

Recommendations

It is recommended that management take cognisance of what employees are suggesting, by implementing suggestion boxes. This will encourage and motivate employees should they see that what they have suggested is being implemented.

- **Quality of work**

Conclusion

An employees workplace environment is a key determinant of the quality of their work and his/her level of productivity. The quality of employees’ work also sets the tone of a workplace culture. The strong majority of respondents indicated that neither they nor their colleagues are committed to doing quality work.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- management implement and conduct an internal performance appraisal system for measuring employee performance; and
- train employees in problem solving skills.

- **Rewards, recognition and compensation**

Conclusion

Rewards, recognition and compensation are incentives that can help boost the morale of employees.
Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- management determine what motivates employees and set up formal and informal structures for rewarding employees. The GTM once had long service awards and recognition days; management should look into resuscitating these programmes in order to improve the morale of employees.

4.1.2 Communication, Leadership and Performance management

- Communication in the workplace

Conclusion

Communication is one of the most important work strategies that can be used within the workplace as it is used by everyone in the workplace at all times. Concerns about communication within the GTM were also found to contribute to a low morale among employees. Most respondents rated communication with co-workers and management as being very poor. Often, employees perceived that they received inconsistent answers about employee-related matters, policies and procedures and, at times, that their supervisors were not well versed in how to respond to their questions. In addition, employees described communication as “one-way,” with information flowing up to those in management positions, but little communication from management to staff.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- management and employees ensure that there is an open and clear communication channels in the workplace in order to build a more
productive environment. As part of this effort, management could provide training in communication skills to staff throughout the organisation.

• Regular feedback of employees from management and support

Conclusion

Employees who are regularly coached through feedback tend to develop a better self concept. They may take on new roles more easily and they typically have a higher level of job satisfaction than those employees who are left to guess whether they are on the right track. The majority of respondents revealed that they do not get regular feedback from management, which may hamper services delivery.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

• management implement effective feedback programmes to employees, either through day-to-day verbal or written communication with the employee.

• Employee involvement and engagement concerning goal setting of the organisation

Conclusion

Involving and engaging employees in the setting of goals in the organisation will help provide direction about the areas of importance of the organisation and individual careers. It offers an employee the opportunity to examine the current state of affairs and reflect on the possibilities for the future. A strong majority of respondents are not involved in goal setting at the GTM and they are neither engaged nor encouraged to work harder.
Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- management start involving employees in the goal setting of the organisation, as employees work harder to reach goals if they are involved in setting those same goals.

4.1.3. Performance management

- Performance appraisal system

Conclusion

Performance management is the key indicators in measuring how employees are doing in their work. The majority of respondents indicated that they do not have written performance criteria which hold them accountable and responsible for their work.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- management ensure that all employees have a written performance agreement which will hold them accountable in doing their work.

- **Employee satisfaction with continuous feedback from management**

Conclusion

Using performance management, one can ensure that one’s employees not only fulfil their responsibilities, but do so to the best of their abilities and up to one’s expectations. However the majority of respondents revealed that they have not receive any feedback from management.
Recommendations

It is recommended that:

• management implement the performance management system and ensure that they do give employees feedback on continuous basis.

• Employees’ performance reviews over the past 12 months

Conclusion

Performance management allows managers to tap the full potential of employees and can be described as a comprehensive process starting from monitoring and developing the desired traits to rating employees’ progress and rewarding them for their achievements.

Recommendation
It is recommended that:

• as soon as performance management is implemented, systems be put in place to ensure that performance management is reviewed continuously.

4.1.4. Training and development of employees

• Refresher trainings

Conclusion

Preventing work- related accidents and ill-health is a key priority for everyone at work. Employees are an asset to their organisations and when they are happy and in good health, any organisation can experience great profits. Employers are not
always aware of the importance of refresher courses and think these are unnecessary as workers have been doing their job for years. This might be the case at the GTM were many respondents indicated that they had not attended refresher trainings.

Refresher training is just a reminder that danger can still exist and since no one can escape accidents or injuries, they therefore have to understand the purpose and importance of these training programmes.

Recommendations
It is recommended that:

• the training and development section ensure that systems are in place for all employees to attend refresher training related to their work.

• Opportunity for employees to learn and grow

Conclusion
Training is crucial for any organisational development and success. It is beneficial to both employers and employees of any organisation. With a majority of respondents indicating that they have not had the opportunity to learn and grow in terms of being trained, it shows that GTM employees may not be efficient and productive in doing their work.

