A Strategic Leadership Model for Policy Implementation

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ABSTRACT

South Africa suffers from a doubtful history of its ability to implement policies successfully. The disastrous effect of this legacy is that the apparent lack of expertise and excellence may lead to a complete loss of the institutional memory in terms of effectiveness and client satisfaction. Responsible and competent leadership is needed by managers who understand the complexities of policy implementation. They must weed out outdated practices the public sector is burdened with and do all they can to attract and retain competent managers who are able to put public service delivery on the track of excellence again. In the final analysis, the quality and impact of policy implementation will be given determined expression to by committed and competent leaders and those they lead.

In this article an effort will be made to present a model that will show that leadership and performance are influenced by the commitment and competencies of officials. The performances of people are stimulated by the ability of leaders to provide vision and direction and to influence, inspire and empower them to collectively achieve policy goals. Apart from the external impact (leadership) on their performance, successful implementation of policies also requires internally located driving forces, which, for purposes of this model include:

- *Commitment depends on a person's self-confidence and motivation. Strong leadership by managers boosts the self-confidence of junior staff and peoples' motivation is determined by their level of interest in their work and their enthusiasm.*
- *Competencies of employees in South Africa are affected by skills development legislation as well as existing skills development practices.*

A survey was done among staff members of different provincial government departments and municipalities in the Free State and North-West provinces

who attended the Advanced Management Development (AMDP) and Emerging Management and Development (EMDP) programmes under the auspices of the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA). The focus group members represented supervisors and managers at the junior and middle levels. The data was collected by means of 20 focus group meetings, comprising an average number of seven members each.

INTRODUCTION

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DYNAMICS OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The public policy implementation environment is much more nuanced and complex than what it seems to be at first sight. Often this underestimation of the complexity causes confusion among scholars and implementers of public policies. The blame for the level of confusion that exists within the public service, as to who should be doing what and how it should be done, cannot however be laid at the door of the policy implementation process *per se*. Almost all the functions of government that interface with civil society are extremely complex, but this does not mean they cannot be managed in a coherent fashion.

As much as South Africa is renowned for the progress it has made in the formulation of progressive legislation and other policies, there are concerns about the outcomes and

outputs of such policies and their effect on the quality of lives of people. This reflects an outdated *inputs-biased* rather than an *outcomes-oriented* approach, which means that the focus is on the quality of policy formulation (inputs) as opposed to the contemporary emphasis on the quality of the envisaged differences that the implementation of policies has on the lives of people (outcomes). The proximate cause for this is clearly human centred and could be blamed on two shortcomings, i.e.:

- from a scholarly perspective the question arises whether adequate attention is given to policy implementation as focus for research and in cases where such initiatives are taken, it is not a clear cut case whether they are indeed contributing factors to the enhancement of the quality of perceived outcomes; and
- from a practitioner's perspective the question about the availability of human capacity to turn plans into action is still unanswered.

Policy implementation research

Policy implementation research has, since its inception, during the early eighties struggled with the provocative and apparent still unsolved problem of synchronising policy goals and their outcomes. Another view-point is that research about policy implementation has been dominated by three characteristics (Terpstra and Havinga 2001:95-96). *Firstly* is the short term focus and fragmented attention to implementation *processes*. *Secondly* the tendency is to focus on the *rules* for and the *practices* and *styles* applied by public officials in the implementation of policies. *Thirdly* is the absence of *comparisons* among approaches, styles and practices of different institutions, sectors and countries. This state of affairs according to Ryan (1999:1), does not provide tools or structures to achieve "… rationality in policy (implementation) sciences" and, in particular practices of policy implementation. Whatever the approach, the main concern among policy scholars and implementers is to find out why and how the policy outcomes differ from the policy goals and objectives?

