

**ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE, ORGANISATIONAL  
PRACTICES AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN A LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT**

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## REMARKS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The referencing as well as the editorial style as prescribed by the *Publication Manual* (5th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this thesis. This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North- West University (Potchefstroom Campus) to use the APA style in scientific documents.
- The thesis is submitted in the form of three research articles.

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**Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point**

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## SUMMARY

**Title:** Organisational climate, organisational practices and service delivery in a local government.

**Key Words:** Organisational climate, human resource management practices, service delivery, reliability, validity, municipality, organisational effectiveness, gender, service years, job level.

The success of any organisation depends on its ability to adapt to an ever-changing environment. In order to be able to adapt, an organisation needs visionary leadership, a management team that is passionate, professional and entrepreneurial, and employees that are engaged. With the right strategies, organisational practices and management the hidden value of an organisation can be unlocked. The traditional hierarchies in the organisation can be broken down in order to empower management teams to be more entrepreneurial. The right organisational climate should also be created to unleash potential.

As part of the business planning process and the drive to reconnect with citizens, to respond to the need to do things differently, to build new relations and to improve service, the municipality should continuously evaluate the human resource management practices in place, to determine whether they are sufficient and effective to enable it to achieve its objectives. Knowledge of organisational climate variables also enables management towards the accomplishment of organisational goals.

Local government is key to the realisation of a promise of a better life for all. It is therefore critical for its employees to always perform at their optimal, and adhere to all the principles of the Batho Pele when delivering service to the public. All the principles of this policy are intertwined and collectively guide all three spheres of government efforts in transforming and accelerating service delivery. Managers at all levels must support staff in service responsibility so that staff members feel valued, motivated, informed and challenged to put forth their best efforts on behalf of the people they serve. The objectives of this study were to determine the reliability and validity of the OCQ, the HRPQ, and the SSPPQ instruments, as well as to assess the relationship between human resource practices and organisational climate in the municipality.

In Article 1 and Article 3 employees from the municipality were targeted, and in Article 2 citizens from the municipality were targeted separately. The study population from the municipality included employees from managerial and non-managerial categories, and the study population from the citizens included the public which the municipality serve. A cross-sectional survey design was used to obtain the research objectives. Three standardised questionnaires were used in the *empirical study*, namely

the Organisational Climate Questionnaire, the Standard of Service as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire and the Human Resource Practices Questionnaire. Descriptive statistics, factor analyses, Cronbach alpha coefficients, correlations, MANOVAS and regression analyses were used to analyse the data.

In Article 1 the results indicated a four-factor structure for the OCQ. Statistically and practically significant differences were found between organisational climate dimensions and some of the biographical characteristics, namely age, service years and job level. Employees with more years of service experience higher levels of organisational climate, than employees with fewer years of service. A significant difference in communication was found between job level 1 and job level 3. Employees in higher positions do not communicate well with employees at lower levels.

In terms of Article 2 the study extracted a two-factor structure, namely Consultation and Efficiency. The scales showed acceptable internal consistencies. Most of the Batho Pele principles received negative responses from the public. The results showed that customers who feel they are not sufficiently consulted on services also feel that the services they received were not effective. Knowledge of the service environment was perceived as poor, and consultation on services was perceived as a challenge. The public also perceived responsiveness as poor.

In Article 3 the scales showed acceptable internal consistencies and also confirmed a relationship between human resource management practices and organisational climate. Responsiveness/cooperation and human resource development contributed most to people care. Supervision, human resource development, responsiveness/cooperation, employee support and recognition contributed to structure. Openness, feedback and responsiveness/cooperation contributed most to efficiency. Recognition, responsiveness/cooperation, supervision and openness contributed most to communication.

Based on the results, recommendations were made for urgent actions to be implemented by the municipality, as well as for future research.

## OPSOMMING

**Titel:** Organisasieklimaat, mensehulpbronbestuur en dienslewering in 'n plaaslike regering

**Sleutelwoorde:** Organisasieklimaat, mensehulpbronbestuur, dienslewering, betroubaarheid, geldigheid, munisipaliteit, organisasie-effektiwiteit, geslag, diensjare, posvlak

Die sukses van enige organisasie is afhanklik van sy vermoë om by 'n konstant veranderende omgewing aan te pas. Om daartoe in staat te wees om aan te pas, moet 'n organisasie oor visioenêre leierskap beskik, 'n bestuurspan hê wat passievol en professioneel is en wat entrepreneurskap toon en werknemers wat betrokke is. Met die regte strategieë, organisasiepraktyke en bestuur kan die verborge waarde van 'n organisasie ontsluit word. Die tradisionele hiërargieë in die organisasie kan verwerp word met die oog daarop om bestuurspanne te bemagtig om sterker entrepreneurskap aan die dag te lê. Die regte organisasieklimaat moet ook geskep word om potensiaal te ontsluit.

As deel van die besigheidsbeplanningsproses en die dryfveer om weer met inwoners te skakel, op die behoefte om dinge anders te doen, te reageer, nuwe verhoudings op te bou en diens te verbeter moet die munisipaliteit voortdurend die mensehulpbronbestuurspraktyke wat reeds bestaan te evalueer om vas te stel of hulle effektief genoeg is om dit in staat te stel om die gestelde doelwitte te bereik. Kennis van organisasieklimaat-veranderlikes stel die bestuur ook daartoe in staat om die organisasie se doelstellings te verwesenlik.

Plaaslike regering speel 'n sleutelrol daarin om 'n belofte van 'n beter lewe vir almal na te kom. Dit is dus van kritieke belang vir sy werknemers om altyd optimaal te presteer en in hul dienslewering aan die publiek aan al die beginsels van die Batho Pele te voldoen. Al die beginsels van genoemde beleid is verweef en rig kollektief al drie sferes van regeringsoogings om dienslewering te transformeer en te bespoedig. Bestuurders op alle vlakke moet personeellede ondersteun met betrekking tot diensverantwoordelikheid sodat personeellede gewaardeer, gemotiveerd, ingelig en uitgedaag voel om hul bes te lewer ter wille van die mense vir wie hulle tot diens is.

Die doelwitte van hierdie studie was om die betroubaarheid en geldigheid van die OCQ-instrument, die HRPQ-instrument en die SSPPQ-instrument te bepaal, om persepsies van dienslewering deur die munisipaliteit te bepaal, asook om die verhouding tussen mensehulpbronpraktyke en organisasieklimaat in die munisipaliteit vas te stel.

In Artikel 1 en Artikel 3 is werknemers van die munisipaliteit geteiken en in Artikel 2 is inwoners van die munisipaliteit afsonderlik geteiken. Die studiepopulasie van die munisipaliteit het werknemers van

bestuurs- en nie bestuurskategorieë ingesluit, en die studiepopulasie van die inwoners het die publiek vir wie die munisipaliteit tot diens is, betrek. 'n Dwarsdeursnee-onderzoekontwerp is benut om die navorsingsdoelwitte te bereik. Drie gestandaardiseerde vraelyste is in die empiriese studie gebruik, naamlik die *Organisational Climate Questionnaire*, die *Human Resource Practices Questionnaire*, en die *Standard of Service as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire*. Beskrywende statistiek, faktoranalise, Cronbach alfakoëffisiënte, korrelasies, MANOVAS en regressie-analise is aangewend om die data te analiseer.

In Artikel 1 het die resultate 'n vier-faktorstruktuur vir OCQ aangetoon. Statisties en prakties betekenisvolle verskille is tussen organisasieklimaat-dimensies en sommige van die biografiese kenmerke gevind, naamlik ouderdom, diensjare en posvlak. Werknemers met meer diensjare ervaar hoër vlakke van organisasieklimaat as werknemers met minder diensjare. 'n Betekenisvolle verskil in kommunikasie is tussen posvlak 1 en posvlak 3 gevind, werknemers in hoër posisies kommunikeer nie goed met werknemers op laer vlakke nie.

Met betrekking tot Artikel 2 het die studie 'n twee-faktorstruktuur onttrek, naamlik Konsultasie en Effektiwiteit. Die skale het aanvaarbare interne konstantheid getoon. Die meeste Batho Pele-beginsels het negatiewe response by die publiek ontlok. Die resultate het getoon dat kliënte wat aangedui het dat hulle nie voldoende oor dienste gekonsulteer is nie, ook gemeen het dat die dienste wat hulle ontvang nie, effektief is nie. Kennis van die diensomgewing is waargeneem as swak, en konsultasie oor diens is as 'n uitdaging beskou. Die publiek het ook responsiwiteit as swak beoordeel.

In Artikel 3 het die skale aanvaarbare interne konstantheid getoon en het ook 'n verhouding tussen mensehulpbronbestuurspraktyke en organisasieklimaat bevestig. Responsiwiteit/samewerking en mensehulpbronontwikkeling het die meeste bygedra tot mensesorg (as komponent van die klimaat binne die munisipaliteit). Supervisie, mensehulpbronontwikkeling, responsiwiteit/samewerking, werknemerondersteuning en erkenning het bygedra tot struktuur (as komponent van organisasieklimaat). Openheid, terugvoer en responsiwiteit/samewerking het die meeste bygedra tot effektiwiteit. Erkenning, responsiwiteit/samewerking, supervisie en openheid was die beste voorspellers van die beleving van kommunikasie.

Gebaseer op die resultate, is aanbevelings aan die hand gedoen rakende dringende optrede van die kant van die munisipaliteit, asook vir toekomstige navorsing.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about organisational climate, organisational practices and service delivery in the Rustenburg municipality of the North West Province in South Africa.

In this chapter, the problem statement is discussed. The research objectives are set out, which include the general objective and specific objectives. Following this, the research method is explained and an overview of the chapters is presented.

### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In recent years, the environment in which companies operate have changed considerably. The global economy can be seen as a driving force behind this change and has led to extensive restructuring in most organisations. Companies are faced with a need to achieve greater economic efficiency and to adapt more flexibly in order to respond to changing market conditions. Seeking to become more competitive on a global scale, organisations have looked for ways to become more flexible in order to respond better to fluctuations in demand for products and services. In this regard Axel (1996) states that flexibility will be a defining attribute for organisations hoping to survive in the 1990s and beyond. Familiar and rigid organisational structures were operating procedures that worked well in more predictable times, but are no longer appropriate today in the ever-changing business environment (Olmstead & Smith, 1997).

Change, as constant as it is in today's business environment, seems to touch on every aspect of organisational life. According to Pendlebury, Grouard and Meston (1998), no business can escape the need for change, as it evolves in the context of a more rapidly changing environment. Within this realm, organisations can either submit to or initiate change. To be able to stay in business, however, change will have to be accommodated.

It is widely accepted that the single most valuable asset of any organisation is its human asset. It may be said that only organisations that appreciate their staff as much as their capital resource will succeed in today's marketplace. If human resource professionals are to be

successful in developing their staff, they have to, amongst others, take employees' economic, social and psychological needs into consideration. This is difficult to achieve in a South African workplace, which is becoming increasingly more diverse as a result of the changing socio-political climate (Human, 1996).

Public service transformation is one of the top priorities in the agenda of the South African government. Whilst there are numerous policy documents on improved, economic, and efficient service delivery, the most important one is The White Paper on Public Service Delivery of 1997 ( Batho Pele SA, 1997). The Batho Pele initiative was one where aspiration to be citizen focused was embraced. The difficulty is that often the flow of information and insights regarding what customers need are lost and diluted on its way to the decision-making core of the organisation for the following reasons:

- The frontline official is not empowered to listen and make promises on behalf of the organisation.
- The locus of decision-making is so far up the hierarchy that the message is lost along the way.
- Although the organisation listens to the needs of its “customers” it simply does not have the capacity to respond due to lack of process or “talent”.

Organisations need to start asking the question why talented people want to join their companies, and what they must do to retain and optimise talent. Attracting and retaining new managers will depend on the quality of the work environments organisations can create (Laschinger, Purdy, Cho, & Almost, 2006). Research done by Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2000) indicates that more than 2000 respondents from diverse industries and functions gave career growth, learning and development, exciting work and challenge, meaningful work, making a difference and contribution, autonomy and sense of control over your work as some of the most common reasons for staying with a company. Birt, Wallis, and Winternitz (2004), identified challenging and meaningful work, advancement opportunities, manager integrity and quality, empowerment and responsibility and new opportunities as the most important reasons why talented people will stay in the company.

Talented people desire challenging environments because they are consistently appraising their learning curve and the level of impact and accountability. If they are not growing,

learning and making a real difference, they move on. They also like working in an organisational climate where they experience “high bandwidth” relationships, deep, collaborative and rich conversational contexts where they are challenged as much as being able to challenge. The role of a leader therefore is to work full time on the maintenance of such organisational climate (Van der Westhuizen, 2006).

In terms of Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), local government is described as a distinct sphere of government in its own right and no longer a function of National or Provincial government. It is a sphere of government closest to the community, and this strategic position makes it the ideal tool for developmental government. The objective of Local Government in terms of Section 152(1) of the Constitution of South Africa (1996), indicates that each and every municipality must strive to achieve within its financial and administration capacity, to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities, to ensure that services are provided to communities in a sustainable manner, to promote a safe and healthy environment, and to promote community participation in local affairs.

The quest for service delivery in South Africa has increased over the past decade. This is evident from the conduct of local communities and citizens that embark, amongst others, on mass actions and taking public officials hostage in an effort to force government to improve service delivery (Abedian, Strachan, & Ajam, 2001).

In many municipalities, the run-up to the elections has been plagued by service delivery protests reminiscent of the uprisings against apartheid in the 80s. The current public sector has had huge expectations thrust upon their shoulders, having to now spread its limited resources even more thinly across a much larger “customer base” of South African citizen, yet it does seem imperative for a service agency with finite resources to make sure that all its efforts are aligned to deliver that which people truly need in partnership with them (Van der Westhuizen, 2006).

The creation of a healthy and motivating organisational climate therefore is imperative and should be the aim of management of any organisation. According to Furnham (1997), organisational climate is a complex set of forces which has a direct influence on those who work in it. According to Litwin and Stringer (1968), a number of factors can influence the

development of the organizational climate. Among these are (a) the history of the climate (b) the constraints imposed by the formal organizational system and the task, and (c) the needs, values, and initial expectations of the members. However, the most important and dramatic determinant of climate seems to be the leadership style utilised by managers or by informal leaders. The emphasis on leader puts on adherence to rules, the kinds of goals and standards he/she sets, and perhaps most importantly, the nature of his/her informal relationships and communications with people, as this will have a huge impact on the climate.

Measuring organisational climate should be the aim of the management of any organisation. What one can measure, ultimately determines what one can manage, and measuring organisational climate is imperative to understanding how the organisation functions at the core (Furnham, 1997). Knowledge of climate variables enables management to direct those forces towards the accomplishment of organisational goals. Such knowledge provides managers with a link between their organisation's procedures and practices and the concerns and needs of individual workers. Managers should know how different procedures and practices will stimulate the worker needs and how worker motivation can be enhanced (Huselid, 1996).

Kanter (1994) proposes that companies need to switch incentives from careers, status and promotion, to personal reputation, teamwork and challenging assignments, finding ways of making work challenging and involving so it becomes a source of loyalty, which translates into a new kind of security. Kanter (1994) uses the term "employability security" for this new type of security. From this, it can be concluded that if companies wish to retain talented people they need to create the environment in which people feel motivated.

Despite the flood of idealistic intellectuals who moved from the struggle and its grassroots into the reconstituted public service, today, the biggest challenge facing municipalities and other state organisations is the retention of talent (Van der Westhuizen, 2006). The tenure of black professionals in the public sector has become more and more brief, a stepping stone to better working conditions and a less politicised career in the private sector. This leaves the public sector as the "last resort" for many talented individuals and it becomes very difficult to maintain technical excellence.

In spite of a growing body of evidence to support the enormous financial performance obtained through effective people management, organisations are still moving in the opposite directions by utilising human resource practices contrary to what is known regarding sound people management (Huselid, 1995; Huselid, Jackson, & Schuler, 1997; Templer & Hofmeyer, 1989; Pfeffer, 1998). Notwithstanding the opposite findings of effective people management, companies continue to pursue restructuring and retrenchments as a means to increase organisational effectiveness and decrease expenses. This is very often detrimental to people management.

Management theorists often distinguish between “sense and respond” organisations on the one hand and “make and sell” organisations on the other. The latter believes it knows what its customers want and pushes it out through one-directional distribution channels (Van der Westhuizen, 2006). The other type of the organisation entirely focused on learning about the ever-changing needs of its customers’ requirements to then produce ever more new solutions. Good human resource practices, in terms of selection practices will determine who gets hired, and if properly designed, will identify competent candidates and accurately match them to the job. The use of proper selection devices will increase the probability that the right person will be chosen to fill the post.

The other major goal of human resource practices in terms of performance evaluation processes is to assess accurately an individual’s performance contribution, as a basis for making reward allocation decisions. If performance evaluation process emphasizes the wrong criteria or inaccurately appraises the actual job performance, employees will be over or under rewarded. This can lead to negative consequences such as reduced effort, increase in absenteeism, or search for continuous and alternative job opportunities (Robbins, 1998). The content of performance evaluation has been found to influence employee performance, organisational climate and enhanced service delivery.

This study will focus on three different aspects contributing to the understanding of service delivery, in the municipal environment. The first aspect that will be looked into will be organisational climate in the municipal area. The relevance of organisational climate is clear to Veldman (1995), who asserts that, organisational climate refers to the psychological structures of organisations and their subunits, and can also be described as the personality of the organisations’ internal environment. The internal environment is influenced by various

forces and in turn influences aspects such as employee achievement, behaviour, attitudes and communication. Organisational climate may affect the quality of service delivered and organisational commitment, and can also influence perceptions of employees (Tovey & Adam, 1990).

Secondly, service delivery in the municipality will be assessed by the public falling under the jurisdiction of the municipality, and the psychometric properties of the Standards of Service delivery as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire (SSPPQ) will be validated. Service delivery by municipalities in South Africa, and specifically in the North West Province, is regarded as poor, resulting in mass protests. According to Tapscott (2007), communities have lost trust and confidence in service delivery by municipalities. Riekert (2001) defines service delivery as the provision of a product or service by a government body to a community that was promised, or which is expected by the community.

Thirdly, human resource management practices in the municipality will be examined and the psychometric properties of the Human Resource Practices Questionnaire (HRPQ) will be validated. Kgwele, (2009), reports that the North West Province is faced with backlogs in service delivery and do not have the capacity and means to meet its growth and development targets. It has also been recognised that lack of service delivery in the municipalities was caused by a range of other factors, namely poor team spirit, lack of appreciation and recognition from managers/supervisors, hostile communication, low levels of trust, and the unwillingness of managers or supervisors to allow employees to produce initiatives and take responsibilities for certain aspects of their work (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006). It is important to study the human resource management practices in the municipalities. It is also important to understand how human resource management practices are being executed and implemented in the municipality. It is expected that organisational climate will reflect a positive relationship with human resource management practices.

According to Stavrou-Costea, (2005), human resource management practices are significantly related to service delivery. One may therefore surmise that an identification of human resource practices, challenges and prospects are essential for accelerated service delivery. When these practices are aligned with the needs of internal and external customers, companies are likely to succeed (Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2003). In order to benefit from these challenges, service organisations must effect radical alterations in their structures and

improve on their human resource practices. Human resource practices, such as performance management systems, human resource development, employee support and control, employee recognition and empowerment, improve service delivery (Ichniowski & Shaw, 2003). The results from the first two parts of this study, namely organisational climate and service delivery will also be taken into account.

It is against this backdrop that this study seeks to focus, on organisational climate, service delivery and human resource practices in the municipality of Rustenburg in the North West Province of South Africa. The need for valid and reliable instruments for measuring organisational climate, service delivery and human resource practices is imperative for the municipality to be able to deliver services as promised to the communities it serves.

However, from the literature there appears to be no valid instruments for measuring organisational climate, service delivery and human resource management practices for South African municipal employees and the public the municipality serves. Furthermore, due to the multicultural nature of the South African society, municipal employees would be drawn from these diverse cultural backgrounds.