Recommendations
It is recommended that:

• management conduct a needs analysis on the training needs of employees for implementation by the training and development division.
• Attendance of workshops and seminars by employees on work related matters

Conclusion

Providing ample staff development is one way of boosting employees’ morale. However, the results revealed that a strong majority of respondents indicated that they had not had the opportunity to attend conferences related to their own work.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

• management together with the skills development facilitator of the GTM plan any allocation of resources in the organisation for training and development by looking at both the expense involved and Return On Investment.

4.1.4. Factors influencing workplace morale

• Salary, training & development

Conclusion

The results revealed that 86% of respondents identified salary, training and development as the most important aspect of their job.

Recommendation

It is recommended that:

Salary adjustment must be done and a training and development system be fully implemented.
• Employees being told they do a good job

Conclusion

The majority of respondents revealed that it is very important for them to be told that they do a good job.

Recommendations

It is recommended that management ensure that they do praise and congratulate employees for the good work they do.

4.2. Different systems at GTM

Conclusion

From the results it is very clear that management have a clear understanding of how systems works, i.e. OHS/EAP management, training and development, human resource, recruitment and selection and the retention management system. From the results, the majority indicated that they do engage with employees during divisional meetings. They refer employees with personal problems to EAP and with critical incidents to OHS. The question thus remains: Do employees know how these systems work? From the results majority of respondents from middle management and first line responded negatively.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

Employees be given sufficient information on how the following systems work in order to use the systems to their advantage:

- OHS Management system;
- Training and Development Management system;
• Recruitment and Selection Management system;
• Retention Management system;
• Human Resource Management system; and
• Performance Management Systems.

• Management of GTM must engage more with employees at lower level, by initiating monthly and/or quarterly meetings to listen to employees inputs.
• The performance management should be cascaded to all employees at GTM, i.e. middle management, first line level employees.
• Rewards and recognition (even if not in a form of money), should be provided to recognise employees for good job done. Rewards can be in the form of afternoon offs, meal vouchers, t-shirts and caps.
• Written performance for all employees should be in place and platforms be made available for feedback on regular basis, i.e. on quarterly or every six month to check how employees are progressing and whether there is room for improvements.
• Employees should be given sufficient information on work-related issues and life skills to enhance their social functioning.
• All supervisors should be trained in order to be able to conduct on the job training for first line employees.
• A formal policy regarding refresher training for all employees to enhance their skills must be formulated and implemented.

Employee morale is an important aspect for any organisation in that it can affect performance and productivity. From the empirical study, it is concluded that the question to the study ‘What are factors influencing the morale of employees at the GTM? has been answered as there are many factors revealed by respondents which are in line with factors influencing morale as shown in the literature study conducted. The results of the study has proven a positive relationship between expected rewards, training and development, performance management, promotion, salary, knowing they do a good job, being told they do a good job and morale
among the GTM employees, with monetary rewards (salary) exerting a greater influence on morale than non-monetary rewards. The researcher established that there is a strong correlation between performance management, communication, leadership, training and development with employee morale, as well as positive work attitudes.

The study confirmed the inter-relatedness of different sub-systems as effectively described in the systems’ theory, discussed in par. 3 on page 5 of this report.

**The objectives of the study were as follows:**

- The first objective was to describe and conceptualise employee morale and the factors influencing morale in the workplace. Through this study it has emerged that both management and employees have a role to play in enhancing the morale in the workplace, therefore this objective was achieved.
- The second was to identify the levels of work morale among GTM employees. This objective was achieved because it was discovered that employees at the GTM suffers low morale.
- The third objective was to explore factors influencing the morale of employees at the GTM. This objective was achieved.
- The final objective was to formulate formal guidelines to assist management and employees to manage morale in the workplace. This objective was achieved because there are recommendations put in place for employees and management to use as guidelines in order to manage and improve the morale in the workplace.
11. References


Dallas, P. 2010. Employee Morale is about more than pay. Morning newspaper.


Prem, C. 2007. The orderly workplace. An exploration into holistically disciplined work life. Macmillan Publisher: India


12. Annexures
Annexure A:

Proof of approval by postgraduate and ethics committee
Annexure B:

Approval to conduct research at GTM
Annexure C

Registration of title
Annexure D

Informed consent
Annexure E

Questionnaire
Annexure F

Editors’ letter