Policy implementation studies could be categorised in first and second generation efforts (Lester *et al.* 1987:201-203). First generation research focussed primarily on the obstacles in the way of implementation, while second generation studies aim at identifying successes and failures. The two generations have furthermore been classified in the following stages (Lester *et al.* 1987:201):

- *Case study generation*, which merely provided a description of the way in which certain decisions were carried out with limited appreciation for reasons why policies failed or succeeded. The focus on the identification barriers and was generally understood to imply that policies were seldom implemented successfully.
- *Development of policy implementation frameworks*, which assisted policy implementers and scholars to identify factors in support of successful implementation and those that have opposite effects on the process.
- *Application of policy frameworks*, which is known as the era of testing the implementation frameworks by means of empirical research. Van Horn, in Lester *et al.* (1987:205) contends that the lessons learned from this research were amongst others, that useful explanations for policy success and failure could be given and that time periods are essential in research of this nature.

- *Synthesis and revision,* which introduced a more critical approach towards the different models of policy implementation. One of these attempts was by Elmore (in Lester *et al.* 1987: 206) who emphasised the fact that the availability of resources and other policy instruments, such as organisational structures (Hindess in Ryan 1999:37) play an essential role in the realisation of the envisaged policy outcomes and outputs.

A study of contemporary research reveals that implementation is still the missing link in the public policy process (Robichau *et al.* 2009:2). Fundamentally the implementation of policies can be related to public sector performance, which is subsequently reflected in the impact of policy outputs and outcomes in communities. Outcomes can be defined as deliverables that bring about the envisaged changes in a community which adds value to the quality of lives of members of such community, e.g. the alleviation of poverty (Minnaar & Bekker 2005:125). Outputs relate to the quantifiable (in terms of quantity and quality) products of the activities performed by public career officials that bring about changes in the lives of recipients of government services to the extent it was foreseen the policy should accomplish, e.g. the creation of 500 permanent job opportunities (Minnaar & Bekker 2005:125). According to Robichau, *et al.* (2009:3) the distinction between outcomes and outputs could make improvements possible and be instrumental in the enhancement of public sector performance. The quality of individual and collective staff performances, therefore, reflects the level of institutional performance. These two can never be separated from one another neither can they be assessed in isolation.

It must also be borne in mind that employees performances are also dependent on other resources of which money could be regarded as indispensable. This emphasises the close link between policy implementation strategies and budgets. There are too many inexcusable examples in the public sector of non-alignment of the strategic outcomes of policies and budgets. In cases where such alignment does exist, it is often a case of artificial alignment for the sake of compliance rather than an effort to enhance excellence (Bekker 2009:4). This is a situation that can be attributed to poor planning, which again points to the human element in this process. Too many incidents occur where aspects such as administrative failures, poor decisions, inadequate leadership and ill discipline are to be blamed for poor performances. That is why bureaucratic incompetence is often central in discussions focussing on the reasons why policies failed (Hicklin, A 2009:4).

Human capacity to turn plans into actions

Adamus-Matuszyñska, A. (2001:256) adds value to the plethora of scholarly opinions about policy implementation in stating that success in this regard requires a disposition to take action rather than providing descriptions of what should be done. There is more to be read in this statement than what the meaning of the wording appears to be on the surface. Meeting this requirement demands amongst others a well performing (action-taking) workforce that is made up of committed and competent individuals. In addition, it needs a working environment that is shaped for excellence by strong and dynamic leadership.

Blanchard *et al.* (1994:49) argue that the commitment and competence of staff members are two essential prerequisites for the achievement and maintenance of excellence in their performances. Burke and Barron (2007:283) agree that officials' performances equal ability