The following research questions emerged from the problem statement:

- How is organisational climate conceptualised in the literature?
- What is the construct validity and reliability of a measure of organisational climate in a local government in South Africa?
- What is the organisational climate in a local government in South Africa and how does it differ between different demographic groups?
- How is service delivery in local government in South Africa conceptualised in literature?
- What is the construct validity and reliability of a measure of service delivery in a local government in South Africa?
- What challenges of service delivery exist in the municipality?
- How is human resource management practices conceptualised in the literature?
- What is the construct validity and reliability of a measure of human resource practices in a local government in South Africa?
- What is the relationship between human resource management practices and organisational climate in a local government in South Africa?

## **1.2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The following research objectives have emerged from the problem statement:

### **1.2.1 General objective**

The general objective of this research is to assess the reliability and validity of the Organisational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ), the Human Resource Practices Questionnaire (HRPQ) for the municipal employees of the Rustenburg municipality, and the Standards of Service as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire (SSPPQ) for the public who fall under the municipality, and to determine the relationship between human resource management practices and organisational climate in the municipality.

### **1.2.2 Specific objectives**

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To conceptualise organisational climate from the literature.
- To investigate the reliability and validity of the OCQ and HRPQ for municipal employees.
- To investigate whether the levels of organisational climate, of the municipal staff differ in terms of the demographic characteristics.
- To conceptualise service delivery in local government in South Africa from the literature?
- To assess the construct validity and reliability of a measure of service delivery in a local government in South Africa.
- To determine challenges faced by the public in relation to service delivery.
- To investigate the reliability and validity of the SSPPQ for the public in the municipality.
- To determine challenges faced by the municipal staff in relation to service delivery.
- To determine the relationship between organisational climate and human resource management practices in the municipality.
- To make recommendations to management in relation to organisational climate, human resource management practices and service delivery in the municipality.

### **1.3 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research method for each of the three subsequent articles to be submitted for the purpose of this thesis comprises a brief literature review and an empirical study. A literature study is provided for each article.

#### **1.3.1 Literature review**

The literature review centres on previous research done on organisational climate, service delivery and human resource management practices and the measurement of these constructs, as well as some findings in respect of the measuring of organisational climate, service delivery and human resource management practices.

#### **1.3.2 Research design**

The research will be carried out using a cross sectional survey design to collect data for all three articles. This design can be used to assess interrelationships among variables at one point in time without any planned intervention. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997), this design is ideally suited when the aim of the study is predictive and of a descriptive nature.

#### **1.3.3 Participants**

The sample is drawn from the employee population from a number of different business units in the municipality, and also on the questionnaire of the public, from the population falling under the jurisdiction of the municipality. The sample consists of employees from the municipality, representing various demographic sub-groups, namely *race, gender, age, job level, language groups, disability, directorate*, in the municipality and members from the public also from different demographic groups.

### 1.3.4 Measuring instruments

Three standardised measuring instruments will be used in the empirical study, namely the *Organisational Climate Questionnaire* (OCQ; Litwin & Stringer, 1968), *Standards of Service as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire* (SSPPQ) and *Human Resource Practices Questionnaire* (HRPQ).

The *Organisational Climate Questionnaire* (OCQ) (Litwin & Stringer, 1968) assesses the level of organisational climate in the municipality, felt by respondents. The OCQ consists of nine dimensions, and they are: structure, responsibility, reward, risk, warmth, support, standards, conflict and identity. The questionnaire consists of 43 items. Litwin and Stringer (1968) report the internal consistency (inter-item correlations) of each of the dimensions of climate to be: Conflict = 0,19; Standards = 0,21; Responsibility = 0,23; Risk = 0,29; Structure = 0,31; Warmth = 0,33; Reward = 0,42; Identity = 0,49. Test-retest reliabilities varied between 0,55 and 0,84 (Combrink, 2004). The items will be scored on a five-point frequency rating scale ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*very much*).

The *Standards of Service as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire* (SSPPQ) is developed for purposes of this study. This questionnaire will be used to obtain the experiences and perceptions of the public in relation to service delivery in the local municipality. The questionnaire consists of 20 items, and is measured on a scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). The questions will be developed based on the principles of Batho Pele (White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, Batho Pele, 1997).

The *Human Resource Practices Questionnaire* (HRPQ) was developed with the purpose of measuring human resource management practices as experienced by employees in the municipality. *Human Resource Practices Questionnaire*, contains 69 items, and has four sub-questionnaires with each having its own rating scale. The sub-questionnaires are named Supervision Practices Questionnaire (SPQ), Human Resource Development Practices Questionnaire (HRDPQ), Recognition Practices Questionnaire (RPQ) and Empowerment Practices Questionnaire (EPQ) respectively.

The *Supervision Practices Questionnaire* (SPQ) consists of 35 items. This questionnaire will be used to measure the degree of communication, supervision, openness and feed-back,

experienced by employees in the municipality. The questions are rated on a five-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (*agree strongly*) to 5 (*disagree strongly*). The items include questions such as “My supervisor listens to me when I communicate”, “I know which communication channel to follow if I experience problems”, and “The management style is autocratic”.

The *Human Resource Development Practices Questionnaire* (HRDPQ) has 24 items, and will be used to measure human resource development and employee support practices in the municipality. The questions are rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). Items include questions such as question 1: “The city council provides me with sufficient in-service training to do the work that is expected of me”, question 6: “I received appropriate in-service training introducing me to the city council when I started working here.” and question 13: “I receive personal feedback from my supervisor regarding shortcomings in my work”.

The *Recognition Practices Questionnaire* (RPQ) consists of five items, and will be used to measure employee recognition by managers/supervisors in the municipality for a job well done. The items are rated on a five-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*very much*). Dimensions on recognition include questions such as question 29: “I am in favour of an annual event where outstanding job performance is publicly acknowledged”, question 25: “Employees receive acknowledgement for outstanding work performance”.

The *Empowerment Practices Questionnaire* (EPQ) comprises five items, and is measured on a scale, ranging from 1 (*disagree*) to 5 (*agree*). This sub-questionnaire will be used to measure the degree to which managers/ supervisors are able to empower employees in the municipality. The items include questions such as question 33: “Managers in the city council receive sufficient training in leadership skills”, and question 30 “Employees of the city council are productive every working day”.

### **1.3.5 Statistical analysis**

The main statistical package used in this study is the SPSS program (SPSS Inc2008). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability and validity of the measuring instrument (Berenson & Levine, 1996; Clark & Watson, 1995; Norusis, 1994). Cronbach alpha coefficients will be used to determine the internal consistency, homogeneity and

unidimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Coefficient alphas contain important information regarding the proportion of variance of the item of a scale in terms of the total variance explained by that particular scale.

Exploratory factor analyses will be used to determine the validity of the OCQ, SSPPQ, and HRPQ. Firstly a simple principal components analysis will be conducted. The eigenvalues and scree plot will be used to determine the number of factors. Secondly, principal factor analysis with a direct oblimin (related factors) rotation or a varimax (unrelated factors) rotation will be conducted to determine the factor structures of measuring instruments (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

Pearson correlation coefficients will be calculated to specify the relationship between the variables. In terms of statistical significance, it was decided to set the value at a 99% confidence interval level ( $p < 0,01$ ). Effect size will be used in addition to statistical significance to determine the practical significance of correlation coefficients. A cut-off point of 0,30, which represents a medium effect (Cohen, 1988; Steyn, 2002), will be set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) will be used to determine the significance of the difference between organisational climate and human resource practices levels of demographic groups. MANOVA tests whether mean differences among groups on a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001). In MANOVA a new dependent that maximises group differences is created from the set of dependent variables. One way analysis will then be performed on the newly created dependent variable. Wilks' Lambda will be used to test the significance of the effects. Wilks' Lambda is a likelihood ratio statistic of the data under the assumption of equal population mean vectors for all groups against the likelihood under assumption that the population mean vectors are identical to those of the sample mean vectors for the different groups. When the effect is significant in MANOVA, ANOVA will be used to discover which dependent variable will be affected.

## **1.4 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter 1: Introduction, problem statement and objectives

Chapter 2: Article 1: Organisational Climate in a Local Government in the North West Province

Chapter 3: Article 2: Service Delivery in a Local government in the North West Province

Chapter 4: Article 3: Human resource practices in a Local government in the North West Province

Chapter 5: Conclusions, limitations and recommendations.

## **1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the problem statement and motivation for the research were discussed and the general and specific objectives formulated. The research method (including the literature review, empirical study, research design, study population, measuring batteries, data analysis and research design) was discussed and lastly a chapter overview was given.

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# THE ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE IN A MUNICIPALITY IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to evaluate the Organisational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ) in a municipality and to investigate the relationship between organisational climate and demographic variables. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The study was carried out with a sample ( $N = 200$ ) representing a cross-cut of all different job levels in the municipality. The OCQ and a biographical questionnaire were administered. Exploratory factor analysis showed that the OCQ measured four dimensions of organisational climate, namely People Care, Structure, Efficiency and Communication. The internal consistencies of the scales were acceptable. Job category showed a statistically significant relationship with experiences of organisational climate.

## OPSOMMING

Die doelstellings van hierdie studie was om die Organisasieklimaatsvraelys (OKV) binne 'n plaaslike owerheid te evalueer en om ondersoek in te stel na die verband tussen organisasieklimaat en demografiese veranderlikes. 'n Dwarsnee-opname-ontwerp is gebruik. Die studie is gedoen met 'n steekproef wat 'n dwarsdeursnee van verskillende posvlakke in die plaaslike owerheid ingesluit het ( $N=201$ ). Die OKV en 'n biografiese vraelys is afgeneem. Verkennende faktoranalise het getoon dat die OKV vier dimensies van organisasieklimaat meet, naamlik Mensesorg, Struktuur, Doeltreffendheid en Kommunikasie. Die interne konsekwentheid van die vier skale was aanvaarbaar. Poskategorie het 'n statisties beduidende verwantskap met ervarings van organisasieklimaat getoon.

Prior to 1994, the South African public sector and in particular the public service, consisted of 1,3 million employees, and was characterised by fragmentation of structures, lack of co-ordinated policy frameworks, unequal allocation of financial and human resources as well as disregard for the democratic requirements of public accountability (Naidoo, 2004). This disjointed public service created opportunities for gross malpractices such as corruption and mismanagement. The public service was highly decentralised, with top-down administrative and managerial practices. There were also no defined roles and responsibilities, as well as lack of effective co-ordinated and communication mechanisms (Naidoo, 2004).

Productivity was low, especially in the South African local government, and little attention was paid to human resource development. Administrative functions were also often duplicated, and the major part of the state's resources was utilised for 13,6% of the population, i.e. the White inhabitants (Mamabolo, 2001). Since 1994, the South African local government has experienced three major waves of change (Atkinson, 2003). The first wave was guided by the Local Government Transition Act of 1993 and was concerned with the political unification of municipalities that had been racially divided under apartheid government. The political change was the focus of this period, often at the expense of municipal functioning.

The second significant turning point was the introduction of the 1998 developmental local government White Paper. This White Paper spurred a series of national legislative innovations such as ward committees, a code of conduct for councillors, integrated development plans, and a variety of service delivery initiatives. The third wave of change introduced a new round of re-demarcation of municipalities, and the first fully democratic local government elections of December 2000 (Atkinson, 2003).

The newly demarcated municipalities (from 843 to 284) had to integrate the transitional local councils, and the transitional rural councils into unified administrations covering much bigger areas. The achievement of developmental local government in former homeland areas that recently amalgamated with small white local authorities remains an elusive goal. These areas are still struggling with the difficulties of integrating administrative, financial and information technology systems of previously separate administrations in a context where human resource capacity does not exist to understand this complexity (Atkinson, 2003).

These political reforms were also aimed at making municipalities democratically accountable to their citizens and efficient and effective in delivering basic services. South Africa's Constitution mandates local authorities to ensure the provision of services to local communities in a sustainable manner (Khumalo, Ntlokonkulu, & Rapoo, 2008).

When referring to the municipal service delivery, Mlambo-Ngcuka, (2006, p. 22) indicates that it is also recognised that during the last term of local government many municipalities experienced grass roots discontent around governance and service delivery issues, but it is certain that with the able and high calibre leadership at their disposal, there will not be reason or cause for this discontent to resurface. According to Gerber, Nel, and Van Dyk (1995), it does not require much insight to realise that one of the most important keys to success is the type of leadership an organisation has. Therefore when an organisation is not successful, the cause is often ineffective leadership which is also an organisational climate variable.

Organisations are operating within a difficult economic environment and in the face of fierce world competition (George & Jones, 2002). To survive and ensure the attainment of organisational goals and profitability, they have to continually adapt and change to new forms of organisations that are flexible and are constantly creating new innovations to remain effective (Bloisi, Cook, & Hunsaker, 2003).

The effectiveness of an organisation depends on the effectiveness of its employees. Without a high quality labour force, an organisation is destined to show mediocre performance (Carrel, Elbert, Hatfield, Grobler, Marx, & Van der Schyf, 1998). Undoubtedly, the central element of a successful organisation lies in the importance of achieving productivity through the effective management of people and their commitment to and involvement with the organisation (Mullins, 2002).

In the North West Province of South Africa, there are 25 municipalities, of which six are high capacity, eight medium capacity and 11 low capacity municipalities. Finances of the 22 out of 25 North West municipalities are in disarray; this is according to the Auditor General, Terence Nombembe's reports (Boso, 2008). Of the 21 completed municipality audits, 16 received worst case audit opinion (adverse and disclaimer), and overall 17 of the 21 municipalities were financially qualified for two consecutive years (2005-2006 and 2006-2007) (Boso, 2008). The auditors found that the financial reports of the municipalities were

not in line with the prescripts and standards of the Municipal Finance Management Act of 2003. The audit reports and systems have been tailor-made to track and identify root causes of problem areas in these municipalities (Boso, 2008). According to the Auditor General, Terence Nombembe's report for (2007-2008), Rustenburg municipality received a qualified audit (Kgwele, 2009).

This might raise a few interesting points: Are employees in the municipality happy? What is the municipality doing to make them valuable? What is being done to ensure that employees learn how to operate in a value-adding manner? How will the municipality ensure that the human capital grows in value as new challenges present?

From the above concerns, it is important to study the organisational climate within which employees in a municipality operate. The study of climate requires some method of assessment, measurement and diagnosis. According to Harvey and Brown (1992), a diagnosis is a systematic approach to understanding and describing the present state of the organisation. The purpose of the diagnostic phase is to specify the nature of the exact problem requiring solution, to identify the underlying causal forces, and to provide a basis for selecting effective change strategies and techniques. Litwin and Stringer (1968) point out that the climate of an organisation could be defined operationally as the sum of the perceptions of the individuals working in that organisation.

Arising from this problem, there are a number of other issues pertaining to this study that came to the fore. It is imperative that the conceptualisation of organisational climate be looked at in the literature, but also to determine what the organisational climate within the municipality should be? Once this foundation has been cast, the dimensions of organisational climate need to be examined together with the inherent reliability and validity of an organisational climate questionnaire in a municipality. The municipality where the study was conducted falls under the region that is rich in mineral deposits. The region is the world's second largest producer of platinum. It is one of five municipalities within the Bojanala District municipality in the North West Province. Rustenburg municipality has a status by Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) for 2010 World Cup (Westoll, 2007). Problems experienced in relation to municipalities' underperformance differ from municipality to municipality. Not all municipalities in the North West Province are underperforming. It is important to assess and understand the organisational climate in the

Rustenburg municipality. No studies have been found focussing on the organisational climate in municipalities. Therefore no validated instrument currently exists to measure climate in the municipalities in South Africa.

Organisational climate is important due to its potential to influence different organisational and psychological processes. Communication, problem solving, decision making, learning and motivation can all be affected by the organisational climate (Ekvall, 1990). Organisations have to change fast to survive (French, Bell, & Zawacki, 1994). Knowledge of organisational climate enables management to direct those forces towards accomplishment of organisational goals. It provides managers with a link between their organisations' procedures and practices and the concerns and needs of individual workers. Managers should know how different procedures and practices will stimulate worker needs and how worker motivation can be enhanced. Organisational climate has been established as a construct of considerable interest in the field of organisational behaviour, predominantly as a result of its influence in organisational effectiveness as well as its relationship to individual motivation (Bowers, 1976; Franklin, 1975; Kanter, 1983; Likert, 1961; Litwin & Stringer, 1968; Mudrack, 1989).

Since 1994, the demographics have changed significantly in the Rustenburg municipality, and a large number of blacks and females are now in positions previously filled by white males, thus bringing the demographics representation much closer to the South African demographics. The new incumbents, who had previously been disadvantaged, find themselves in better positions than before, with better opportunities, more equality and greater prospects. Although the corporate ladder is now open to all demographic groups, the process of equity of balances is incomplete (Lekgotla HR Report 2008/2009). This is evident from the equity report, representation percentage still reported for different demographic groups on different job levels, as well as continued disparities these groups face in the workplace (for example compensation, respect, and on-the-job treatment) still reported not to be balancing (Weil, 2003).

There are certain demographic groups, for example gender, racial, and age groups that were previously been discriminated against at the workplace. Recently, the work arena that had for decades been dominated by white males opened up for previously disadvantaged groups. Qualifications have also affected career advancement as more young individuals can now be found in senior positions that were still recently occupied by incumbents who only reached

those positions after years of service and who were not necessarily qualified for those positions.

The objectives of this study were to investigate the reliability and construct validity of an organisational climate inventory in a municipality, to assess the organisational climate in the municipality, and to investigate whether perceived organisational climate differs in terms of demographic variables such as age, language, gender, race, disability, job levels and years of service.

### **Organisational climate**

To define the concept *climate*, Tagiuri (1968) outlines the following attributes: climate, has a connotation of continuity; is determined by conduct, attitudes and expectations of other persons depending on sociological and cultural realities; is capable of being shared by several persons in the situation; is interpreted in terms of shared meaning (with some variations around consensus); is at times difficult to describe in words, but may be capable of specification in terms of response. In addition, climate has a potential behaviour in that it acts on attitudes, expectations, and states of arousal which are direct determinants of behaviour.

Organisational climate is defined as the recurring patterns of feelings, attitudes and behaviour that characterise life in organisations (Isaksen & Ekvall, 2007). Ekvall (1990) regards organisational climate as a conglomerate of attitudes, feelings and behaviours that characterise life in an organisation. Organisational climate has been defined by French et al. (1994) as the relatively persistent set of opinions held by organisations' members concerning the characteristics and quality of organisational culture.

Two approaches to organisational climate are distinguished in the literature, namely the *cognitive schema approach* and the *shared perception approach*. According to the cognitive schema approach, climate is made up of individual perceptions and cognitive representations of the organisational environment. Accordingly, climate assessments are conducted at an individual level. The cognitive schema approach (Anderson & West, 1998; Mathisen & Einarsen 2004) emphasises the importance of shared perceptions as a basis of organisational climate. Reichers and Schneider (1999, p. 22) define organisational climate as the "shared perception of the way things are around here." None of these approaches are superior to the

other. However, these models generate useful information concerning behaviours of leaders which might impact on quality of work life, morale and stress.

It is important to distinguish organisational climate from organisational culture. Culture is shared by members of a social group, is passed on from older members to younger members, shapes behaviour, and structures employees' perceptions of reality. Schein (1990, p. 111) defined organisational culture as follows: "a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered, or developed by a given group, as it learns to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore is to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems."

As employees work together, specific procedures or ways in which work is done, problems are dealt with, and decisions made become established, and in time these procedures and ways become the accepted manner in which such actions are performed (Cartwright, Cooper, & Earley, 2001). Therefore organisational culture tends to be deep and stable. Climate is conceived as an organisational reality in an "objectivistic" sense (Ekvall, 1987). If climate is to be included in a culture model, it should be regarded as a manifestation of culture on what Schein (1985) has described visible and audible behaviour patterns (i.e. artefacts).