Figure 1 Adopted from Blanchard Situational Leadership Theory
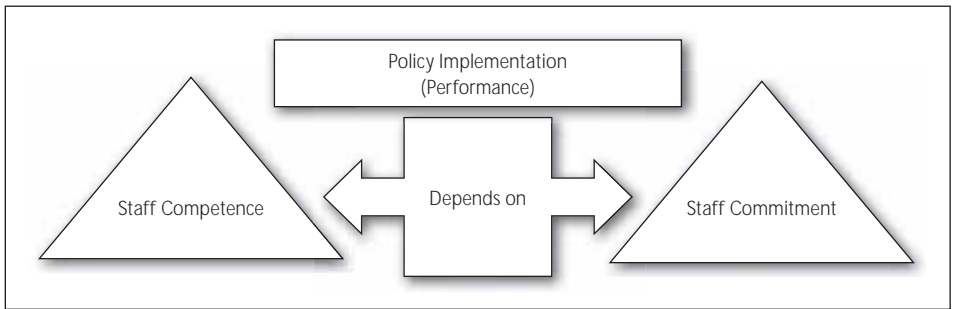
and commitment. This implies that the absence of either commitment or competence among staff members would undo any disposition to take action and subsequently prevent effective policy implementation. To prove the knowledge, skills and attitudes to be competent and committed individuals or teams, depends largely on the situational roles that leaders play. Hersey who is regarded as the father of situational leadership, argues that successful situational leaders assess the performances of others and take the responsibility for making things happen. Situational leadership has become one of the most popular approaches to leadership (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt 2003:247). This approach requires from leaders to adapt their leadership style in accordance with the willingness and ability of their team members. The willingness of workers to perform particular tasks depends on the maturity of their attitudes while the ability of a person is reflected in his/her maturity to perform assigned tasks. Collectively these types of maturity form the basis of the situational leadership model (Burke and Barron 2007:242).

As indicated later on in this article, managers who are serious about the quality of services to the public and who ensure that their subordinates' performances are regularly assessed would necessarily contribute towards the enhancement of their commitment and competence. However, the assessment of competence and commitment as isolated action will not solve policy implementation problems. It also requires the correct diagnosis of the causes for the competence and commitment challenges. Taking actions to successfully address these causes is the only way in which the challenges could be transformed into opportunities.

As mentioned in the introduction above, this article creates awareness of the opinions of practitioners with regard to the causes affecting their competence and commitment and therefore also their performances in policy implementation.

COMPETENCE AS PRE-REQUISITE FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Blanchard *et al.* (1994) describe competence as a "…function of knowledge and skills which can be gained from education, training and/or experience". Thus, competence is the end result of a combination of knowledge and skills. It enables exemplary job incumbents to perform in such a way that policy outputs and outcomes are achieved (Goldstein and Ford 2002:74). This implies that a leader should be able to identify the shortcomings of team

members and create opportunities for such team members to learn and develop in order to maximise their performances. A person's ability will therefore be the determining factor for his/her capability to acquire the required knowledge and skills.

Beebe *et al.* (2004:24) regard learning as a process of transformation – a change that takes place within an individual as a result of an interaction of some kind. Knowledge, skills and attitude are the three domains where learning can take place. In terms of Bloom's taxonomy (Beebe *et al* 2004:128) the learning that takes place by means of training should bring about fundamental changes in the behaviour of staff members.

Efforts that may contribute to the enhancement of staff competence could be divided into three distinctive, but also integrated processes. The first processes are those aiming at the appointment of knowledgeable and skilful, (competent) staff members. Second is the training and development of staff members who need additional knowledge and skills in order to be regarded as competent. In the third instance, processes should be in place to ensure that staff competence is sustained at the required level, which may include efforts to keep track with new policies and procedures. Further explanation of these process as well as the opinions of focus group members on the application of the processes are the following:

Appointment of Competent Staff

One way to enhance the appointment of competent employees is to ensure that the content of a job analysis is reflecting the skills and knowledge that are indeed required to execute tasks associated with a specific position and then to use such document as guiding mechanism to appoint the right person i.e. with the required competence. The introduction of a systematic and well-designed process of job analysis (Mondy 2002:87) will enable staff members to cope with the challenges they are facing and to attain policy outcomes and outputs through the proper implementation of the tasks that are bestowed upon them (Chelechele 2009:44-57).

For these and other reasons, care should be taken that job analysis does not become outdated. If job analysis is not aligned with the knowledge and skills required for the implementation of contemporary policies, strategies and procedures, there is no way that newly appointed employees could be regarded as competent (Mondy 2002:88). According to the respondents of this survey, the following challenges are experienced in the public sector:

- Job analysis is not amended in accordance with the changing demands of strategic plans. This has a cumulative affect on the products of job analysis, such as job descriptions and job specifications (job profiles). For this reason recruitment and selection of staff based on these job descriptions, often result in the appointment of persons with different competencies than what are required for the changing circumstances.
- The responsibility for the annual review of job analysis, job descriptions and job specifications is wrongly perceived to be that of the human resource divisions with the exclusion of line managers and supervisors. The correct approach should be to perform these functions as collaborative efforts of staff and line specialists.
- Instances were identified where job analysis is based on data collected for job evaluation. The risk in this regard is that although the levels of jobs and job titles

may be similar, the nature of the work and thus the required knowledge and skills to perform these jobs may differ substantially.

- It was also found that job specifications are more education orientated than skills and knowledge orientated. This subsequently leads to a stronger focus on qualifications rather than on the knowledge and skills factors.
- Job specifications are sometimes designed to fit the competencies of specific individuals rather than the requirements of the job itself.

According to Mondy (2002:119) recruitment is the process of attracting individuals with appropriate qualifications and encouraging them to apply for a job in an organisastion. The selection of staff aims at identifying the most suitable candidate for a position. This action is based on primary data such as job analyses, job descriptions and job specifications and any secondary data supplied by supervisors. Successful selection depends on many variables including the up-dated status and correctness of, amongst others, job analysis as well as the competency and commitment of the recruitment and selection of personnel.

The decision of an interview panel in respect of the appointment of a successful candidate, impacts directly on the performance of the incumbent and eventually on the quality of policy implementation. Obviously the first choice would be to appoint the candidate who scores the best against the selection criteria. However, as indicated in the paragraphs below, the application of employment equity is but one factor that might be a valid reason for deviations from the ideal situation.

The outcomes of the focus group discussions revealed the following challenges in respect of staff appointments:

- Under the veil of legitimate intervention, politicians often blatantly interfere with the recruitment and selection of staff. In the majority of such cases the officials who have been appointed because of this abuse of power, are failing to meet the requirement of possing relevant knowledge and skills to perform their tasks. For obvious reasons this places unnecessary burdens on the shoulders of supervisors and managers to achieve their targets. The differences in the levels of competence also complicate the equitable division of work among employees doing the same work.
- The application of employment equity also seems to be a hindering factor in the quest for competence in the public sector. In terms of Section 20 of the *Employment Equity Act,* 1998 (Act 55 of 1998) several factors such as prior learning, relevant experience and/or formal qualifications may be considered to determine whether a candidate could be regarded as a *suitably qualified person*. The one factor that could open the door for possible misuse is contained in Section 20(3)(d) of the Act, which stipulates that a person is regarded as "…suitably qualified as a result of her/his capacity to require, within a reasonable time, the ability to do the job". Section 20(4), which could be regarded as the shield against *mala fide* interpretations of Section 20(3), however requires from employers "…to *review* all the factors mentioned in Sub-section 3 and to *determine whether a person has the ability to do the job* in terms of any one or combination of the factors" (authors' emphases). According to the participants in focus group meetings, evidence reflecting purposeful *reviews* and objective efforts by employers to "determine whether a person has the ability to do the job" is noticeably absent. The effect of this is that there is a reasonable and equitable distribution of

designated persons in positions, but unfortunately it also contributes towards poor implementation of public policies.

- Focus group members are of the opinion that the compilation of interview panels for the selection of employees leaves much to be desired. Examples were given of persons serving on such panels who either are not qualified to do selection interviews or who are not committed to fulfil the task. It is often found that panellists are too person centred in their approaches during interviews, which means that the task oriented determination of competencies and fit with a candidate's knowledge and skills are completely neglected. Linked to these is the argument that certain applicants become skilful in interviewing techniques to the effect that inexperienced panellists can easily be beguiled by the false impressions made by such candidates.
- Another serious concern among focus group members is the fact that junior employees with less than two years experience in one provincial government department is appointed in promotional positions in another provincial government department. Job-hopping from one province to the other seems to have become the *fast-lane-for-promotion.*
- Finally it seems as if supervisors prefer to rather transfer an assumingly skilful and knowledgeable person from another department than to address the shortcomings of own team members by equipping them with the required knowledge and skills to qualify for promotion.