Organisational climate is not so much concerned with perceptions of how situational stimuli exist externally as it is with how these stimuli are interpreted by individuals within each working environment. For example, it is not pay that motivates; it is how equitable pay is perceived to be, that motivates. Similarly, group size is less important than perception of the "friendliness and cooperativeness of intra-group relations", and task complexity is of less salience than perception of the "challenge" imputed to that complexity. This view is also shared by Tovey and Adam (1999) who contend that the organisational climate may affect the quality of service, organisational commitment, and general organisational climate can influence perception of employees.

Organisational climate is a multifunctional construct that encompasses a wide range of individual evaluations of the work environment (James & James, 1989). These evaluations may refer to general dimensions such as leadership roles and communication, or to specific dimensions, such as climate for customer service (James & McIntyre, 1996).

General perceptions of the organisational context can influence interaction amongst individuals Griffin and Mathieu, (1997), attitudes towards organisational rewards, and effective responses to the work environment (Griffin & Griffin, 1996). Perceptions of general organisational climate develop as individuals attribute meaning to their organisational context based on the significance of the environment for individual values (James, James, & Ashe, 1990). Organisational climate therefore is thought to extend a strong impact on individual motivation to achieve work outcomes and skills by increasing participation in activities such as training (Morrison, Upton, & Cordery, 1997). Employees who identify closely with the organisation will be more loyal, more committed and hard working (Kreitner & Kinicki, 2001).

Ekvall (1991) asserts that climate acts as an intervening variable in the organisation and climate influences and is subsequently influenced by the outcome of organisational operations. Evidence suggests that what individuals perceive from their work situation will influence their productivity more than will the situation itself; therefore managers must spend time understanding how each individual interprets reality and, where there is a significant difference between what is such and what exists, to try to eliminate the distortions (Robbins, Odendaal, & Roodt, 2003).

Failure to deal with the difference when individuals perceive that the job is negative, in turn, will result in increased absenteeism and turnover and also lower job satisfaction. As such, organisational climate might be thought of as the “personality” of the organisation. Just as some individuals are aggressive in their dealings with other individuals, some organisations are aggressive in their dealings with their members. Landy and Trumbo (1980) point out that organisations do not exist in the same way single individuals do. Nevertheless, traditions and styles of organisations do endure over time and seem to have a rather strong influence on managers and upper-level executives.

The genesis of organisational climate, unlike that of culture, lies in the individual difference, psychology of the environment, cognition, and perception. The concept of organisational climate is concerned with relative importance of the individual and situational antecedents of perception in models that recognise both situational and individual causation. For example, climate models often begin with situational stimuli such as pay, group size, or technological

complexity (James, Demaree, Mulaik, & Ladd, 1992; James & Jones, 1980; James & Tertrick, 1986).

According to Zohar (2008), communication has also been found to influence organisational climate. Mathebula (2006) determined that most municipalities in the North West Province do not have communication personnel and those that do have communicators do not involve them in decision-making structures. He further elaborated that communication personnel lack basic communication tools such as computers, printing machines, phones and vehicles as well as access to internet and E-mail facilities. As a result, municipal communicators are not adequately informed about the developments in their municipalities and therefore cannot communicate adequately with the public. Organisational climate therefore is thought to exert a strong impact on individual motivation to achieve work outcomes (Brown & Leigh, 1996). An analysis of organisational climate is one method that can be used also to improve employees' involvement in adapting to the organisational change.

### **Measurement of organisational climate**

The study on organisational climate requires some method of measurement (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). Organisational climate refers to a set of measurable properties of the work environment, perceived directly or indirectly by the people who live and work in the environment and are assumed to influence their motivation and behaviour (Litwin & Stringer, 1968).

Numerous authors have studied the extraction of dimensions of climate. Litwin and Stringer (1968) developed nine such dimensions, namely structure, responsibility, reward, risk, warmth, support, standards, conflict, and identity. Ekvall (1990) developed 10 dimensions that include challenge, freedom, idea and support, trust/openness, dynamism/loneliness, playfulness/humour, debates, ideas, conflict, risk taking, and idea time. Jones and James (1979) derived six dimensions of climate. These dimensions are leadership facilitation and support, workgroup co-operation, friendliness and warmth, conflict and ambiguity, professional and organisational spirit, job challenge, importance of variety and mutual trust. Combrink (2004) derived six dimensions, being recognition and feedback, management, work relations, task characteristics, responsibility, and work pressure.

There are also several major studies of business that suggest that the amount of structure is an important variable affecting climate in an organisation (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Hall, 1962; Lorsch, 1964, 1965; Woodward, 1958). McGregor (1960) emphasises the inefficiency and “demotivation” effects of the traditional organisational environment with its reliance on high structure, authoritarian control, and strict job descriptions. Fleishman and Harris (1962) point out that employee absenteeism, accidents, and turnover are factors that are directly related to structure. Argyris (1964) describes some of the effects an organisation’s formal and informal structure can have on the interpersonal relationships and task behaviour of the members of the organisation.

### **Demographic variables and organisational climate**

Many studies have shown that older workers generally are more satisfied than younger workers. The difference may be attributed to better adjustment at work, better conditions and greater rewards at work (Birdi, Warr, & Oswald, 1995). Siu (2001) found that age was positively related to well-being (job satisfaction and mental well-being) of managers. Concerning gender, Zawacki, Shahan, and Carey (1995) reported that male nurses tend to be more satisfied with their supervisors than female nurses, and male nurses rated the five characteristics of work (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy and feedback) more meaningful and satisfying than female nurses.

Age has also been shown to be negatively related to absence frequency among hospital employees. Absenteeism is seen to be resultant of a negative organisational climate. This relationship can be explained by the fact that older workers usually take up higher responsibility at work, and they will not ask for sick leave for minor illnesses (Clegg, 1983). However, Piero, Gonzales-Roma, Lloret, Bravo, and Zurriga (1999) found that age was positively related to absenteeism. In terms of gender difference, females reported more absences than males (Clegg, 1983; Mathieu & Kohler, 1990). Some of the reasons are that women have more health complaints and that working women have multiple roles as they are also married and/or have children.

Different people are likely to perceive the same environment differently, which leads to variation in their behavioural responses to it. Although the focus is on the antecedents of

competitive psychological climate, variations in psychological climate might result from the general influences, as set out below:

- Individual differences among employees. Differences in backgrounds, personalities, and experiences can create perceptual and interpretational biases leading to different perceptions (James, James, & Ashe, 1990). For example, a salesperson who recently lost a bid for a promotion to an aggressive co-worker may perceive the organisation's climate as more competitive than a salesperson who is simply trying to do everything possible to achieve a personal sales quota.
- Different situations within the same organisation. Supervisory practices are likely to differ between different managers, giving rise to different perceptions of the environment. For example, some managers focus primarily on individual salespeople's progress towards their individual goals, whereas others pay close attention to competitive rankings among salespeople. Research has also shown that relationships with subordinates vary substantially even among those who report to the same manager (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Podsakoff et al., 1995). Salespeople who rank in the top echelon tend to enjoy privileged relationships with management, whereas others experience distant relationships (Dienesch & Robert, 1986).
- Interactions between individual differences and situational factors. The preceding types of factors may interact in ways that make their joint effects on employee perceptions greater than the combination of their individual effects (James, James, & Ashe, 1990).

## METHOD

### Research design

A cross-sectional survey design was utilised to reach the research objectives. A correlation design was also used. This design can be used to assess interrelationships among variables at one point in time, without any planned intervention. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997), this design is ideal when the aim of the study is predictive and descriptive by nature. Participants were informed regarding the purpose of the questionnaire, namely that it was to gather voluntary responses on how they perceive the organisational climate of the municipality to be.

## Participants

A stratified random sample was taken of 200 employees in the Rustenburg municipality ( $N = 1200$ ). The participants included employees from the following directorates in the municipality: Office of the Speaker ( $n=6$ ), Corporate services ( $n=50$ ), Finance ( $n=86$ ), Public safety ( $n=14$ ), Arts, Culture and Recreation ( $n=23$ ), Health ( $n=7$ ) Environmental services ( $n=11$ ), Technical services (engineering) ( $n=1$ ) and Electro-technical (engineering) ( $n=2$ ).

Descriptive information of the sample is given in Table 1. The sample consisted of predominantly blacks (84,1%) with a gender composition of females (59,2%) and males (36,3%). A total of 73,6% of the participants were married. Regarding the educational level, the following distribution was found: grade 12 certificate (61,7%). A sizeable majority (93, 0%) are members of a trade union. An interesting trend that arose from the study, is the fact that a larger part of the trade union, IMATU, has a 63,7% membership compared to SAMWU with a membership of 28,9%. The striking feature, as indicated by the Lekgotla HR Report (2008/2009), is that IMATU was a white member labour union party for municipal employees prior to the 1994 elections in South Africa.

The job levels for the majority (50,2%) were from levels 6 to 10. Only 0,5% of the participants was disabled. The missing values explain why some frequencies and percentages of some items did not add up to 100.

Table 1

*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	35 years and younger	85	42,3
	36-45 years	69	34,3
	46 and older	46	22,9
	Missing	1	0,5
Gender	Male	73	36,3
	Female	119	59,2
	Missing	9	4,5
Race	White	18	9,0
	Black	169	84,1
	Coloured	5	2,5
	Indians	3	1,5
	Others	1	0,5
	Missing	5	2,5
Secondary Education	<Std. 8/Grade 10	0	0,0
	Std. 8/Grade 10	2	1,0
	Std. 9/Grade 11	3	1,5
	Std. 10/Grade 12	124	61,7
	Missing	73	36,3
Tertiary Education	Certificate	52	25,9
	Diploma	46	22,9
	Degree	45	22,4
	Postgraduate	6	3,0
	Missing	52	25,9

Table 1

*Characteristics of the Participants (continue)*

Years of Service	Less than 6 years	82	40,8
	6-10 years	76	37,8
	More than 10 years	36	17,9
	Missing	7	3,5
Job Level	Less than 6	50	24,9
	6-10	101	50,2
	More than 10	4	2,0
	Missing	46	22,9

**Measuring instruments**

Two measuring instruments were used in this study, namely a biographical questionnaire and the *Organisational Climate Questionnaire*.

The biographical questionnaire was concerned with several aspects of an individual's personal life. Although this part is printed separately and some parts were optional, such as name, it was desirable as it forms part of the integral part of the *Organisational Climate Questionnaire*, as well as an integral part of the present study, since it provided important information on the following: name, gender, age, educational qualification, directorate, and also position, number of years with the municipality, marital status and disability.

The *Organisational Climate Questionnaire* (OCQ) was developed with the purpose of measuring organisational climate (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). The OCQ comprises of 43 items, and is scored on a 5-point scale varying from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*very much*). The following dimensions (with examples of items) were included in the questionnaire: a) Structure (i.e. the feeling that employees have about the constraints in a group, how many rules, regulations and procedures there are; b) Responsibility (i.e. the extent to which employees take responsibility for their work decisions); c) Reward (i.e. the feeling of being rewarded for a job well done);

d) Risks (i.e. the sense of riskiness and challenge in the job and organisations); e) Warmth (the feeling of general good fellowship that prevails in the work group); f) Support (i.e. the perceived helpfulness of the manager and other employees in the group); g) Standards (i.e. the perceived importance of implicit and explicit goals and performance standards); h) Conflict (i.e. the extent to which managers and workers want to hear different opinions, getting things more in the open); and Identity (i.e. the feeling that you belong to a company and you are a valuable member of a working team). Litwin and Stringer (1968) report the internal consistencies (inter-item correlations) of each of the dimensions of climate to be: Conflict = 0,19; Standards = 0,21; Responsibility = 0,23; Risk = 0,29; Structure = 0,31; Warmth = 0,33; Reward = 0,42; Identity = 0,49. Test-retest reliabilities varied between 0,55 and 0,84 (Combrink, 2004).

### **Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS 16.0 Program (SPSS, 2008). The reliability and validity of the OCQ were assessed by means of Cronbach alpha coefficient and exploratory factor analysis respectively. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were determined to describe the data. Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to determine the significance of differences between groups (Field, 2005).

The first phase of the data analysis involved an assessment of the construct validity of the OCQ. Exploratory factor analyses were carried out to determine the construct validity of the OCQ. A simple principal component analysis was performed on the constructs that form part of the measurement model. The eigenvalues and scree plot were studied to determine the number of factors involved. A principal axis factor analysis with a varimax rotation was conducted to extract the factors (Field, 2005; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001).

In this study, the differences in organisational climate of groups based on job category, race, directorate and gender were determined by means of MANOVA. MANOVA tests whether mean differences among groups on a combination of dependent variables are likely to have occurred by chance (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). In MANOVA, a new dependent variable that maximises group differences was created from the set of dependent variables. One-way analysis of variance was then performed on a newly created dependent variable. Wilk's,

Lambda was used to test the significance of the effects. Wilk's Lambda represents the ratio error variance to total variance for each variant (Field, 2005).

## **Procedure**

Permission was requested from the Office of the Executive Mayor of Rustenburg local municipality to conduct the study. The Office of the Executive Mayor then requested Corporate Service (Human Resource Management) to assist in convening meetings with different managers of different directorates selected to be included in the sample. The role of the managers was to provide dates on which presentations could be made regarding the objective of the study. Managers were then provided with questionnaires to give to their staff members. The completed questionnaires were collected from the managers.

## **RESULTS**

### **Construct validity**

A principal component analysis was carried out on the 43 items of the OCQ. The results showed that 11 factors, which explained 89% of the total variance, had eigenvalues larger than one. Subsequently a principal axis factor analysis with a varimax rotation was carried out on the 43 items of the OCQ. Various factor solutions were tried (between 4 and 11 factors). However, the most interpretable factor solution was obtained when four factors were extracted.

The loadings of the items on the four factors, communalities ( $h^2$ ), eigenvalues, and percentage of variance explained by each factor are shown in Table 5. The variables are ordered and grouped according to loadings-size to facilitate interpretations. Labels for each factor are suggested in a footnote.

As can be seen from Table 5, the communalities of the items were acceptable. The high scores suggest that the items were well represented by the factors.

Table 2

*Principal Axis Factor Analysis with a Varimax Rotation on the Items of the OCQ*

NO	ITEM DESCRIPTION	F1	F2	F3	F4	$h^2$
OC37	A friendly atmosphere prevails amongst employees of the City Council.	0,81	-0,39	0,06	-0,16	
OC26	There is a great deal of criticism in the City Council.	0,73	-0,56	0,15	0,01	
OC30	Our philosophy emphasises that people should solve their problems.	0,73	0,24	0,30	0,44	
OC10	Employees are allowed to assume responsibility for their job.	0,72	0,46	0,40	-0,16	
OC25	In the City Council, there are more rewards and encouragement than threats and criticism.	0,72	-0,33	0,09	0,04	
OC32	In some of the projects I have been on, I have not been sure exactly who my boss was.	0,71	0,12	0,36	0,10	
OC27	One of the problems in the City Council is that individuals will not take responsibility.	-0,64	0,23	0,08	0,34	
OC31	Decision making in the City Council is too captious for maximum effectiveness.	0,62	0,18	0,01	0,30	
OC16	Employees of this City Council work hard enough and give 100% in doing their jobs.	-0,60	0,37	0,04	-0,10	
OC43	In this City Council, employees look out for their own interest.	0,57	-0,34	0,09	0,41	
OC39	I feel that I am a member of a well-functioning team.	0,55	0,03	0,34	-0,08	
OC22	In this City Council, employees do not seem to take much pride in their performance.	-0,52	0,22	-0,41	0,27	
OC33	When I am on a difficult assignment, I can usually count on getting assistance from my manager/supervisor as well as from my colleagues.	0,45	-0,18	0,03	0,06	
OC36	Around here, there is a feeling of pressure to continually improve on performance.	-0,39	-0,12	-0,14	-0,02	
OC23	Rewards are clearly related to performance.	-0,02	0,92	0,00	0,13	
OC24	I feel that the City Council gives me ample opportunities to take on extra responsibilities and thus earn more.	-0,30	0,85	0,08	0,01	
OC2	In this City Council it is sometimes unclear who has the formal authority to make decisions.	0,22	-0,81	0,09	-0,00	
OC5	In this City Council, Work-Plans are agreed upon by both employees and supervisors.	0,04	0,76	0,44	-0,11	
OC1	The jobs in this City Council are clearly defined and logically structured.	0,68	0,73	-0,10	-0,23	
OC12	We are allowed to seek better ways to do our work in this City Council.	0,55	0,68	0,01	0,19	
OC3	The policies and organizational structure of the City Council have been clearly explained.	-0,04	0,66	0,02	-0,21	
OC42	As far as I can see, there is not much personal loyalty to the City Council	-0,51	-0,62	-0,32	0,24	
OC21	The City Council gets value for money for its reward system.	0,04	0,57	-0,37	0,37	
OC19	Performance Management System also helps in the process of managing expectations.	-0,16	0,54	0,00	0,15	
OC11	Are you influenced in achieving City Council goals?	-0,06	0,05	-0,02	-0,01	
OC13	We are allowed to make decisions on our own without prior management approval.	-0,20	0,41	-0,40	-0,12	
OC4	Red tape is kept to a minimum in this City Council.	-0,08	0,01	-0,80	0,09	
OC8	In this City we do not rely heavily on individual judgment, almost everything is double checked.	0,10	-0,11	0,79	0,17	
OC29	There are awfully many excuses around here when somebody makes a mistake.	0,35	0,07	0,78	0,44	
OC6	The City Council suffers from a lack of organizational planning.	0,21	-0,31	0,67	-0,06	

Table 2

*Principal Axis Factor Analysis with a Varimax Rotation on the Items of the OCQ*

NO	ITEM DESCRIPTION	F1	F2	F3	F4	<i>h</i> <sup>2</sup>
OC20	In the City Council, there is more focus on what employees produce than on how they do the work.	0,42	0,31	0,66	0,14	
OC15	If my manager's expectations are met, I know that I will be fully and fairly acknowledged.	0,40	0,09	0,63	-0,23	
OC9	To get ahead in this City Council, it is important to know the right people.	0,38	-0,39	0,47	0,10	
OC38	Working environment and conditions allow for productive work in this City Council.	0,45	-0,35	-0,47	-0,10	
OC35	Management believes that if people are happy, productivity will take care of itself.	-0,00	0,12	-0,42	0,08	
OC7	Excessive rule, administrative detail and red tape make it impossible for new ideas to be considered.	-0,09	-0,05	0,04	0,83	
OC28	If you make a mistake in the City Council you will be punished.	0,21	0,23	0,41	0,71	
OC34	The attitude of management is that conflict between competing units and individuals can be very healthy.	-0,11	-0,21	-0,27	0,70	
OC14	We get full feedback from managers/team leaders on how we are doing our work.	-0,16	-0,06	-0,05	-0,66	
OC40	I would resign from the City Council if offered another job at a more or less the same salary.	0,36	-0,12	0,04	0,48	
OC17	There is a performance management system (PMS) in place in this City Council.	-0,26	0,19	0,08	-0,46	
OC41	Employees are proud to be working for this City Council.	0,38	0,25	0,37	-0,45	
OC18	The PMS provides valid and acceptable data on performance, as the basis of performance-related pay decisions.	-0,32	0,29	-0,13	0,43	
	Eigenvalue	9,91	7,72	4,40	3,43	
	Percentage of variance	23,05	17,95	10,24	8,00	

F<sub>1</sub>: People Care F<sub>2</sub>: Structure F<sub>3</sub>: Efficiency F<sub>4</sub>: Communication

Factor 1 was labelled *People Care*. Items that loaded on this factor were in the main variables that related to friendly environment, supportive management, and feelings of belonging. The second factor was labelled *Structure*. Items that loaded on this factor include feelings of advancement and growth, transparency, rewards and performance management system and also clarification on organisational policies, as well as on work tasks. The third factor was labelled *Efficiency*. Items that loaded on this factor include conducive working environment, recognition, and lack of organisational planning, concern for work as opposed to concern for people. The fourth factor was labelled *Communication*. This factor measured the degree on constraint on behaviour by rules, formal procedures and accepted norms, stringent authority, conflict tolerance and acceptance, emphasis on threat and punishment for mistakes or failure, feedback on performance and performance management system.