Development of Competence

The role of knowledge and skills development is to enhance an organisation's effectiveness by improving employees' performances (Blanchard & Thacker 1999:48). Many managers in the South African public sector regard human resource development (HRD) merely as a support function. For this reason there are many examples where HRD activities are isolated from the traditional line functions. This is often reflected in the inferior position of HRD in departmental and municipal strategy plans (Wexley & Latham 2002:9). The discussions among members of the focus groups indicated that HRD actions are more focussed on the attainment of the work place skills plan targets or deadlines as required by the Public Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETAs). The alignment of HRD and policy implementation, may be the cause why skills development as intended by the *Skills Development Act,* 1998 (Act 97 of 1998) and the National skills Development Strategy (2005) is failing South Africans. The model as reflected in Figure 1 above suggests that HRD should be directly linked to the implementing of policies.

Training is seen by Blanchard and Thacker (1999:85) as "...a systematic process of attempting to develop knowledge, skills and attitude (KSA) for current or future jobs and development refer to the learning of KSAs. That is, training provides the opportunity for learning, and development is the result of learning". Based on this point it is interesting to know how much emphasis and weight is placed on education as pre-requisite for positions and how little emphasis is placed on specific job KSAs. According to the focus group members the perceived challenges in existing procedures hindering the assurance of competence through education, training and development are the following:

- *Education*:
  - limited bursaries available to staff for studies at institutions of higher learning;
  - poor career guidance to staff before deciding on what to study;
  - poor motivation by managers and supervisors of staff who are studying; and
  - pressure on staff to perform under time restrictions has a negative impact on their study accomplishments.
- *Training and Development*:
  - low hierarchical level of the positions held by skills development facilitators weakens their ability to consult and negotiate with manager;
  - functions of skills development facilitators are regarded by managers as added-on, which leads to the appointment of incompetent functionaries;
  - agendas for labour forum meetings are being used for the discussion of irrelevant matters;
  - employment equity plans are merely regarded as mechanisms for the achievement of quotas, causing the neglect of the identification of the potential of persons to be developed as competent employees;
  - selection of candidates for training is not done in accordance with thorough training needs analysis resulting in persons being sent on courses that do not meet their needs, leading to ineffective training; and
  - no examples could be found where any studies on return on investment of training efforts were conducted, applicable to studies to determine the impact of training programmes.
- *Sustain competence:*

  Performance appraisal is one of the mechanisms that can be used for sustaining organisational competence. Boland & Fowler (2000:422) argue that two questions need to be answered in public sector performance improvement. *Firstly* is what is to be measured, thus what should an employee do and how good should he/she do what is expected? The competence needed by any job incumbent should be determined in order to improve performance. *Secondly* is what should the information arising from performance appraisals be used for and how? Tasks related to any position often need to be changed due to amendments in strategic objectives, technological changes, new initiatives or merely to find better and faster ways to perform tasks. This may cause staff not to be competent in some areas of their work. Performance depends on a person's commitment and competence. Thus the performance appraisal of an individual determines whether his/her commitment and competence are at a desired level. The manager of such an official has the opportunity to use the appropriate developmental needs for closing the performance gaps.

Responses of the focus groups on the challenges in performance appraisal affecting the assurance of staff competence revealed the following:

- managers are lacking the skills to do performance appraisals, resulting in incorrect application of appraisal processes;
- due to personal (hidden) agendas and political pressures managers are either too strict or too lenient in performance appraisals;
- managers and supervisors are biased in terms of ethical principles and racial, age, religion or gender differences;

- manipulation of evaluations because of sympathy towards staff with socio-economic problems;
- lack of planning and time management does not leave adequate time for in-depth evaluations; and
- in general, performance appraisals are regarded by employees as *bonus opportunities* and not as a leadership tool to ensure competence and commitment in positions.

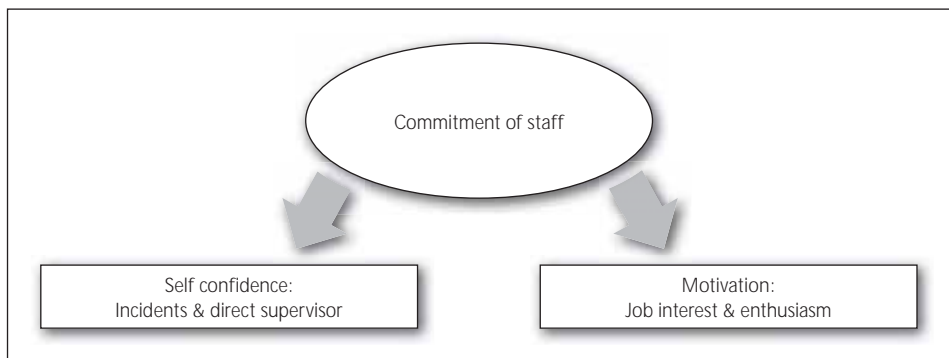## COMMITMENT AS PRE-REQUISITE FOR POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Commitment according to Blanchard *et al.* (1994:49) is the combination of self-confidence and motivation (See Figure 2 below). According to these authors, self-confidence is a measure of a person's self-assuredness or self-belief in his/her ability to perform a job or a specific task that forms part of his/her job. Commitment is the willingness and drive to complete a job (Burke & Barron 2007:362) Motivation comprises a person's "…enthusiasm and interest to do a task well" (Blanchard *et al.* 1994: 49).

A closer look at the different components of Figure 2 provides a thorough understanding of the meaning of each one of them, but also the interdependence and interrelatedness of these components.

Self-confidence

The effect of self- confidence on the motivation of team members to perform to the best of their physical and mental abilities forms the basis of many motivational theories. The cognitive dissonance theory of Festinger (in Swanepoel 2003:334) and the *Equity Theory* of Adams (in Swanepoel 2003: 335) presume that if employees' performances are poor or their perception is that their performances are poor, the chances are good that their performances would eventually also be poor. Swanepoel *et al.* (2003:335) state that "Vroom's expectancy theory of motivation holds that the tendency to act in a certain way depends on the strength of the expectation that the act will be followed by a given outcome, and on the degree to which the person desires that outcomes".

Figure 2 Adopted from Blanchard *et al.* (1994:49)

Commitment of staff

Self confidence:
Incidents & direct supervisor

Motivation:
Job interest & enthusiasm

Within the context of the so-called *Reinforcement Theory*, Swanepoel *et al.* (2003:334) conclude that managers who are confronted by the poor behaviour and performances of their subordinates might tend to blame themselves when the expected outcomes are not achieved. However, when exceptional behaviour and performances are not noticed and appropriately rewarded, it may result in a drop in self- confidence as the performer may believe that his/her efforts are not regarded to be *good enough*.

Walker (2002:101) contends that so-called *rookie managers* take too long to give feedback on staff performances. Long time lapses between performances and feedback might cause staff to believe that their performances were poor and this might in turn lead to low self- confidence. In the South African public sector feedback on the staff performances is given once a year. Because of the time lapse between performance appraisals, the feedback is therefore often experienced as criticism rather than developmental of nature or as an effort to provide support to employees. On the positive side, a study by Abualrub, & Al-Zaru, (2008:233) reveal that regular feedback and recognition of performance could have a negative effect on staff turnover. In a negative sense, Clark (2003:136) states that destructive and irregular feedback is a de-motivating factor. He concludes that timely and effective performance feedback closes the gap between staff performances and policy outcomes.

Walker (2002:99) adds to these views by stating that the projection of self-confidence by managers has an emulative effect on team members. He is of the opinion that managers who believe that a domineering management style is a reflection of self-confidence, are causing fear and uncertainty among team members, which result in low self-confidence. Indecisive managers and managers that are guilty of non-completion of tasks, leave the perception among team members that they are lacking self-confidence.