## Descriptive statistics and correlations

The descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients of the OCQ are displayed in Table 3. It is important to note that the following items were reverse scored before the descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients were computed: OC27, OC16, OC22, OC36 (all items measuring People Care); OC2 and OC42 (both items which measured Structure); OC38 OC35 OC4 (all items which measured Efficiency), and OC14, OC17, and OC41 (items which measured Communication).

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of the OCQ*

Item	Mean (Total)	SD (Total)	Mean (Item)	SD (Item)	Skewness	Kurtosis	$\alpha$
People Care	36,87	5,58	2,63	0,40	0,43	-1,28	0,77
Structure	34,80	5,86	2,91	0,49	0,47	0,18	0,87
Efficiency	22,11	5,26	2,46	0,59	0,12	-1,27	0,84
Communication (r)	25,31	2,81	3,16	0,36	-2,72	8,34	0,70

(r) – score should be reversed

Table 3 shows that, with the exception of the scores on Communication, the score on the scales are reasonably normally distributed. The score on Communication was skew (-2,72) and showed a high kurtosis (8,34). The internal consistencies of the scales are acceptable, compared to the guideline of 0,70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The results confirm the reliability of the scales of the OCQ. Communication received the lowest score (1,84 if the score is reversed), while Efficiency (2,46) was second lowest.

The Pearson correlations between the dimensions of the OCQ, age, service years and job level appear in Table 4.

Table 4

*Pearson Correlations between Organisational Climate Dimensions, Age, Service Years and Job Level*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. People Care	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Structure	-0,10	-	-	-	-	-
3. Efficiency	0,55 <sup>*++</sup>	0,04	-	-	-	-
4. Communication	-0,06	-0,10	-0,05	-	-	-
5. Age	-0,09	0,06	-0,00	0,00	-	-
6. Service years	-0,02	0,04	0,21 <sup>*</sup>	0,12	0,51 <sup>*++</sup>	-
7. Job level	-0,08	0,04	0,14	-0,18 <sup>*</sup>	0,39 <sup>*+</sup>	0,45 <sup>*+</sup>

\*  $p < 0,05$

+  $r > 0,30$  - practically significant (medium effect)

++  $r > 0,50$  - practically significant (large effect)

Table 4 indicates that a statistically and practically significant correlation was found between Efficiency and People Care (large effect). Furthermore, Efficiency is statistically significantly related to service years, while job level is statistically significantly negatively related to Communication. Age is statistically and practically significantly related to service years (large effect) and job level (medium effect). Job level is statistically and practically significantly related to service years.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used to investigate the relationship between the organisational climate variables (including People Care, Structure, Efficiency and Communication), and biographical characteristics such as job category, race, directorate and gender. The independent variables were analysed for statistical significance, using Wilk's Lambda. Lastly, Tukey's HSD tests were also done. Partial eta square ( $\eta^2$ ) was used to determine the practical significance of results. The results of the comparisons are shown in Table 5.

Table 5

*Differences in Organisational Climate Levels of the Demographic Groups*

Item	Wilk's Lambda	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	Error <i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	$\eta^2$
Job Category	0,79	4,51	8	284	0,00	0,11
Race	0,95	2,21	4	178	0,07	-
Directorate	0,82	1,48	24	590,78	0,06	-
Gender	0,94	2,63	4	174	0,36	-

Table 5 reveals that there was a significant effect of job category on the combined dependent variable organisational climate:  $F_{(8, 284)} = 4,51, p < 0,01$ ; Wilk's Lambda = 0,79;  $\eta^2 = 0,11$ ). This effect was moderate (11% of the variance explained). Lastly, Table 5 shows that there was no significant effect of race on the combined dependent variable. According to the results of the tests of between-subjects effects, Efficiency and Communication (as dimensions of organisational climate) showed statistically significant relationships with job category. Tukey's HSD tests revealed that Efficiency was perceived as higher by employees at job level 1 compared to employees at job level 3 ( $p < 0,05$ ). Furthermore, employees at level 2 obtained statistically significantly higher scores than at job level 3. There is a significant difference in Communication as perceived by employees at job level 1 compared to that as perceived by employees at job level 3. This implies that employees at job level 1 perceived communication to be better than employees at job level 3.

Race, directorate and gender had no statistically significant effect on the organisational climate.

## DISCUSSION

The aims of this study were first to assess the psychometric properties of the OCQ for employees of the Rustenburg municipality in South Africa, and to investigate whether employees of different demographic groups experienced different levels of organisational climate.

The results showed that the OCQ consists of four factors, namely people care, structure, efficiency, and communication. The four factors of the OCQ had sufficient internal consistencies. Statistically significant differences were found between the levels of organisational climate of employees in terms of age, service years and job level. Race, directorate and gender had no statistical effect on organisational climate. The significance of the findings is firstly, that the construct validity of the OCQ received support. In respect of the OCQ, contrary to the nine dimensional factor structure which has been confirmed by Litwin and Stringer (1968) (i.e. structure, responsibility, reward, risk, warmth, support, standards, conflict, and identity), and also, contrary to South African studies such as that of Combrink (2004), which confirmed a six dimensional factor structure (i.e. recognition and feedback, management, work relationships, task characteristics, responsibility, and work pressure ) the present study has found that the OCQ is a four dimensional construct, namely, people care, structure, efficiency and communication.

The first dimension, *people care*, refers to support for the supervisor and the organisation as a whole, in the form of having a “sense” of belonging and also being part of the decision-making process, as well as getting cooperation from the supervisor and from the colleagues, and having unconditional positive regard between people. The second dimension, *structure*, deals with reward and performance management system, feelings of advancement and growth, transparency, clarification on organisational policies as well as on work tasks. The third dimension, *efficiency*, implies a conducive working environment, recognition, lack of organisational planning and concern for work as opposed to concern for people. The fourth dimension, *communication*, measured the degree on constraint on behaviour by rules, formal procedures and accepted norms, stringent authority, conflict, tolerance and acceptance, emphasis on threat and punishment for mistakes or failure, feedback on performance, and performance management system.

The four factors showed acceptable internal consistencies (Table 3). Communication showed the lowest mean score and efficiency received the second lowest mean score. Mathebula (2006) adds to the above finding that most municipalities in the province do not have communication personnel and those that do have communicators do not involve them in decision making. Zohar (2008) also contends that communication has been found to influence organisational climate. Organisational climate can have a dramatic effect on motivation and satisfaction (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). All these aspects were found to be problematic.

Secondly, differences in levels of organisational climate between demographic groups were assessed. As far as job level is concerned, employees at different job levels perceived organisational climate differently. The results show that job level and service years are statistically significantly positively correlated. This implies that the higher the job level, the higher the level of organisational climate an employee will experience. The above finding is supported by the research of Dienesch and Robert (1986) whereby it was found that salespeople who rank in the top echelon tend to enjoy privileged relationships with management, whereas others experience distant relationships.

Employees at higher job levels perceived efficiency to be high, whereas those at the lower levels perceived it as low. This implies that the higher the job level the higher the efficiency of the employees. Therefore employees at higher job levels tend to experience organisational climate more than employees at lower job levels. In an analysis of Wilk's Lambda values, there is practically significant difference of medium effect found only for job category and gender. No statistically significant differences were found between employees at different job levels. Job category is the lowest and this implies that job category is the most important factor.

Age also correlated with service years. Employees with longer service experienced higher levels of organisational climate than employees with lesser service years. Employees with more years of service perceive that they are experienced. Race, directorate and gender had no statistically significant relationship with organisational climate. This means that they cannot be seen as a determining factor of climate in the Rustenburg municipality. It is worth mentioning that in relation to race, the majority of respondents were blacks (84,1%), and female (59,2%).

In conclusion, this study could serve as a standard regarding measuring experiences of employees on climate in the municipalities in South Africa. The four-factor structure of the organisational climate construct was confirmed, as well as the internal consistencies of the scales. Based on the results of the study, it would seem that the OCQ could be regarded as a suitable instrument for measuring climate in municipalities in South Africa.

The study has several limitations. Firstly, the use of self-report measures to assess all dimensions was exclusively relied on. It must be kept in mind that a self-report questionnaire

has limitations. Self-report bias, as well as respondents' motivation could impact on the results (Kim & George, 2005). Hoyt, Warbassa, and Chu (2006) mention that there are pervasive threats to construct validity when researchers exclusively use self-report measures. A further limitation of the study was cross-sectional measurement. Longitudinal data would allow for a better understanding of the true nature of climate in the municipality. The occurrence of missing percentage values in some of the demographic groups is a further limitation. More work with a larger and more representative sample of different races and languages can improve the quality of the research.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the menacing nature of organisational climate, the findings of this study are important in order to improve the quality of service delivery for municipal employees in South Africa. However, because this study is the first of its kind to validate the OCQ in the domain of municipal employees in South Africa, focusing only on municipal employees in the Rustenburg municipality, it is important that all municipal employees in South Africa be included in a future study to improve on the validity of the current study. It was also not possible to test the causal relationship between variables; therefore a longitudinal study should be undertaken to investigate it.

There is common attitude or stereotype that results in a general perception by public that municipal services are poor. Based on the findings of the study, climate in the municipality is on a very subjective level and it seems to be experienced so in terms of people care, structure, efficiency and communication. All these aspects seem to be experienced by different demographic groups. This is a disturbing finding, taking into consideration the environment that municipal employees are operating from. One then starts asking questions as to whether employees of the Rustenburg municipality are able to effectively communicate with the public about services the public is expecting to be provided with if communication is at a subjective level. Managers should be able to influence employees to achieve organisational objectives. Hence it is difficult for employees to perform optimally if they are unable to communicate effectively with their managers. Zohar (2008) contends that communication has been found to have a strong influence on organisational climate. Organisational climate can have a dramatic effect on motivation and satisfaction (Litwin & Stringer, 1968).

Whilst it is expected from the municipality to consult extensively with the public on the products and services it provides, it will also be very crucial for managers to conduct surveys on employees' opinions and also on the effects of climate to enable them to identify areas which need immediate attention. If service delivery is increased, the satisfaction levels of the public will be affected positively. Low levels of strikes or no strikes at all will be experienced in the municipality. The Lekgotla HR Report (2008/2009) also indicated that there is a high turnover level in managerial positions. This is also a disturbing trend which requires an in-depth investigation to establish the underlying factors thereof.

Organisational climate surveys should be conducted, also due to the fact that staff turnover is higher than normal in the municipality. This will assist in providing a very clear view of what issues concern staff and whether there is a "silo" effect taking place within the municipality. This will also assist management to analyse the views of staff members over a wide range of municipal performance and motivational areas.

Interventions can be used by the municipal management team which include giving feedback regarding the operations of the municipality, matching the needs of employees with various task demands, and informing employees on matters of concern, programmes in team building or business process re-engineering. This is an important instrument of organisational development with the objective of making the municipality more effective. This could affect employee attitude profoundly and improve overall organisational climate in the municipality.

Future research may include investigating the specific strategies and changes implemented by managers that have a profound impact on influencing the organisational climate in the municipality.

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# SERVICE DELIVERY IN A MUNICIPALITY IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to assess the psychometric properties of the Questionnaire on the Standards of Service as Perceived by the Public (QSSPP), and to investigate the extent to which the municipality in Rustenburg complies with the Batho Pele principles when delivering services. A cross-sectional survey design with a convenient sample ( $N = 252$ ) was used. The results showed that the QSSPP consists of two scales, namely Consultation and Efficiency. The scales showed acceptable internal consistencies. The results showed that customers, who feel they are not sufficiently consulted on services, also feel that the services they received were not effective. Knowledge of the service environment was perceived to be poor, and consultation on services was perceived as a challenge. The public also perceived responsiveness to be poor.

## OPSOMMING

Die doelstellings van hierdie studie was om die psigometriese eienskappe van die Vraelys oor die Standaard van Dienste (Questionnaire on the Standards of Service as Perceived by the Public- QSSPP) te bepaal en die mate waarin die munisipaliteit in Rustenburg ten opsigte van dienslewering aan die Batho Pele-beginsels voldoen, te ondersoek. 'n Dwarssnee-opnameontwerp met 'n gerieflikheidsteekproef ( $N = 252$ ) is gebruik. Die resultate het aangetoon dat die QSS uit twee faktore bestaan, naamlik Konsultasie en Doelmatigheid. Die skale het aanvaarbare interne konsekwentheid getoon. Verder het die resultate aangedui dat kliënte wat meen dat hulle nie voldoende oor dienste geraadpleeg is nie, ook gemeen dat die dienste wat hulle ontvang, nie toereikend is nie. Kennis aangaande die diensomgewing is beskou as swak, en konsultasie oor dienste is as 'n uitdaging gesien. Die publiek het responsiwiteit ook as swak beskou.

The advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994 brought with it not only political transformation, but also the institutional reforms that were vital for dealing with the socio-economic and developmental challenges in the country. These changes were part of an overall process of democratic transformation that provided the necessary political inclination at the highest levels of government to provide basic services to the community, and especially previously disadvantaged communities in South Africa (Naidoo, 2000). The political reforms intended to make local authorities democratically accountable to their citizens, and also efficient and effective in delivering services (Parnell & Mabina, 1994).

As a sphere of government, municipalities are faced with various challenges relating to transformation and service delivery. Many municipalities are perceived to be extravagant and failing to respond to the real needs of their communities (Dhlamini, 2006). Service delivery by municipalities in South Africa, and specifically in the North West Province, is regarded as poor, resulting in mass protests. These protests manifest due to community frustration with the pace and scale of service delivery, and employment creation. According to Tapscott (2007), communities have lost trust and confidence in the service delivery by municipalities.

Prior to 1994, the grand policy of separate development meant that local government in South Africa was constructed separately for Africans, Coloureds, Indians and Whites. However, these attempts were unsuccessful because the local authorities which were established were not accepted by the Coloureds, the Africans and the Indians (Turok, 2000). Inhabitants of the African urban areas established civic associations which demanded unified non-racial local authorities for the adjoining urban areas and local authorities. In the absence of truly representative local government, civics (through the South African National Civic Association) provided an alternative channel of communities to take up grievances with the state. These grievances included inadequate housing, urban infrastructure and access to the municipal.

In terms of Chapter 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (South Africa, 1996), local government is described as a distinct sphere of government in its own right and no longer a function of National or Provincial government. It is a sphere of government closest to the community, and this strategic position makes it the ideal tool for developmental government. The objective of Local Government in terms of Section 152(1) of the Constitution South Africa (1996) indicates that each and every municipality *must strive to*

achieve within its financial and administration capacity to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities, to ensure that services are provided to communities in a sustainable manner, to promote a safe and healthy environment, and to promote community participation in local affairs.

These objectives mean that municipalities must be able to level the playing field for the communities to take part in their affairs and also that the elected and appointed officials must act responsibly and account to the communities. Services rendered by municipalities must be sustainable and benefit the communities so that there is value for their money, since the public is expected to pay for those services. For social and economic development to be achieved, it is also important for local authorities, as the first line of service delivery, to be aware of the socio-economic factors prevailing in the communities they serve so that when councillors make policies, they can take these factors into consideration. Failure to do so could result in the developmental policies and projects that fail in benefitting the wider community (Martin, 2000).

It is widely acknowledged that municipalities in South Africa are critical to the country's developmental process and to the delivery of services to communities. Macdonald and Pape (2002) report that the severe lack of capacity at municipal level tends to come in the form of inadequate managerial skills and technical expertise, which has proven to be debilitating for service delivery. Municipalities in South Africa have to improve their service delivery and become more efficient (Hemson, 2002). The perceived lack of service orientation at municipal level, including ineffective and inefficient administrative structures, are often seen as obstacles to deal with the huge service backlogs in many poor communities (Naidoo, 2000).

At this point it is important to establish clarity on what is meant by *the customers* that are hereby referred to. According to Riekert (2001), customers are all citizens who make use of a particular service. A customer can be defined as a person you must deal with or a person or institute that buys goods or services. In the context of governance, customers are those who use the services and products delivered and provided by government institutions (Fox, Scwella, & Wissink, 1991). This analysis determines the customers and potential customers of the intended service. This means that services delivered by municipalities to their customers should be those that reflect the local challenges the municipality faces (Martin,

2000). When aiming to determine what influences customer satisfaction, research has shown that customers, as service users, judge the quality of services according to two criteria: firstly, whether the services will help them achieve the outcomes they aspire to, and secondly, whether services are delivered in ways that will empower them (Evers, Haverinen, Leichensring, & Wistow, 1997). Customer satisfaction is achieved by economically delivering services that meet customer requirements (Grenier, 1988).

It is crucial that communities participate in predetermining the product (service) which will be offered to them. In this way it will be possible to effectively establish what the needs and expectations of the customers are (Bekker, 1996). These needs and expectations can therefore be managed effectively from the onset. This will assist in prioritising municipal activities towards allocating resources and getting the buy-in of potential customers, because it is important to balance the expectations against available resources at the beginning of the process of implementing any programme of service delivery.

Rendering services to the public is not just a standing routine to be performed by the municipality, but a direct need to respond to the needs and expectations of the customers the municipality serves. The process entails the analysis of both the internal and the external customers and environments within which the municipality must perform its function (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 2002; Wistow, 1997).

Municipalities are responsible for providing basic services to everyone living within their jurisdiction. These basic services include supplying water, collecting and disposing of sewage, removing refuse, supplying electricity and gas, building and maintaining municipal roads, providing storm-water drainage, street lighting, municipal parks and recreation (Ismail, Bayat, & Meyer, 1997)

Basic services have a direct and immediate effect on the quality of the lives of people in a community. For example, if water provided by the municipality is of poor quality or refuse is not collected, this will contribute to the creation of an unhealthy and unsafe living environment for residents living within the municipality concerned (Martin, 2000). This will ultimately lead to illnesses which might result in death. Poor services can also make it difficult for the municipality to attract business, and this will result in limited job

opportunities. Through free basic services poor people are able to gain access to socio-economic opportunities (McDonald & Pape, 2002).

The quest for service delivery in South Africa has increased over the past decade. This is evident from the conduct of local communities and citizens that embark, amongst others, on mass actions and taking public officials hostage in an effort to force government to improve service delivery (Abedian, Strachan, & Ajam, 2001). Therefore it is important for municipalities to assess how satisfied customers are with services rendered to them, using the Batho Pele as a guide.

The concept of Batho Pele is also applicable to service delivery. The word (*Batho Pele*) is a Sesotho adape meaning “people first”. Batho Pele sought to transform public service delivery by introducing a customer oriented approach that puts people first. In supporting the above statement the Batho Pele Handbook (2003) states that the public bases its perceptions of government on the nature and quality of the services it experiences at the hands of public servants. The frontline service providers are the ‘face’ of government in the perspective of communities. It is therefore important to assess the opinions of the public regarding the service delivery by the municipality. When assessing customer satisfaction with service delivery in a municipality, it is necessary to clarify the nature of the Batho Pele principles so that the extent to which the municipality adheres to these principles can be assessed and interventions implemented to correct shortcomings.

Rustenburg has been identified as one of the fastest growing urban areas in South Africa. Rustenburg is one of the five municipalities within the Bojanala District Municipality in the North West Province of South Africa which has been granted host city status by Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) for 2010 World Cup (Westoll, 2007). It is also important to mention that South African government is the significant funder of the event (Simpson, 2007). The Rustenburg municipality has in recent months received a huge amount of negative publicity regarding service delivery performance from most members of the public, indicating that urgent improvements in service delivery are required. Therefore assessing the level of service delivery of the municipality as perceived by customers will assist the management of the municipality in identifying key areas of concern and making a choice between alternatives in service improvement features.

Public Service transformation is one of the top priorities in the agenda of the South African government. Whilst there are numerous policy documents on improved, economical, efficient service delivery, the most important one is the White Paper on Public Service Delivery (South Africa, 1997). One of the eight “Batho Pele” principles argues for a more and better informed society. The public should be entitled to full accurate information concerning the public services they receive. The primary focus therefore should be on the public as customers. This encourages a climate of openness and public accountability.

The research problem can be summarised as follows: The primary delivery of services to the public is done by municipalities. However, it seems that they experience difficulties to deliver basic services in an effective and efficient way (and which is in line with the principles of Batho Pele): This leads to a loss of public trust in municipalities and eventually in the government (Tapscott, 2007). Therefore it is necessary to develop and validate an instrument which can be used to measure experiences of service delivery and to assess customers of a municipality’s perceptions of service delivery. The objectives of this study were to assess the psychometric properties of the Questionnaire on the Standards of Service (QSS) as perceived by customers of a municipality in the North West Province of South Africa, and to investigate the extent to which the municipality complies with the Batho Pele principles of service delivery.

### **Local government in South Africa**

Within the framework of the Constitution, the White Paper for Local Government (1998) established a basis for a new developmental local government system which is committed to working with civil society and communities to create sustainable human settlements which provide for a decent quality of life which will meet the social and material needs of the community in a holistic manner.

Local authorities have an important role to play in development. According to Fox and Meyer (1995), development is a process of improving the quality of human lives. This involves creating conditions conducive to growth through the establishment of economic, political and social institutions that promote human dignity and respect. Wissink (1999) argues that

development in local government is aimed at eliminating poverty caused by lack of the means to provide food, clothing, housing and other material needs.

This involves equipping the municipal inhabitants materially and spiritually so that each is able to pursue a specific standard of living, enjoys meaningful opportunities and lives accordingly to pursued personal values. Local authorities have to fulfil an important role in development. Being the first line of service delivery makes them aware of the socio-economic factors prevailing in the communities they serve.

The Constitution of South Africa (1996) and the Local Government White Paper paved way for the introduction of important legislation, e.g. the Local Government Municipal Demarcation Act 27 of 1998, the Local Government Municipal System Act 32 of 2000, and the Local Government Municipal Finance Management Bill, 2001, and the Municipal Structures Act (South Africa, 2002).

- The Municipal Demarcation Act. The Constitution calls for the establishment of an independent authority to demarcate municipal boundaries and for the establishment of criteria and procedures for the demarcation (South Africa 1996). This Act provided for the establishment of a Demarcation Board that demarcated municipal boundaries (South Africa, 1998b). This Board performed and accomplished its mission in 2000.
- The Municipal Structures Act. This act, together with the Constitution, establishes a system of categories and types of municipality as follows: Category A (a metropolitan area); Category B (a local municipality that shares authority with the district municipality in which it is located); and Category C (a district municipality that has authority to administer and make rules in a locality with more than one local municipality (South Africa, 2000).
- The Municipal Systems Act. The focus of this act is mainly on the internal systems and administration of municipalities. The act establishes the basic principles and mechanism to give effect to the vision of the developmental local government. Central to the Act is the provision of an enabling environment for municipalities to perform and exercise their executive authority. The Municipal Systems Act also introduces a culture of high performance and quality in the operation of local governments (South Africa, 2000).

Various categories of local government exist in South Africa, namely metropolitan councils, district municipalities, local councils, and traditional municipalities. Metropolitan councils exist in large cities and/or represent a complex of municipal authorities (Zybrands, 2000). Metropolitan councils are established in areas where there are high population densities, and an extensive movement of people, goods and services, in centres of economic activities which are characterised by a complex and diverse economy, and in single areas for which integrated development planning is desirable. The following metropolitan councils exist in South Africa: Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Durban, Johannesburg, the East Rand, and Pretoria. Metropolitan councils have drawbacks, specifically because they are often large and therefore not always in touch with the needs of local communities. The enforcement of accountability also becomes difficult in such areas.

District municipalities formed over cross-provincial boundaries and contain other municipalities (known as local municipalities). District municipalities fulfil a developmental role, especially in disadvantaged rural areas. There are 47 district municipalities in South Africa (Zybrands, 2000).

Local councils integrated service delivery to previously racially segregated communities. According to Zybrands (2000), there are 231 local municipalities in South Africa. Many of these municipalities provide services to vast areas in their vicinity. Traditional leaders may form part of a local municipality.

Section 195 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 stipulates that public administration should adhere to a number of principles, including that:

- A high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained.
- Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted.
- Public administration must be developmental and be public oriented.
- Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- People's needs must be responded to, and the public must be encouraged to participate in policy making.
- Public administration must be accountable.
- Transparency must be fostered by providing the public with timely, accessible and accurate information.

- Good human-resource management and career development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated.
- Public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation.

The White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery, 1997 considers the public as customers who must be given priority in terms of the Batho Pele principle and the enhancement of public participation has been stipulated therein.

### **Service delivery**

Riekert (2001) defines service delivery as the provision of a product or service by a government body to a community that was promised to, or which is expected by the community. Service delivery also means supplying users with services needed or demanded. Fox, Meyer and Van (1995) define service delivery as the provision of public activities, benefits or satisfaction to the customers. Service delivery should be designed around the needs of end users, rather than departmental bureaucracies, or the convenience of delivery institutions (Martin, 2000). Services should be a means to an end, and that end is a better quality of life (Fox et al., 1995). Since the South African government is encouraging citizen participation in all its activities, especially in the local sphere of government, this principal means that when municipalities deliver services to their constituencies such services should be centred on the needs of the local people, not according to the needs of the municipal officials. This means that services that are delivered by municipalities should be those that reflect the local challenges the municipality faces.

Customers, as the users of services, are concerned about the nature of services they receive and how those services can help them. Woodruff (1997) has for example indicated that customers are now preoccupied with obtaining values, which suggests that organizations should intensify their focus on creating enhanced or new values. Dawes and Brown (2000) indicated that understanding how the consumers perceive value in this postmodern environment therefore becomes a central survival issue for organisations in the service sector.

## **The Batho Pele programme and principles**

In 1997 the new dispensation introduced the White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery in its attempt to build a people-centred government. This policy is based on the Government's vision to put "people first" in the process of service delivery, effectively meaning that service delivery should be citizen-centred (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 2002). It is an initiative that allows public servants to strive for excellence. It is equally expected of them to commit them to the continuum to which there is courtesy, value for money, information, redress and service delivery improvements. Public officials will be transparent in their ways of rendering services in order to enable customers to hold them accountable (South Africa, 2003).

In order to enhance service delivery, the transformation of local government should not only focus on affecting work ethical issues such as attitude and behaviour, the process should also aim at auditing and affecting organisational structures such as outdated government processes and systems (South Africa, 1997). The improved processes and systems will re-orientate the public service to the business approach of putting customers first, as propagated through the Batho Pele programme (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 2002).

Every person who works in the public service should be proud to be a servant of the people and relish the challenge of providing improved services to all. Batho Pele is the soul of the public service and the heartbeat of the nation that will help the nation to rise above the legacies of the past and drive the nation forward with courage and pride (Batho Pele Handbook, 2003). The purpose of the Batho Pele White Paper is to provide a policy framework and a practical implementation strategy for the transformation of public service delivery. It focuses on 'how' public services are provided, rather than on 'which' services are provided and its main intent is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the way in which the services are delivered (Batho Pele Handbook, 2003).

Batho Pele is not a plan in the sense that one has strategic plans, operational plans, action plans, and human resource plans, but an attitude that shapes the character of the public service (Batho Pele Handbook). Principles are normative guidelines, societal value systems or established legal rules (Van der Waldt & Du Toit, 2002). The Batho Pele principles are designed to create a framework which regulates the relationship between *public servants and*

the public as their client base. These principles must be present in all government departments and local municipalities to institutionalise effective service delivery and strengthen aspects of internal accountability. Van der Waldt and Du Toit (2002) further indicate that the Batho Pele programme confirms the legitimate right of citizens to be treated with dignity and courtesy and to receive quality and sustainable services.

One of the principles of the White Paper (1998) requires that national and provincial departments regularly and systematically consult citizens not only on the service but also on the provision of new basic services to those who lack them. Although the study flows from the above-mentioned Batho Pele principles requirements of public satisfaction levels on service delivery, it also takes the eight principles into account as they are intertwined and collectively guide all three spheres of government efforts of transforming service delivery. For example, citizen satisfaction levels may be influenced by the extent to which there is courtesy, information and redress in the municipal service delivery.

The following Batho Pele principles informed this study (Batho Pele Handbook, 2003):

- **Consultation.** This means creating an opportunity for communities to influence and take part in the determination of service delivery priorities. Citizens should also be consulted on the level and quality of the services they receive and wherever possible they should be given a choice regarding the services they are offered. The Batho Pele principle of consultation strives to promote service excellence so that service can be defined and appropriate standards set.
- **Service standards.** This is the determination of quality of the level of services to be delivered. The involvement of communities in determining these service standards is likely to turn service standards into a Service Agreement Charter, between the particular local municipality and communities which stand to be beneficiaries of the service. Communities are likely to be supportive if they are aware of what they can expect.
- **Access.** A creation of equal access means to ensure that everybody is able to reach the benefit irrespective of social class, race, gender, religion and physical condition.
- **Courtesy.** Ensuring courtesy means treating a person with respect and dignity. It is important that services should be rendered in a professional respectful, friendly, efficient and helpful manner.

- **Information.** The provision of information will empower customers to exercise their right to good services. It is through the best communication that communities will know as to how, where and when and by whom services are provided.
- **Openness and transparency.** The public should be told how the municipality is run, what the costs involved are and who is in charge.
- **Redress.** If the promised standard is not delivered, the public should be offered an apology and a full explanation, and a speedy and effective remedy should be implemented. When complaints are laid, the public should receive a sympathetic positive response.
- **Value for money.** Quality for services provided should relate to the cost value. The same public who are beneficiaries contribute to the state coffers as taxpayers. This places an obligation on municipality officials to provide services in an efficient, effective and economic manner.

The eight principles of the Batho Pele as listed above have more to do with the human values and dignity than operational processes. Batho Pele is a way of conducting oneself in the presence of others. It is also a preparedness to acknowledge their rights and needs and a willingness to help them add value to their lives. Batho Pele is a commitment to other people that echoes through the ages of human compassion (Batho Pele Handbook 2003, p. 25). The creation of a better life for all is about the restoration of human dignity. The Batho Pele principles put into practice the human values as enshrined in the Bill of Rights as reflected in Chapter two of the Constitution (South Africa, 1996). This is a set of activities aiming at encouraging and promoting change in behaviour.

## METHOD

### Research design

A cross-sectional survey design was utilised to reach the research objectives. A correlation design was also used. This design can be used to assess interrelationships among variables at a certain point in time, without any planned intervention. According to Shaughnessy and Zechmeister (1997), this design is ideal when the aim of the study is predictive and descriptive by nature. Participants were informed regarding the purpose of the questionnaire,

namely, that it was to gather voluntary responses on how they perceive service delivery in the municipality.

## **Participants**

The study population of ( $N = 300$ ) Rustenburg municipal public in the North West Province was targeted through accidental sampling. Of the 300 questionnaires collected, only 252 could be used. A response rate of 84% was achieved in this study. The sample of the study comprised the diverse population of the Rustenburg municipal areas who are the users of the services provided by the municipality.

## **Measuring instruments**

The *Questionnaire on the Standards of Service* (QSS) was developed by the researchers. The items of the QSS were formulated from the Batho Pele principles (Batho Pele Handbook, 2003) with the purpose of assessing the quality of services provided and experienced by the public as end users. The questionnaire comprised 20 formulated items, of which all the dimensions were based on the Batho Pele principles. For example, without service standards, the reliability of the service or product cannot be assessed. Respondents indicated the extent to which they agree with each statement on a five-point scale, ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*always*). The questions from The Batho Pele principles were formulated regarding the following dimensions: consultation, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress, and value for money. The questions asked cover most of the major activities and functions of employees in the municipality and relates to consultation, information sharing and redress and included questions such as: “Is consultation an ongoing process?”, “How often do you have access to information that affects you in the City Council?” Other dimensions, such as friendliness and courtesy have also been included in the questionnaire: “Do the staff members smile when attending to you”, and “Do they treat you with respect?” The questionnaire was translated into the three languages mostly used in the Rustenburg municipal area, i.e. English, Afrikaans and Setswana.

A biographical questionnaire was not included in the QSS due to the fact that when commencing with the study it was established that the public had indicated their willingness in completing the questionnaire only if they would be allowed to remain anonymous.

Therefore for the public to be free in expressing their views in relation to their perceptions and experiences with service delivery, a biographical questionnaire was not included.

### **Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS 16.0 Program (SPSS, 2008). The reliability and validity of the QSS were assessed by means of Cronbach alpha coefficients and exploratory factor analysis respectively. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were computed to describe the data.

Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means and standard deviations) were used to analyse the data. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationships between variables. A cut-off point of  $p= 0,05$  was set for the statistical significance of the results. Effect sizes were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings (Cohen, 1988). A cut-off of 0,30 medium effect was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Exploratory factor analyses were used to explore the factors' structures of the QSS. First, a simple principal components analysis was conducted on the items of the QSS. The eigenvalues and scree plot were studied to determine the number of factors. Second, principal axis factor analysis with a direct oblimin rotation was conducted if factors were related ( $r > 0,30$ ). Third, a principal axis factor analysis with a varimax rotation was used if the obtained factors were not related.

### **Procedure**

A field study was conducted in the Rustenburg municipality area. The study coverage was spread throughout the municipality service points. The front line staff of the municipality interface directly with the public, most front line service points were visited, and the 'walk-in' public were requested to complete the questionnaires as end users of the services. There was willingness on the part of the public to complete the questionnaires.

## RESULTS

### Frequencies

The frequencies and percentages of customers' perceptions of service delivery in the municipality are reported in Table 1. The last column of the table indicates the percentage of low responses on a specific item (i.e. when respondents scored between 1 and 3).

Table 1

*Perceptions of Service Delivery (Percentages)*

	1 (Never)	2	3	4	5 (Always)	Low responses
How often are you consulted on the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided to you?	36,4	34,9	15,3	6,1	7,3	71,3
How often has the approach employed been useful in determining your needs?	23,0	33,7	31,4	5,7	6,1	56,7
Is consultation often an ongoing process, e.g. IMBIZO's?	8,9	46,7	34,0	7,3	3,1	55,6
Is consultation often helpful?	18,0	47,1	20,7	10,7	3,4	65,1
How often are service standards agreed with you as end user?	17,7	48,8	24,2	7,3	1,9	66,5
How often are service standards communicated with you as end user?	17,2	41,4	34,1	4,6	2,7	58,6
How often do you have access to information that affects you in the City Council?	12,7	42,2	35,4	5,8	1,9	54,9
How often has provision been made for physically challenged people, for example ramps for people in wheelchairs, and guide rails and available information for blind people in the Rustenburg City Council?	10,3	23,8	55,9	5,0	5,0	34,1
How often do employees from the City Council conduct a public opinion survey to establish levels of service delivery?	13,1	51,2	25,8	7,3	2,7	64,3
How often are employees helpful?	14,2	44,6	26,5	10,4	4,2	58,8
Do they smile when attending to you?	17,6	50,6	19,2	8,8	3,8	68,2
Do they treat you with respect and dignity as end user?	14,6	50,6	24,2	6,1	4,6	65,2
How often is information on service delivery readily available?	20,2	47,3	23,3	7,0	2,3	67,5
Do you often know who the head of the Rustenburg City Council is and how much it costs to run the City Council?	31,0	57,5	23,4	5,4	2,7	88,5
How often is that information readily available to you as end user?	14,2	55,2	20,7	5,4	4,6	69,4
Does the City Council have a complaints-handling system in place?	13,5	36,9	38,1	10,0	1,5	50,4
How often is it effective?	21,5	41,0	21,1	5,4	3,1	62,5
How often are the services provided by the City Council economical and efficient?	24,5	38,7	24,1	10,3	2,3	63,2
How often is the response rate "rapid" according to the Service Commitment Charter?	26,4	44,1	18,8	8,8	1,9	70,5
How often do you think employees of the Rustenburg City Council adhere to the Batho Pele principles?	28,4	29,1	26,1	9,2	7,3	57,5

Table 1 shows the following perceptions of service delivery in the Rustenburg Municipality:

The first theme concerns knowledge of the municipality and its structures. A large percentage of the participants (88,5%) reported that they do not know who the head of the municipality is, and that they do not know how much it costs to run the municipality. This means that the public do not know the service delivery environment. If the public as beneficiaries had a better understanding of the processes underpinning municipal planning and budget cycle, they would understand how to use municipal services better. Customer knowledge of the services available in the municipality would also improve value for money for both the customer and the municipality.

The second theme has to do with consultation, and it received the second highest negative response on the lack of consultation of the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided (71,3%). The participants perceived consultation not being helpful (65,1%), and (56,7%) report that their experience as it relates to the approach which is in use at the municipality in determining their needs as end users is not helpful. The participants negatively experienced consultation as often not an ongoing process, and this seems not to be a good rating (55,6%). The overall picture created by these responses indicate that the public feel that they are not consulted extensively, and as a result their needs are not known and can therefore not be responded to. There is lack of public-centred service delivery in the municipality.

Responsiveness is the third theme. It concerns “turn-around time”. This is one of the important aspects of service quality to the public in which they expect services to be rendered within a reasonable time. The participants scored (70,5%), which means that the response rate according to the Service Commitment Charter is not as “rapid” as it is supposed to be. The negative response to this theme means that most customers of the municipality expect it to deliver better and quicker services and that “turn-around time” still remains a problem within the Rustenburg municipality.

The fourth theme concerns information. Information is one of the Batho Pele principles and it advocates that the public should be given full and accurate information on public services they are entitled to receive. Of the respondents who took part in this study, (69,4%), reported that information is not readily available to them as end users and neither is information on service delivery readily available to them, as (67,5%) reported. The ineffectiveness of the

complaints-handling system was rated at (62,5%), and lack of accessibility to information in the municipality that affects them was rated at (54,9%). The public regard access to information a challenge in the municipality. The perception of the participants regarding the information-handling system not being place in the municipality was also given a low rating of (50,4%).

Friendliness, courtesy and empathy comprise the fifth theme. Municipal staff, especially those in the front-line, has significant influence in the perceptions of the public as far as service is concerned. Perceptions and opinions concerning the public service delivery chain are developed at this interface. Friendly staff members must be approachable and also need to show courtesy if the public are to feel that they are being treated with respect and dignity. Empathy refers to the level of care and compassion experienced by the public, and this affects the environment of effective service delivery. The public should receive a sympathetic positive response when mistakes have occurred. The participants (68,2%) report that employees are not friendly, and (65,2%) of the participants reported that the municipal staff are not treating them with dignity and respect as end users, and (58,8%) also rated employees of the municipality not being helpful.

Efficiency of services is also very important to the public. This sixth theme concerns perceptions, expectations as well as experiences of the public in relation to service standards in the municipality. The participants report that service standards are not often agreed with them as end users (66,5%), and (64,3%) reported that public opinion surveys to establish levels of service are not often conducted. The eighth principle of the Batho Pele, value for money encourages public servants to prioritise the use of the resources, to cut costs and to spend carefully, while at the same time ensuring that effective service delivery is not compromised. The participants scored (63,2%) on this principle, reporting that services provided by the municipality are not economical and also not efficient.

The seventh theme, namely compliance, received (57,5%). The public reported that employees of the municipality do not adhere to the Batho Pele principles. This is a striking feature produced by this study, and is also a concern in the municipality. Batho Pele Handbook (2003) stressed that the transformed South African Public Service will be judged by one criterion above all, and that is its effectiveness in the delivery services which meet the

basic needs of all South African citizens. It is also important to note that the above-mentioned principles are intertwined; hence they cannot be achieved in isolation. Most of the Batho Pele principles received negative responses. It clearly indicates that the municipal staff members do not comply with the principles when delivering services.

Tangibles (state of the facilities) is the last and eighth theme. This is the physical appearance and availability of facilities and equipment affecting the perception of the public on service delivery. These tangibles tend to be the area given priority when service delivery is being considered. Only (34,1%), of the public reports that provision has been made for physically challenged people in the Rustenburg municipality. This is the only theme in this study which received a positive response from the public.

### Construct validity of the questionnaire

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 20 items of the QSP. The results showed that three components had eigenvalues larger than one, but an analysis of the scree plot showed that two could be extracted. The three components explained 57,83% of the total variance.