Findings of the survey referred to above, reflect the existence of similar opinions in respect of self-confidence as variable of commitment:

- The lack of people skills, such as leadership and communication skills among supervisors lead to subjectivity and favouritism, which on their part result in mistrust.
- Managers who lack leadership skills fail to develop skills of subordinates, but they are sometimes the first to judge and criticise their performances.
- Certain managers are criticizing subordinates under the false belief that their behaviour earn the respect of subordinates. This causes fear and a break-down in confidence among subordinates.
- Managers are sometimes guilty of being impatient with slow learners or subordinates who ask questions of clarification.
- Subordinates get the impression that their managers take all the credit for their outputs in good performances.
- Managers do not give credit to staff members when they deserve that and they also lack the skills or the will to celebrate the achievements of staff.
- Managers seem to feel threatened by good or outstanding performances by junior staff members.

These challenges, according to the respondents, impact negatively on the self-esteem and self-confidence of subordinates, which is subsequently evenly reflected in their commitment towards their tasks.

Motivation

When individuals accept a job without considering whether it matches their interests, it may inevitably result in poor motivation and subsequently failure (Mondy *et al.* 2002:176). In a country like South Africa where unemployment is unrealistically high, it is not unexpected if unemployed individuals take on jobs which are not necessarily their first choice. The challenge that develops from such practices is to keep such employees motivated. The responsibility to determine whether an applicant for a vacancy is indeed interested in a particular position ultimately lies with members of selection panels. The return on investment of appointing a person who is competent and committed justifies the introduction of selection processes that enable members of a selection panel to distinguish between applicants who have an interest in a specific position and those who have applied for other reasons.

The so-called career key is based on Holland's (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt 2003:91) theory of career choice. Robbins *et al* (2003:92) state that "…the theory argues that satisfaction is highest and turnover lowest when personality and occupation are in agreement." This theory explains work-related behaviour such as, career choices that are likely to lead to job success and satisfaction. The interest of people in positions might change over time. Reasons for such changes could be, amongst others, the fact that a person has outgrown the challenges of a job or that the job content has changed so much over a period of time that an incumbent loses interest in the job.

According to Holland's theory employees who choose to work in an environment that relates to their personality types are more likely to be confident, enthusiastic and motivated (Swanepoel *et al.* 2003:400) The concerns expressed in this regard by the focus group members are the following

- No examples could be given of mentoring and coaching opportunities available to employees.
- Departmental strategy objectives are changing frequently and drastically, causing job profiles to be out-dated.
- Workplace skills plans are not implemented effectively.
- Skills audits are not focusing on the fact that specific employees have lost interest in current jobs.
- Determining the interest of applicants in jobs that they apply for does not form part of the selection criteria during selection interviews. This leads to the appointment of possibly ambitious applicants, but who do not fit the requirements of a specific position, thus also lacking the passion to perform satisfactorily. Since job rotations do not take place in the workplace, such misplaced incumbents are sometimes stuck in such positions for long periods of time.

CONCLUSION

The successful implementation of public policies depends on externally as well as internally located driving forces. Leadership is regarded as the external driving force, while the commitment and competencies of individual staff members are regarded as the internal forces that facilitate successful policy implementation.

Commitment depends on a person's self-confidence and motivation. Strong leadership by managers boost the self-confidence of junior officials and employees' motivation are determined by their level of interest in their work and their enthusiasm. Competencies of officials in South Africa are affected by skills development legislation as well as existing skills development practices.

A survey was done among officials of different provincial government departments and municipalities in the Free State and North-West Provinces to determine the viewpoints of employees in respect of human resource practices that may affect their commitment as well as their competency levels. The survey revealed that in general, human resource practices in the institutions concerned are not always reconcilable with efforts to enhance the competence and commitment levels of employees. This state of affairs impacts negatively on the performances of officials in respect to the implementation of policies.

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