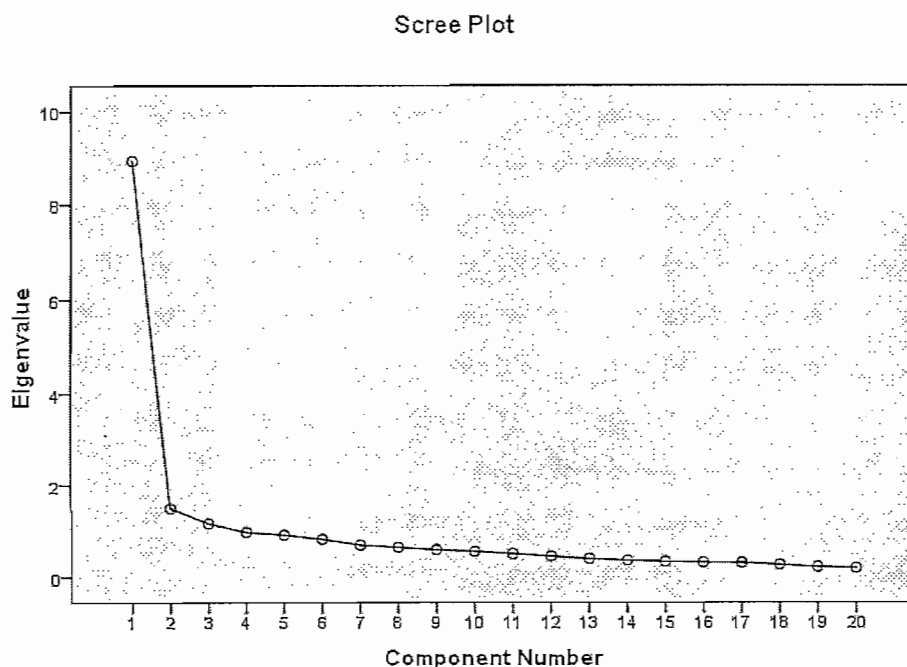


Figure 1. Scree plot for the items of the SSPPQ

Subsequently a principal axis factor analysis with a direct oblimin rotation was carried out on the items of the SSPPQ. Table 2 shows the results of the principal axis factor analysis.

Table 2

*Pattern Matrix of the SSPPQ*

Item	F <sub>1</sub>	F <sub>2</sub>	<i>h</i> <sup>2</sup>
Q3 Is consultation often an ongoing process, e.g. IMBIZO's?	<b>0,76</b>	0,13	0,47
Q2 How often has the approach employed been useful in determining your needs?	<b>0,76</b>	0,01	0,56
Q1 How often are you consulted on the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided to you?	<b>0,66</b>	-0,02	0,45
Q7 How often do you have access to information that affects you in the City Council?	<b>0,65</b>	0,01	0,41
Q6 How often are Service Standards communicated with you as end users?	<b>0,62</b>	-0,08	0,45
Q5 How often are Service Standards agreed with you as end users?	<b>0,55</b>	-0,20	0,44
Q4 Is consultation often helpful?	<b>0,55</b>	-0,17	0,44
Q9 How often do the employees from the City Council conduct a public opinion survey to establish levels of Service Delivery?	<b>0,51</b>	-0,17	0,40
Q16 Does the City Council have a complaints-handling system in place?	<b>0,44</b>	-0,20	0,35
Q20 How often do you think employees of Rustenburg City Council adhere to the Batho Pele Principles?	-0,28	<b>-0,90</b>	0,56
Q18 How often are the services provided by the City Council economical and efficient?	0,10	<b>-0,71</b>	0,60
Q11 Do they smile when attending you?	0,18	<b>-0,62</b>	0,56
Q13 How often is information on service delivery readily available?	0,23	<b>-0,60</b>	0,59
Q19 How often is the response rate rapid according to the Service Commitment Charter?	0,12	<b>-0,58</b>	0,44
Q15 How often is that information readily available to you as end users?	0,20	<b>-0,56</b>	0,49
Q12 Do they treat you as end users with respect and dignity as end users?	0,22	<b>-0,55</b>	0,50
Q10 How often are employees helpful?	0,34	<b>-0,49</b>	0,56
Q17 How often is it effective?	0,29	<b>-0,47</b>	0,49
Q14 Do you often know who the Head of the Rustenburg City Council is and how much it costs to run the City Council?	0,33	<b>-0,45</b>	0,50
Q8 How often have provisions been made for physically challenged people in the Rustenburg City Council?	0,18	0,18	0,10
Eigenvalue	8,92	1,49	
Percentage of variance	44,59	7,44	

F<sub>1</sub>: Consultation F<sub>2</sub>: Efficiency

Factor 1 was labelled *Consultation*. The Batho Pele principle of consultation with the public endeavours to promote service excellence so that the services can be defined and appropriate standards set. These services can be measured; therefore the results are critical in any attempt to improve service standards. Items which loaded on this factor were in the main variables that related to the municipality staff consulting the public in relation to the quality and quantity of services to be rendered to them, to whether consultation is an ongoing process, and also to whether consultation is helpful to them, and finally to wishing to establish whether employees of the municipality do conduct public opinion surveys. The item concerning the approach employed in consulting the public is included in this dimension. The other items had to do with the complaints-handling system and access to information. Service standards agreement and communication on service standards are also items measured using this dimension.

Factor 2 was labelled *Efficiency*. This refers to the effective, efficient and economic provision of services to the public by the municipal staff. The dimension also includes the level of confidence, care and compassion experienced by the public, as well as turn-around time, herein referred to as 'rapid' response, which measures whether services are being delivered on time as depicted in the Service Commitment Charter, and are also responded to swiftly and sympathetically when standards of services fall below the promised levels. The dimension also measured whether information on service delivery is readily available and how often it is available to them as end users. The dimension measured whether the public knows who the head of the municipality is, and how much it costs to run the municipality. The dimension also measured whether the municipal members of staff comply with the requirements of the eight Batho Pele principles, namely consultation, service standards, access, courtesy, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money.

### **Descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients**

The descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients of the SSPPQ are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients for the Service Delivery Questionnaire*

Item	Mean (5 – point scale)	Mean	SD	Min	Max	$\alpha$
Consultation	2,36	21,21	6,06	10	44	0,87
Efficiency	2,33	23,30	7,19	10	47	0,90

The results in Table 3 show that the alpha coefficients of both scales were higher than 0,70, which indicates acceptable reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The total scores of respondents on Consultation vary between 10 and 44, with a mean of 21,21. The total score on Efficiency vary between 10 and 47, with a mean of 23,30. These results clearly show that customers within the municipality were dissatisfied with both dimensions of service delivery.

A product-moment correlation of 0,75 was found between Consultation and Efficiency, which is statistically significant ( $p < 0,01$ ) and practically significant (large effect). This indicates that customers who feel that they are not sufficiently consulted on services also felt that the services they received were not effective.

## DISCUSSION

The first objective of this study was to establish the internal consistency of the SSPPQ measuring instrument, and secondly, to assess the experiences and perceptions of the public using municipal services, and thirdly to determine whether the municipal staff complies with the Batho Pele principles when delivering services to the public. A two-factor structure for the QSS was extracted, namely consultation and efficiency. The two dimensions displayed acceptable Cronbach's alpha scores as shown in Table 3. Most of the Batho Pele principles received negative responses from the participants. Batho Pele principles are not complied with by staff members when delivering services.

The first dimension, *consultation*, refers to citizens being consulted on their needs, priorities and standards of services to be provided and required by them (Riekert, 2001). If services are to meet the aspirations of citizens, full information on services provided must be given to

them as end users (Gaster & Squares, 2003). Knowledge concerning how to access services should be communicated to them, as well as how to find their way around buildings that provide services (South Africa, 2003). The second dimension, *efficiency*, concerns economical and efficient provision of services. Efficiency also means treating citizens with consideration and respect (courtesy), allowing them to ask questions and responding to them honestly and frankly (openness and transparency), responding swiftly and sympathetically when standards of service fall below the promised level (redress) (Edwards, 1997), and also adding value to citizens' lives (value for money). The study found that the eight Batho Pele principles can be reduced to these two important dimensions extracted from the SSPPQ.

The second objective of this study was to assess the experiences and perceptions of the public using the municipal services. Batho Pele principles were used to reach this objective. Efforts to improve public service delivery are guided by the White Paper on Transforming Service Delivery (Batho Pele, 1997). The Batho Pele principles are also designed to create a framework which regulates the relationship between public servants and the public as their client base.

The results show that the overwhelming majority of the public reported that they do not know the Head of the City Council nor do they know how much it costs to run the City Council. According to the Batho Pele (2003), service standards should be published in the Service Delivery Charter in each and every component of government and should contain the following:

- The name and address of the component;
- A description of the services to be provided, and at what level the services will be provided and the perceived benefit to the customers;
- A clear statement of the standards of service delivery customers can expect to receive, focusing on quality, quantity, time and costs;
- Specific service delivery targets for key aspects of service such as timeliness, access and accuracy;
- The cost to the customer for receiving the service, if any;
- The complaint and redress mechanisms that customers may use if they feel that standards are not met.

The two principles of the Batho Pele which is *openness and transparency*, and *access*, have not been complied with, as depicted by the highest negative response received from the public. Openness and transparency, which is the sixth principle of the Batho Pele, requires that citizens should be informed on how institutions are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge (Batho Pele, SA, 1997). Schwella, Burger, and Fox (1996) also state that openness and transparency concern the extent to which the functioning of the institution is open to public scrutiny. It also requires mechanisms to ensure that all public processes and programmes are open to the public. The public should be informed about what level and quality of public service they will receive so that they know what to expect. It is also important to inform service users as to whether or not there will be a charge for a particular service, as this would encourage the use of the service if it is free or if there is only a minimal charge. Displaying the cost of services also minimises the abuse of service users and false expectations in cases where there are high charges that may not be affordable to other service users. The Batho Pele principle of access, which is the third principle, also emphasises that service delivery programmes should specifically address the need to redress the disadvantages of all barriers to access. The public perceive openness and transparency, as well as access to services, to be poor in the municipality.

The Batho Pele principle of *consultation* strives to promote service excellence so that services can be defined and appropriate standards set. Consultation received the highest second negative response. The treatment of citizens, as the users of services and as customers, will not be enforced successfully if customers are not consulted on an ongoing basis (Riekert, 2001). Whilst it is expected that the municipality should consult extensively with their customers on the products and services available within the municipality, the participants expressed displeasure with consultation. To improve service delivery, and in line with good governance, municipalities are supposed to consult with citizens on their needs, priorities, and standard of services required (Batho Pele White Paper, Section 1.3.3). The municipality would therefore be able to put in place appropriate plans and strategies based on the results of the consultation process with the public who are recipients of the services. Major problems with service delivery often arise because customer needs are overlooked or taken for granted (Fornell, 1992). Talking to the public is very important as it inculcates a customer centric culture, and also assists in monitoring and evaluating the attitudes of the public towards service delivery.

An important aspect of service delivery is that services must be delivered within a reasonable time, “*turn-around time*”, and this also still remains a challenge in the municipality. The experiences and perceptions of the public underline this finding. This may also mean that the members of staff do not have the necessary skills and experience to deliver the services. It also indicates that there are serious deficiencies within the service delivery structures. The study by Tapscott (2007) confirms the above finding that there is serious lack of skills and capacity in the municipalities and that political promises and a crisis of expectations are still the order of the day in the municipalities.

Participants did not perceive the provision of information, access to information, information on service delivery and information-handling system to be satisfactory. This is an indication of lack of communication experienced by the public in the municipality. To measure quality of service delivery, public information as well as communication and feedback must be obtained and utilised, since customer satisfaction must be the effort that drives quality assurance (Gaster & Squires, 2003). Mathebula (2006) adds to the above-mentioned finding that most municipalities in the province do not have communication personnel and those that have communicators do not involve them in decision-making structures, and that communication personnel lack basic communication tools such as computers, printing machines, phones, vehicles as well as access to internet and E-mail facilities, and as a result municipal communicators are not able to communicate with the public.

Information from both the front line staff and the citizens is important because it provides opinions on the level of service delivery. The front line staff members have an opportunity to experience a range of customer views and have practical knowledge of providing service. With good internal communication, the front-line staff can be able to convey their experiences regarding possible service delivery improvement areas. This is also true regarding information received from the public. Communicating with the public is key to service delivery because information-identifying areas of improvement are solicited from the user perspective. Some of the protests may even be influenced by lack of information, because citizens would not be empowered sufficient to understand municipal plans, even demand services or products that are already articulated in the municipal plan (Baloyi, 2007). The *information* principle did not receive support.

Friendliness, courtesy and empathy received poor responses from the participants. These three aspects are embedded in the principle of *redress*, which calls for a public service institution to enable people to indicate when they are not entirely satisfied with a product or service and for the public institution to apologise, to provide full explanation and to act swiftly and rectify mistakes. Furthermore it implies that apart from a remedy, the public have to receive a sympathetic, positive response (Edwards, 1997). The public will more likely feel that the municipality cares for them if it endeavours to remedy mistakes as soon as possible once they have occurred.

In perceiving *service standards*, the public responded negatively, namely that information on service standards is not readily available, that service standards are not often agreed with them as end users and also that service standards are not communicated with them as end users. Gaster and Squires (2003) argue that services after all exist for the benefit of the users, and that is the prime purpose and function of the service. Woodruff (1997) adds that standards should be set at the level that is demanding but realistic. They should be displayed at the point of delivery and communicated as widely as possible to all potential users so that they know what level of service delivery they are entitled to and can complain if they do not receive it. To measure the quality of service delivery, public feedback must be obtained and utilised as public satisfaction must be the goal that drives quality assurance efforts. Standards provide a good basis for costing services and provide one way in which a variety of role players agree on the value that will be derived from budget allocation to different programmes.

The public seem to regard *value for money*, as an overwhelming challenge in the municipality. Through the Batho Pele principle of value for money, the White Paper requires all public institutions to search for creative ways to simplify procedures and eliminate wasteful expenditure and inefficiency (Batho Pele, 2003). Of importance is that value for money is not about cutting costs, it is about careful spending by public institutions while at the same time ensuring that effective service delivery is not compromised. The majority of the public did not perceive disability as a problem in the municipality, therefore the percentage allocated to disability is the lowest amongst all the dimensions of the study. This is the only item which received the highest positive response from the public. The provision of caring and individualised attention ensures a feeling of satisfaction among the public, as

such affects the environment of effective service delivery. Disability in this study did not influence service delivery positively.

The third objective of this study was to determine whether the employees of the municipality comply with the Batho Pele principles. The finding of this study indicates that the Batho Pele principles remain an enormous problem in the municipality. The municipality staff members do not comply with the Batho Pele principles when delivering services. This finding is not surprising, because most of the Batho Pele principles received negative responses from the participants. It is also important to note that the above-mentioned principles are interrelated. They cannot be achieved in isolation from one another. Therefore the negative responses to one principle will influence the responses to the other principles negatively.

The study found that the eight Batho Pele principles can be reduced to two important principles, namely consultation and efficiency, which are the two factors extracted from the SSPPQ.

According to this study, consultation means consulting with the public on an on-going process in a helpful and approachable manner and on the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided. The public should have access to information that affects them in the municipality, and service standards should be communicated to them as end users. Consultation also means that service standards should be agreed with the public, and employees of the municipality should conduct public opinion surveys to establish levels of service delivery and should also have a complaints-handling system in place. In terms of the Batho Pele principles embedded in the consultation dimension are the following principles, including the principle of consultation:

- Service standards: citizens should be told what level and quality of public services they should receive, so that they are aware of what to expect.
- Access: All citizens should have equal access to the services they are entitled to.
- Information: Citizens should be given full, accurate information about the public services they are entitled to receive.

Efficiency means being helpful and friendly as well as treating the public with dignity and respect when delivering services to them. Efficiency also means making information readily available to the public, and also making information on service delivery available to them. The information regarding who is in charge in the municipality, as well as how much it costs to run the municipality should be known. Economic and efficient services should be provided, and time taken to respond to the requests of the public should be fast and responses should be efficient. Compliance with all the Batho Pele principles means that the employees of the municipality will be efficient in their delivery of services. Included in the efficiency dimension are the following Batho Pele principles:

- Courtesy : Citizens should be treated with courtesy and consideration;
- Redress: If the promised standard of service is not rendered, citizens should be offered an apology, and a full explanation should be given, and a speedy and effective remedy should be employed. When complaints are made, citizens should receive a sympathetic, positive response;
- Openness and transparency: Citizens should be told how municipalities are run , how much it costs, and who is in charge;
- Value for money: Public services should be provided economically and efficiently in order to give citizens the best possible value for money.

In conclusion, this study could serve as a standard regarding measuring the experiences and perceptions of the public in relation to service delivery in the municipalities of South Africa. The two-factor structure was confirmed as well as the internal consistencies of the scales. Employees of the municipality do not adhere to the Batho Pele principles when delivering services. Based on the results, it would seem that the SSPPQ could be regarded as a suitable instrument for measuring perceptions and experiences of the public in municipalities in South Africa.

As in any research the limitations of this study need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the exclusion of the biographical questionnaire limits the knowledge of the equal representation of a diverse population of the Rustenburg municipality, which could have improved the value of this research. Secondly, the sample size limits the generalisability of the results. The reliance on self-report, lack of social desirability and the cross-sectional design may limit the

conclusion. The measure of service delivery in the Rustenburg municipality, using the QSS, needs to be explored further. It must also be kept in mind that the self-report questionnaire has limitations. One of the limitations is that the respondents' motivation could impact on the results.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Batho Pele White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery guides all components of government in delivering services effectively and efficiently. Although the research flows from the above-mentioned Batho Pele requirement of consultation, it also takes the other seven principles into account as they are intertwined and collectively guide components on efforts of transforming Public Service delivery. The research also sought to assess the municipality's compliance with these principles.

The study has identified some key areas and priority challenges for improvement in service delivery in the municipality. Based on good governance as set out in the Constitution and the Batho Pele principles, the following recommendations are made on consultation. Studies by Mathebula (2006) determined that most municipalities in the province do not have communication personnel and those that have communicators do not include them in decision-making structures, communication personnel lack basic communication tools, and as a result municipal communicators are not adequately informed about the developments in their municipalities; therefore cannot communicate with the public.

Consultation and communication structures must be developed and implemented to ensure internal communication and consultation between relevant stakeholders of related services should be attended to. The municipality should move from client relationship to one of focusing on partnership with the stakeholders. Adequate systems also need to be established to promote consultation between the municipality and the public to ensure that the needs of the external public are responded to effectively and efficiently.

Work processes should be investigated to determine the most effective way to deliver services. Formalised complaints-handling mechanisms should be developed and be put in place. Public participation should also be strengthened. By repressing public participation,

authorities may deprive themselves and their ability to render services of a vast source of human resources, information and expertise for the attainment of national and local goals and also deprive citizens of the opportunity to grow (Bekker, 1996).

In conclusion, it is also crucial for the municipal staff to comply with the Batho Pele principles. When the consumers of the municipal services start saying that the municipality is providing for their needs, the Batho Pele principles will then be entrenched.

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# HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTICES AND ORGANISATIONAL CLIMATE IN A MUNICIPALITY

## ABSTRACT

The objectives of this study were to validate a human resource management practices inventory in a municipality, and to assess the relationship between human resource management practices and organisational climate. A cross-sectional survey design was used. The sample consisted of ( $N = 200$ ) employees in the North West Province of South Africa. The Human Resource Management Practices Questionnaire (HRMPQ) and the Organisational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ) were administered. The scales showed acceptable internal consistencies. The study confirmed a relationship between human resource management practices and organisational climate. The studies showed that responsiveness/cooperation and human resource development contributed most to people care. Supervision, human resource development, responsiveness/cooperation, employee support, and recognition contributed to structure. Openness, feedback and information contributed most to efficiency. Recognition, responsiveness/cooperation, supervision and openness contributed most to communication.

## OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie was om 'n inventaris vir die mensehulpbronbestuur-praktyke in 'n munisipaliteit te valideer en die verhouding tussen mensehulpbronbestuur-praktyke en organisasieklimaat te assessee. 'n Dwarsdeursnee-opname-ontwerp is daarvoor aangewend. Die steekproef het bestaan uit ( $N = 200$ ) werknemers in die Noordwes Provinsie van Suid-Afrika. Die volgende subvraelyste van die inventaris vir die Mensehulpbronbestuur-praktyke. Die skale het aanvaarbare interne konstantheid getoon. Die studie het 'n verhouding tussen mensehulpbronbestuur-praktyke en organisasieklimaat bevestig. Die studie het aangedui dat responsiwiteit/samewerking en mensehulpbronontwikkeling die grootste bydrae gelewer het tot mensesorg. Supervisie, mensehulpbronontwikkeling, responsiwiteit/samewerking, werknemerondersteuning en erkenning het bygedra tot struktuur. Openheid, terugvoer en responsiwiteit/samewerking het die meeste bygedra tot doeltreffendheid, en erkenning, responsiwiteit/samewerking, supervisie en openheid het die meeste bygedra tot kommunikasie.

As a result of technology, globalisation and social evolution, change in the 21<sup>st</sup> century occurs more rapidly than ever, and in a discontinuous way (Robbins, 2002). New forms of production such as “lean production” and “just-in-time” production, diversification of commodities for niche markets, a “flexible” labour force, and the concept of “mobile capital” have steadily surfaced over the past decade or so, and are replacing the long-entrenched approach of mass production and standardised goods as well as the forms of labour and work practices required to sustain this approach (Wood, 1996). The business environment in which organisations have to operate has become increasingly complex. Organisations are confronted with ever-increasing uncertainty, turbulence and a change in their environment (La Grange & Roodt, 2001).

These practices and changes, mentioned by Robbins (2002) and Wood (1996) are testimony to the deep-seated and fundamental changes the world is experiencing. In order to benefit from these changes, service organisations must effect radical alterations in their structures, practices, processes and methodologies. Furthermore, organisations are shifting boundaries as new alliances are being created and resources are innovatively being exploited (Venter, 2001). The ability to sense, adjust, respond and implement change timeously is being recognised as a form of strategic and competitive advantage (Gerber, Nel, & Van Dyk, 1998).

The challenge of attending to the needs of the South African population through effective service delivery is part of the five key programmes of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was the manifesto of the ruling party in the preparation for the 1994 elections (South Africa, 1994). Effective service delivery was, and is, therefore a priority from a government point of view.

Ismail, Bayat, and Meyer (1997) indicated that at the local sphere of government, the municipalities, guided by the values and principles of public administration, are required to deal with the following activities: promoting democratic and accountable government for local communities; providing services to communities in a sustainable manner; promoting social and economic developments; promoting a safe and healthy environment; encouraging community participation in matters of local government; promoting Integrated Development Planning; coordinating issues around housing, and dealing with any issue that is a service delivery priority need of their respective communities.

In order to roll out the implementation of these laws and policies, municipalities set out structures for service delivery combined with policies and practices that had so far been developed. The question here is whether the human resource management practices that are in place in the Rustenburg municipality can be explained against a record of actual practical implementation and the resultant impact of these practices on improving the lives of people that the municipality serve. Service organisations can enhance their performance by putting in place human resource management practices that strengthen the service oriented behaviour of employees and reduce their intention to leave the organisation (Armstrong & Murlis, 2004).

It is important to study the human resource management practices in municipalities. It is also important to understand human resource management practices and how they are being executed in the municipality. Rustenburg has become the fastest growing town in South Africa. The town is the world's leading platinum producer. The foreign exchange earned through mining, has had a positive effect on the economic growth of the area and spilled over to the rest of the North West Province (Portfolio, Black Business in South Africa, 2006). Rustenburg is also one of the five municipalities within the Bojanala District municipality in the North West Province of South Africa which has been granted host city status, by Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) for the 2010 World Cup (Westoll, 2007).

Kgwele (2009) report that the North West Province is faced with backlogs in service delivery and do not have the capacity and means to meet its growth and development targets. The municipalities are in serious difficulties; a serious lack of skills and capacity is facing municipalities (Tapscott, 2007). Several incidents have been reported by the media regarding poor performance of municipalities, mainly in service delivery (Newmarch 2004; Volksblad 2004; Wyngaard 2004). It was also recognised that lack of service delivery in the municipalities was caused by a range of other factors, namely poor team spirit, lack of appreciation and recognition from managers/supervisors, hostile communication, low levels of trust, and the unwillingness of managers or supervisors to allow employees to use initiatives and take responsibilities for certain aspects of their work (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006). In addition, skills development needs identified in the municipalities result because of a lack of efficient human resource management practices.

The Department of Provincial Local Government Project Consolidate, while seeking to address municipalities' capacity crisis by dispatching highly trained professionals and practitioners to ailing councils, can only be considered a short-term solution to a profound problem that requires systematic redress through skills development and a culture of improved service delivery. Recent guidelines on remuneration for officials in the municipalities should provide for assistance in understanding criteria for employee appointments, and on how much top officials should be paid (Portfolio-Municipalities in South Africa 2006).

Government's numerous assessments of project evaluation, and hands-on support efforts through integrated partnering, knowledge-sharing forums and similar interface, have led to one conclusion, which has been apparent for some time, namely that municipal performance is not up to scratch. This is largely so due to the dearth of skills relating to management, budgeting, financial management, human resource management practices, procurement, planning, credit control, facilitation skills for community participation, as well as technical skills (Portfolio-Municipality South Africa, 2006).

As part of the business planning process and the drive to reconnect with citizens, respond to the need to do things differently, build new relations and improve service, the municipality should continually re-evaluate the human resource management practices in place to determine whether they are able to influence the achievement of their objectives and the delivery of equitable and effective service. It is also important to identify human resource management practices that are directly or indirectly adversely affecting the quality of service delivery. The objectives of this study were to determine the reliability and construct validity of a human resource management practices questionnaire, to investigate the status of human resource management practices in the municipality and also to determine the relationship between organisational climate and human resource management practices in the municipality.

### **Human resource management practices**

Human resource management practices are aimed at enhancing individual competencies and organisational capabilities. When these practices are aligned with the needs of internal and external customers, companies are likely to succeed (Robbins, Odendaal, and Roodt (2003).

Venter (2001) asserts that human resource management practices and activities are also significant management tools to promote commitment of the labour force to accelerate service delivery. Robbins et al. (2003) indicate that, given the South African history of employment disparities and discriminatory practices, legislative frameworks have been enacted that have a major impact on employment policies and practices.

In particular, the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 is of critical importance in human resource management practices in relation to recruitment, and amongst others, advertising and appointment processes, employment testing, diversity management, and affirmative action measures are all the other human resource management practices. Research findings confirm the effect legislation has had in changing recent South African recruitment and other Human resource management practices (Robbins et al., 2003).

Human resource management practices are significantly related to organisational service delivery, and one may therefore surmise that an identification of human resource management practices, challenges and prospects are essential to organisational service delivery (Stavrou-Costea, 2005). The quality of an organisation's work force is largely the result of the people it hires. If a firm hires new employees with inadequate skills, for instance, the work performance of these employees is likely to suffer regardless of management's efforts to provide motivation and leadership, create effective groups, or design challenging jobs (Robbins, 1998). In a rapidly changing environment, employers should be encouraged to experiment with innovative new recruitment schemes to ensure increased efficiency and innovation (Price 2004, p. 382).

The objective of effective selection practices is to match individuals' characteristics with the requirements of the job. Robbins (1998) indicates that when management fails to get a proper match, both employer and employees' performance and satisfaction suffer. Carrell et al. (1998) point out that recruiting good applicants has always been challenging. However, political, demographic and economic factors in South Africa require employees to utilise more flexible and innovative recruitment methods. Once potential employees have been identified, organisations need to be conscientious in their screening practices to truly identify the best people from the available pool of candidates (Zeithamil & Bitner, 2000).

To remain competitive, a company should have an effective recruitment programme to ensure that suitable and qualified applicants are attracted (Gerber, Nel, & Van Dyk, 1998). Competent employees do not remain competent forever; skills deteriorate and can also become obsolete (Robbins, 1998).

In the South African context, the lack of appropriate numbers of suitably skilled human resource practitioners is consistently pointed out as a major obstacle in achieving economic growth targets and global competitiveness (Robbins et al., 2003). Human resource management practices have significant implications for marketing effectiveness since the skills of employees are possibly the most important strategic assets and have significant implication for service delivery (Delery & Doty, 1996 & Huselid, Jackson & Schuler, 1997).

Kanfer (1992) mentions that, at a general level, the issue concerning what motivates employees to change their work practices in line with new policies is varied because employees are motivated by different factors. Past research findings suggest that employees undergoing organisational change are likely to respond favourably to change, unless rewarded for their efforts (Pettigrew & Whipp, 1991). Effective performance management contributes to the achievement of business objectives while maximising the contribution of employees (Cornelius, 1999). A good performance appraisal system can also help to enhance employee performance by evaluating how employees are doing on the job by affording them the opportunity to correct their mistakes and acquire new skills (Luyt, 2007). A performance appraisal system should be objective not subjective, relevant to the job and the company, and fair to all employees and offer no special treatment (Schuler, 1992).

Management uses evaluations for general human resource management decisions. Robbins et al. (2003) assert that evaluations provide input into such important decisions such as promotion, transfers and terminations. Evaluations also identify training and development needs. Evaluations can also be used as a criterion against which selection and development programmes are validated. Luyt (2007) mentions that performance agreements of heads of departments and senior programme managers should be published, and the media should be updated on performance compliance, including corrective steps taken and capacity building and staff development, as this has a positive effect on service delivery improvement.

Robbins et al. (2003) state that labour unions are a vehicle by means of which employees act collectively to protect and promote their interests. For employees who are members of a labour union, wage levels and condition of employment are explicitly articulated in a contract that is negotiated, through collective bargaining, between representatives of the union and the organisation's management (Robbins, 1998). Luyt (2007) further mentions that it is important to deal with disciplinary matters, for inadequate disciplinary processes clearly sap confidence in the public service and increases poor service delivery.

### **Human resource management practices and organisational climate**

According to Lado and Wilson(1994), human resource management practices are considered to be one of the most important organisational capabilities because humans may be regarded as the most important assets of any organisation, and a unique source of sustained competitive advantage (Becker & Gerhart, 1996), as well as one of the important elements of creating value for customers (Band, 1991). Lado and Wilson (1994) suggest that a firm's human resource management practices could provide a source of sustainable competitive advantage as it is relatively difficult to imitate. Earlier research by Huselid, Jackson, and Schuler (1997) suggests that strategic human resource management practice helps organisations to ensure their human capital pool is not easily imitated. The strategic value of human resource management practices is its potential to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the firm, to utilise market opportunities, and to neutralise potential threats (Lepak & Snell, 2002).

Mullins (1989) argues that a healthy organisational climate might be expected to exhibit such characteristic features as:

- The integration of organisational goals and personal goals;
- A flexible structure with a network of authority, control and communications, and with autonomy for individual members;
- Styles of leadership appropriate to particular work stations;
- Mutual trust, consideration and support among different levels of the organisation;
- Recognition of individuals' differences and attributes, and of people's needs and expectations at work;
- Attention to job design and the quality of working life;

- Challenging and responsible jobs with high performance standards;
- Equitable systems of rewards based on positive reinforcement;
- Opportunities for personal development, career progression and advancement;
- Justice in treatment, and fair personnel and industrial relations policies and practices;  
and
- The open discussion of conflict with the emphasis on the settlement of difference.

According to Litwin and Stringer (1968), climate provides theorists with a conceptual link between the elements of the organisational system and the determinants of individual behaviour. It also provides management with a link between their organisation's procedures and practices and the concerns and needs of individual workers. Human resource management practices lead to organisational effectiveness by creating a supportive climate and shaping employee behaviour and attitudes (Huselid, 1996). Managers must know how different procedures and practices will stimulate these worker needs and how worker motivation can be enhanced (Oakland & Oakland, 1998).

### **Human resource management practices and service delivery**

Organisations specifically following "high commitment" human resource management practices increase their employees' commitment to the organisation (Huselid, 1996), enhance employee skills, as well as subsequently increase employees' motivation and satisfaction (Delaney & Huselid, 1996).

Having satisfied employees has a significant impact on customer satisfaction (Thiagarajan & Zairi, 1997) and customer value, and a positive impact on service delivery (Band, 1991). Many organisations have discovered that to be truly responsive to customer needs, front-line employees need to be empowered to accommodate customer request and to recover on the spot when things go wrong. Therefore effective empowerment strategies usually lead to happy and motivated employees (Zeithaml & Bitner, 2000).

According to Matomela (2007), some of the fundamental issues that require a closer inspection in making the public service an effective engine of development and delivery, given the experience with transformation thus far, are:

- Obsession with policy and structural undertones and textbook approaches to implementation of what are generally good policy intentions;
- Inappropriate leadership and management in the public service institution;
- Lack of credible systems and measures to instil a culture of performance quality;
- Complete absence and at worst stifling of innovation and creativity;
- Bad recruitment and retention practices;
- Rewarding and recognising good management solutions and not good professional and technical solutions; and
- The need for strong and more robust oversight and constitutional safeguard institutions, relative to how they have performed thus far.

To be successful, organisations need to ensure that employees feel valued and are trusted to do a good job (Oakland & Oakland, 1998). Furthermore, they maintain that a key element of best practice in many leading organisations involve the effective management of people through good communication of organisational values, goals, policies, practices to foster employee participation and commitment, encouraging and facilitating teamwork, assessing training needs and providing appropriate training and development opportunities, and empowering employees. Accordingly, when these human resource management practices are in place, employees are likely to be satisfied in a work place. Only then will employees be motivated and committed to deliver products or service which meets or even exceeds customer requirements and, ultimately, lead to superior business performance and results (Thiagarajan & Zairi, 1997).

## **METHOD**

### **Research design**

A survey design was used to reach the research objectives. More specifically, a correlation design was used. This design can be used to assess interrelationships among variables at one point in time, without any planned intervention. According to Shaugnessy and Zechmeister (1997), this design is ideal when the aim of the study is of a descriptive and predictive nature.

## Participants

A study population of ( $n = 300$ ) of municipal employees from Rustenburg in the North-West Province was targeted through random sampling. Of the 300 questionnaires returned, only ( $n = 200$ ) were usable. A response rate of 67% was achieved. The participants included employees from the following directorates in the municipality: Office of the Speaker ( $n = 6$ ), Corporate services ( $n = 50$ ), Finance ( $n = 86$ ), Public safety ( $n = 14$ ), Arts, culture and recreation ( $n = 23$ ), Health ( $n = 7$ ) Environmental services ( $n = 11$ ), Technical services (engineering) ( $n = 1$ ) and Electrotechnical (engineering) ( $n = 2$ ).

Descriptive information of the sample is given in Table 1. As indicated in Table 1, 3% of the participants were 33 years old and younger, 34,3% were between 36 and 45 years old, and 22,9% were 46 years old and older.

The sample consisted of predominantly blacks (84,1%) with a gender composition of females (59,2%) and males (36,3%), while 73,6% of the samples were married and 25,4% were single. Regarding the educational level, the following distribution was found: grade 12 certificate - 61,7%, tertiary education certificate - 25,9%; diploma - 22,9%; degrees - 22,4%, and honours degree - 3%. A sizeable majority (93%) are members of a trade union.

Approximately 41% of the participants had one to five years of service, 37,8% had six to 10 years of service, and 17,9% had more than 10 years of service.

Table 1

*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	35 years and younger	85	42,3
	36-45 years	69	34,3
	46 and older	46	22,9
	Missing	1	0,5
Gender	Male	73	36,3
	Female	119	59,2
	Missing	9	4,5
Race	White	18	9,0
	Black	169	84,1
	Coloured	5	2,5
	Indian	3	1,5
	Others	1	0,5
	Missing	5	2,5
Marital status	Married	148	73,6
	Unmarried	51	25,4
	Missing	2	1,0
Disability	Yes	1	0,5
	No	179	89,1
Secondary Education	<Std.8/Grade 10	0	0,0
	Std.8/Grade 10	2	1,0
	Std9/Grade 11	3	1,5
	Std.10/Grade 12	124	61,7
	Missing	73	36,3
Tertiary Education	Certificate	52	25,9
	Diploma	46	22,9
	Degree	45	22,4
	Postgraduate	6	3,0
	Missing	52	25,9
Years of Service	Less than 6 years	82	40,8
	6-10 years	76	37,8
	More than 10 years	36	17,9
	Missing	7	3,5
Job Level	Less than 6	50	24,9
	6-10	101	50,2
	More than 10	4	2,0
	Missing	46	22,9

## Measuring instruments

Five measuring instruments were used in this study, namely a biographical questionnaire, and four sub-scales of the Human Resource Management Practices Questionnaire (HRMPQ). The biographical questionnaire was concerned with several aspects of an individual personal life. Although this part is printed separately and some parts were optional, such as name, it was desirable as it forms part of the present study, since it provided important information on the following: name, gender, qualification, directorate, position, number of years with the municipality, marital status and disability.

The *Human Resource Management Practices Questionnaire (HRMPQ)* was developed with the purpose of measuring human resource management practices as experienced by employees in the municipality. The questionnaire comprises 69 formulated items, and is divided into four sub-questionnaires with each having its own rating scale. The sub-questionnaires are named Supervision Questionnaire (CQ), Human Resource Development Questionnaire (HRDQ), Recognition Practices Questionnaire (RPQ) and Empowerment Questionnaire (EQ) respectively.

The *Supervision Practices Questionnaire (SPQ)* consists of 35 items. This questionnaire was used to measure the degree of information, supervision, openness and feed-back, experienced by employees in the municipality. The questions are rated on a five-point rating scale, ranging from 1 (*agree strongly*) to 5 (*disagree strongly*). The items include questions such as “My supervisor listens to me when I communicate”, “I know which communication channel to follow if I experience problems”, and “The management style is autocratic”.

The *Human Resource Development Questionnaire (HRDPQ)* has 24 items, and was used to measure human resource development and employee support practices in the municipality. The questions were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). Items for instance include questions such as question 1: “The city council provides me with sufficient in-service training to do the work that is expected of me”, question 6 “I received appropriate in-service training introducing me to the city council when I started working here”, and question 13 “I receive personal feedback from my supervisor regarding shortcomings in my work”.

The *Recognition Practices Questionnaire* (RPQ) consists of five items, and was used to measure employee recognition by managers / supervisors in the municipality for a job well done. The items were rated on a scale, ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*very much*). Dimensions on recognition include questions such as question 29: “I am in favour of an annual event where outstanding job performance is publicly acknowledged”, question 25 “Employees receive acknowledgement for outstanding work performance”.

The *Empowerment Practices Questionnaire* (EPQ) comprises five items, and is measured on a scale, ranging from 1 (*disagree*) to 5 (*agree*). This sub-questionnaire was used to measure the degree to which managers/supervisors are able to empower employees in the municipality. The items include questions such as question 33 “Managers in the city council receive sufficient training in leadership skills”, and question 30 “Employees of the city council are productive every working day.”

Organisational climate was also measured in this study using *Organisational Climate Questionnaire* (OCQ) which comprises 43 items (Litwin & Stringer, 1968). The OCQ was rated on a five-point scale, ranging from 1(*very little*) to 5 (*very much*). Organisational climate consists of four dimensions, namely people care, structure, efficiency and communication. Concerning people care, items that loaded on this dimension are variables which related to support for the supervisor and the organisation as a whole in the form of having a sense of belonging and also being part of the decision-making process as well as receiving cooperation from the supervisor and from colleagues.

The alpha coefficients of the four factors of the OCQ are as follows: 0,70 (Communication), 0,77 (People care), 0,84 (Efficiency), and 0,87 (Structure). The reliability of the OCQ was confirmed. Litwin and Stringer (1968) report the internal consistencies (inter-item correlations) of each of the dimensions of climate to be: conflict 0,19, standards 0,21, responsibility 0,23, risk 0,29, structure 0,31, warmth 0,33, reward 0,42, identity 0,49.

## **Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was carried out with the help of the SPSS-program (SPSS Inc, 2003). Exploratory factor analyses were used to explore the factor structures of the HRMPQ. First, a simple principal components analysis was conducted on the items of the HRMPQ. The

eigenvalues and scree plot were studied to determine the number of factors. Second, principal axis factoring with a direct oblimin rotation was conducted if factors were related ( $r > 0.30$ ). Third, a principal factor analysis with a varimax rotation was used if the obtained factors were not related.

Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistency of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, minimum and maximum values) and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to determine the relationships between variables. A cut-off point of  $p = 0,05$  was set for the statistical significance of the results. Effect sizes (Cohen, 1988) were used to decide on the practical significance of the findings. A cut-off point of 0,30 (medium effect, Cohen, 1988) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is predicted by the independent variables. The value of  $R^2$  is used to determine the proportion of the total variance of the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables. The F-test was used to test whether a significant regression exists between the independent and dependent variables.

## RESULTS

### Factor analyses

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 35 items of the Supervision. The results showed that seven components had eigenvalues larger than one, but an analysis of the scree plot showed that four could be extracted. The four factors which were extracted explained 72,28% of the total variance.

Subsequently a principal axis factor analysis with a direct oblimin rotation was carried out on the items of the *Supervision Questionnaire* (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Pattern Matrix of the Supervision Practices Questionnaire*

NO	ITEM	F1	F2	F3	F4	$h^2$
SP37	Teamwork is very important in my directorate.	0,73	0,25	-0,05	-0,35	0,73
SP43	My supervisor understands my problems at work.	0,92	-0,04	0,30	-0,03	0,94
SP45	I am aware of the roles of the different directorates in the City Council.	0,54	-0,34	0,09	0,45	0,62
SP47	Information in the City Council is communicated via a newsletter.	0,87	-0,22	0,34	0,18	0,94
SP2	Misunderstandings between me and my supervisor happen often.	-0,53	-0,32	0,50	-0,40	0,77
SP55	I know what the goals of my department are.	0,56	0,11	-0,35	0,13	0,46
SP58	My supervisor reacts on recommendations from employees.	0,74	-0,02	0,09	0,05	0,56
SP59	Good cooperation exists between my directorate and other directorates with whom I work.	0,89	0,20	-0,17	0,06	0,85
SP60	My supervisor acknowledges good ideas from employees.	0,90	-0,27	0,26	-0,03	0,95
SP61	A strong feeling of trust exists between employees and management.	0,49	-0,39	0,35	0,05	0,52
SP67	The grapevine is a general way to exchange newsworthy information in the City Council.	0,76	-0,49	-0,10	-0,05	0,83
SP41	Sufficient opportunities exist to discuss problems with my supervisor.	0,38	0,74	-0,30	0,28	0,85
SP36	I know what the core values of the City Council are.	-0,18	0,74	-0,52	0,25	0,91
SP38	My supervisor frequently asks my opinion on work-related issues.	-0,31	0,72	0,21	0,22	0,71
SP40	Conflict between employees in my directorate harms the task accomplishment.	0,06	-0,53	-0,24	0,26	0,41
SP44	I trust my supervisor.	-0,25	0,88	-0,23	0,08	0,90
SP65	My supervisor listens to me when we communicate.	-0,7	0,78	0,43	0,17	0,82
SP42	The management style of my supervisor is autocratic.	-0,52	0,25	-0,60	0,08	0,70
SP48	Directorate meetings are held regularly to give feedback in relation to work arrangements.	0,44	-0,44	0,54	0,36	0,81
SP53	Communication between senior and junior personnel occurs regularly in my directorate.	0,38	-0,18	0,81	0,04	0,84
SP54	If I disagree with another employee, I will keep it to myself.	-0,11	0,47	-0,77	0,04	0,83
SP56	When I get instructions at works, the purpose thereof is explained.	-0,05	0,07	0,57	0,18	0,37
SP57	Communication between departments in the City Council occurs regularly.	0,19	0,09	0,75	0,09	0,60
SP62	Working problems are not always discussed openly with me.	-0,45	0,44	-0,48	0,29	0,71
SP66	Limited knowledge concerning cultural groups with whom I have to deal with in my work, makes it difficult to perform my duties.	0,7	-0,54	0,56	0,34	0,72
SP5	My supervisor considers my likes and dislikes in the work situation.	-0,36	0,43	-0,29	0,48	0,62
SP39	I cannot identify with the core values of the City Council.	-0,35	0,41	-0,26	0,62	0,74
SP46	I regularly receive feedback regarding my job performance.	0,59	-0,05	0,30	0,63	0,83
SP49	Social interaction about work issues occurs regularly in the directorates.	-0,15	0,3	0,21	0,73	0,61
SP50	I am satisfied with the communication in my section.	-0,27	0,10	-0,15	0,86	0,84
SP51	I am allowed to criticise the way things are done in my department.	0,9	-0,08	0,33	0,68	0,61
SP64	My supervisor is always willing to communicate with me.	0,12	-0,39	0,31	0,40	0,41
SP68	I feel that I am informed of all the activities that occur in the City Council.	-0,22	-0,41	0,40	0,54	0,67
SP69	The interpersonal relations amongst colleagues in the City Council are healthy.	0,30	-0,08	-0,19	0,58	0,47
SP63	I know which communication channel to follow if I experience a problem.	0,01	-0,20	0,00	0,00	0,04
	Eigenvalue	12,44	5,35	4,78	2,73	
	Percentage of variance	35,53	15,28	13,67	7,79	

F1: Responsiveness/Cooperation; F2: Supervision; F3: Openness; F4: Feedback

The results displayed in Table 2 show variables as they load on their respective factors. The first factor was labelled *Responsiveness/Cooperation* and referred to knowledge of the goals of the department, teamwork, awareness of roles, cooperation, acknowledgement of good ideas, trust, and the availability of information. The second factor was labelled *Supervision* and referred to the relationship with the supervisor. The third factor was labelled *Openness* and referred to an open discussion of work problems and free communication between different levels. The fourth factor was labelled *Feedback* and referred to the willingness of the supervisor to discuss issues in an open way and the readiness of the organisation to be open. As can be seen from Table 2 above, the high scores suggest that in all four factors, the internal consistencies of the scales are acceptable.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the 24 items of the *Human Resource Development Questionnaire* (HRDQ). The results showed that five components had eigenvalues larger than one, but an analysis of the scree plot showed that two factors could be extracted. The two factors which were extracted explained 62,46% of the total variance. Table 3 depicts the results of the principal axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation.

Table 3

*Principal Factor Analysis with a Direct Oblimin Rotation on the Items of HRDPQ*

	Item	F1	F2	$h^2$
HRDP1	The City Council provides me with sufficient in- service training to do the work that is expected of me.	0,45	0,09	0,24
HRDP2	I possess the knowledge and skills that my job requires of me.	-0,61	0,55	0,45
HRDP3	I do not receive the training I need to develop my job related skills.	-0,01	-0,57	0,32
HRDP4	The City Council provides me with sufficient training in communication skills.	0,62	0,02	0,39
HRDP5	I have insufficient knowledge and skill to manage stress.	-0,57	-0,31	0,55
HRDP6	I received appropriate in service training, introducing me to the City Council, when I started to work here.	0,79	0,26	0,83
HRDP7	There are few opportunities for employees to receive training in the City Council.	0,07	0,74	0,59
HRDP8	My training needs in my work are determined on a continuous basis by the City Council.	0,05	0,36	0,14
HRDP9	I have no knowledge regarding the City Council's policy on training.	-0,63	-0,37	0,68
HRDP10	The policy regarding training is not applied consistently.	-0,95	0,05	0,88
HRDP11	Skills development has a high priority in the City Council.	0,15	0,87	0,87
HRDP12	My supervisor discusses my job performance with me on a regular basis.	0,25	0,56	0,46
HRDP13	I receive personal feedback from my supervisor regarding shortcomings in my work.	-0,62	-0,34	0,64
HRDP14	My supervisor allows me the opportunity to discuss my personal problems with him/her.	0,78	0,16	0,72
HRDP15	My supervisor focuses annually, during a personal conversation on my training needs.	0,70	-0,25	0,44
HRDP16	My colleagues support me when I experience problems.	0,76	0,26	0,77
HRDP17	Employees receive insufficient support from the City Council in times of illness.	-0,41	-0,51	0,57
HRDP18	Employees receive sufficient support from the City Council when they experience personal problems.	0,87	0,03	0,76
HRDP19	My director allows me to take an open discussion with him/her regarding my personal problems.	0,71	0,27	0,69
HRDP20	Employees receive sufficient support from the City Council in times of financial problems.	0,80	0,08	0,69
HRDP21	There is little understanding in the City Council for employees who experience personal problems.	0,83	0,18	0,82
HRDP22	When I experience personal problems, I would like to discuss them with a trained specialist in the City Council who can help me.	-0,88	0,27	0,70
HRDP23	The well-being of employees of the City Council is being neglected.	0,25	0,54	0,44
HRDP24	Supervisors do not treat employee's personal problems confidentially.	-0,75	-0,08	0,61
	Eigenvalue	12,07	2,92	
	Percentage of variance	50,28	12,19	

F1: Human Resource Development; F2: Employee Support

Table 3 shows items as they load into two factors, namely Human resource development and Employee support. *Human resource development* refers to in-service training of employees as well as the existence of training and development policies in the organisation. *Employee support* refers to activities and programmes directed at the well-being of employees.

A principal component analysis was conducted on the five items of the *Recognition Practices Questionnaire* (RPQ). The results showed that five components had eigenvalues larger than one, but an analysis of the scree plot showed that one factor could be extracted. The five components explained 57,68% of the total variance. Subsequently a principal axis factor analysis with a direct oblimin rotation was carried out on the items of the RPQ. Table 4 shows the results of the principal axis factor analysis.

Table 4  
*Principal Axis Factor Analysis on RPQ*

NO	ITEM	F1	<i>h</i> <sup>2</sup>
RP28	I would like to be acknowledged for outstanding performance during Mayoral Coordinating Meetings and Council meetings.	0,95	0,90
RP29	I am in favour of an annual event where outstanding job performance is publicly acknowledged.	0,90	0,81
RP27	I would like to receive a written acknowledgement of outstanding job performance.	0,87	0,75
RP26	My supervisor acknowledges outstanding job performance.	0,64	0,40
RP25	Employees receive acknowledgement for outstanding work performance	0,15	0,02
	Eigenvalue	2,88	
	Percentage of variance .	57,68	

#### F1: Recognition

Table 4 displays one factor loading, namely Recognition. *Recognition* refers to a feeling of being rewarded for a job well done, emphasising positive rewards and perceived fairness of the pay and promotion policies.

Principal component analysis was conducted on the five items of the *Empowerment Practices Questionnaire* (EPQ). The results revealed that five components had eigenvalues larger than one, but an analysis of the scree plot showed that one factor could be extracted. The five components explained 49,20% of the total variance.

Table 5 shows the results of the principal axis factor analysis of *Empowerment, Control Practices Questionnaire*.

Table 5

*Principal Axis Factor Analysis on Items of EP and CQ*

NO	ITEM	F1
ECP32	There is no control over performance of employees of the City Council	-0,87
ECP34	Managers in the City Council receive sufficient training in management skills.	0,86
ECP30	Employees in the City Council are productive every working day.	0,09
ECP31	Employees of the City Council always report for work on time.	0,39
ECP33	Managers in the City Council receive sufficient training in leadership skills.	0,40
	Eigenvalue	2,46
	Percentage of variance	49,20

F1: Empowerment and Control

Table 5 shows one factor loading, namely *Empowerment and Control*. This factor refers to control over performance of employees and the utilisation of training to empower employees to perform.

**Descriptive statistics and correlations**

The descriptive statistics and alpha coefficients of the measuring instruments are reported in Table 6.

Table 6

*Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of the Measuring Instruments*

Scale	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Mean (item)	$\alpha$
<b>Human Resource management Practices</b>						
Responsiveness/Cooperation	19,00	48,00	40,27	8,84	3,66	0,94
Supervision	12,00	23,00	15,98	3,48	2,66	0,77
Openness	21,00	39,00	32,89	5,84	4,11	0,90
Feedback	21,00	42,00	32,60	3,82	3,62	0,82
<b>Human Resource Development</b>						
Employee Support	13,00	26,00	17,51	3,92	2,50	0,80
Recognition	7,00	20,00	16,65	2,60	4,16	0,84
Control	7,00	22,00	11,31	2,63	2,26	0,72
<b>Organisational Climate</b>						
People Care	36,87	48,00	31,00	5,58	2,63	0,77
Structure	34,80	50,00	21,00	5,86	2,91	0,87
Efficiency	22,11	34,00	14,00	5,26	2,46	0,84
Communication (r)	25,31	31,00	13,00	2,81	3,16	0,70

\*Significant internal consistency  $\alpha > 0,70$  (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994)

(r)- score should be reversed

In terms of human resource management practices sub-scales, a scale ranging from 1 (*agree strongly*) to 5 (*disagree strongly*) was used to measure the perceptions of the respondents on Responsiveness/Cooperation, Supervision, Openness and Feedback Practices, and a scale ranging from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*) was used to measure Human Resource Development and Employee Support. A scale ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*very much*) was used to measure Recognition Practices, and a scale ranging from 1 (*disagree*) to 5 (*agree*) was used to measure Empowerment and Control Practices in the municipality. In relation to organisational climate, a scale ranging from 1 (*very little*) to 5 (*very much*) was used to measure the perceptions of employees in the municipality as it relates to organisational climate.

It is indicated that the scores for Communication, which received the lowest score if the score is reversed (1,84), Structure (2,90), Supervision (2,66), Employee support (2,50), People care (2,63), Efficiency (2,46), Human resource development (2,09) and Control (2,26) are low. This implies that the workers hold the view that communication, structure, supervision, people care, efficiency, human resource development, employee support and control are inadequate in the municipality. On the other hand, the scores for openness (4,11) and recognition (4,16) are high, implying that, according to the respondents, the human resource management practices in these areas are satisfactory. The perception of the respondents on feedback (3,62), responsiveness (3,66) was that the municipality is performing fairly well in these areas.

For organisational climate, people care, efficiency, structure and communication received low scores, which implies that climate in the municipality is at a subjective level and is perceived to be so by the municipal staff. In terms of human resource management practices, human resource development, control, employee support and supervision also received the lowest mean scores, which also implies that the municipal staff perceive human resource management practices in place are not effective in accelerating service delivery.

The internal consistencies of the human resource management practices sub-scales and that of organisational climate inventory, are very high, and acceptable, according to the guidelines of 0,70 as set out by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). These results indicate a high reliability of the instruments. Based on the above, all the HRMPQ sub-scales and the OCQ are reliable instruments.

The Pearson correlation coefficients between the dimensions of HRMPQ, sub-scales and OCQ are presented in Table 7.

Table 7

*Product-Moment Correlation Coefficients of the Scales of the HRMPQ and Dimensions OCQ*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Responsiveness/Cooperation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2. Supervision	-0,32**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3. Openness	0,61***	-0,66*++	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4. Feedback	-0,01	0,20*	0,13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5. Human Resource Development	-0,54***	0,80***	-0,84***	0,21*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6. Employee Support	0,80***	0,46**	-0,71***	0,16*	0,61***	-	-	-	-	-	-
7. Recognition	0,78***	-0,13	0,41**	-0,05	-0,30**	-0,67***	-	-	-	-	-
8. Control	-0,33**	0,31**	-0,72***	-0,40**	0,55***	0,43**	-0,23*	-	-	-	-
9. People Care	-0,82***	0,61***	-0,77***	0,11	0,83***	0,70***	-0,54***	0,46**	-	-	-
10. Structure	0,33**	0,53***	-0,24*	-0,06	0,23*	0,03	0,44**	0,27*	-0,10	-	-
11. Efficiency	-0,50***	0,37**	-0,65***	0,08	0,60***	0,51***	-0,35**	0,52***	0,55***	0,04	-
12. Communication	0,07	-0,33**	0,26*	0,15*	-0,22*	-0,12	0,25*	-0,10	-0,06	-0,10	-0,05

\* Correlation is significant at the  $p < 0,05$  level (2-tailed)+  $r \geq 0,30$  - practically significant (medium effect)++  $r \geq 0,50$  - practically significant (large effect)

A statistically significant negative correlation was found between Openness and Structure, while a statistically significant negative correlation (practically significant, large effect) was found between Openness and Efficiency. Responsiveness/Cooperation has a statistically significant negative correlation with: Supervision (practically significant, medium effect), Human resource development (practically significant, large effect), Employee support (practically significant, large effect), Control (practically significant, medium effect) and People care (practically significant, large effect) and statistically significantly positively related with: Structure (practically significant, medium effect), Openness (practically significant, large effect) and Recognition (practically significant, large effect). Efficiency is statistically negatively significantly correlated with: Openness (practically significant, large effect) and Recognition (practically significant, medium effect). Supervision has a statistically significant negative correlation with: Openness (practically significant, large effect) and Communication (practically significant, medium effect), and a statistically significant positive correlation with: Human resource development (practically significant, large effect), Employee support (practically significant, medium effect), Control (practically significant, medium effect), People care (large effect), Structure (practically, significant, large effect), Efficiency (practically, significant, medium effect) and with Feedback which is not practically significantly related.

Openness has a statistically negative significant correlation with: Human resource development, Employee support, Control, Structure, People care and Efficiency and a statistically positive significant correlation with: Recognition and Communication. Feedback has a statistically significant negative correlation with Control and a statistically significant positive correlation with: Human resource development, Employee support and Communication. Human resource development has a statistically significant negative correlation with Recognition (practically significant, medium effect) and Communication and statistically significant positive correlation with Employee support (practically significant, large effect), Control (practically significant, large effect), and People care (practically, significant, large effect), Structure and also with Efficiency (practically significant, large effect).

Employee support is statistically significantly negatively correlated with recognition (practically, significant, large effect) and statistically significantly positively correlated with: Control (medium effect) People care (practically, significant, large effect) and Efficiency

(practically, significant, large effect). Recognition is statistically significantly negatively correlated with Control, People care (large effect) and Efficiency (medium effect) and is statistically significantly positively correlated with Structure (medium effect) and Communication. Control is statistically significantly positively correlated with: People care, Structure and Efficiency. People care is statistically significantly positively correlated with Efficiency.

### **Multiple regression analyses**

The results of multiple regression analyses with People care and Structure (as measured by the OCQ) as dependent variables, and human resource practices (as measured by the HRPQ) are reported in Table 8.

Table 8

*Multiple Regression Analyses with People Care and Structure as Dependent Variables and Human Resource Practices as Independent Variables*

Variable	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
	B	SE	Beta					
People care						169,23*	0,89	0,88*
(Constant)	52,52	4,60		11,42	0,00			
Responsiveness	-0,42	0,04	-0,67	-10,66	0,00*			
Supervision	0,03	0,08	0,02	0,36	0,72			
Openness	-0,10	0,07	-0,10	-1,31	0,19			
Feedback	0,04	0,06	0,03	0,66	0,51			
Human resource development	0,24	0,04	0,52	6,61	0,00*			
Employee support	-0,30	0,09	-0,22	-3,43	0,00*			
Recognition	0,03	0,10	0,01	0,27	0,79			
Control	-0,09	0,10	-0,04	-0,84	0,40			
Structure						74,67*	0,78	0,77*
(Constant)	-16,25	6,89		-2,36	0,02			
Responsiveness	0,36	0,06	0,54	6,06	0,00*			
Supervision	1,39	0,12	0,82	12,03	0,00*			
Openness	-0,26	0,11	0,25	-2,30	0,02*			
Feedback	-0,04	0,09	0,03	-0,45	0,65			
Human resource development	-0,31	0,05	0,64	-5,77	0,00*			
Employee support	0,77	0,13	0,52	5,87	0,00*			
Recognition	1,02	0,15	0,44	6,54	0,00*			
Control	0,46	0,15	0,19	3,00	0,01*			

\**p* < 0,00 – statistically significant

Table 8 shows that Responsiveness/Cooperation, Supervision, Openness, and Feedback, (as measured by CSOF) and Human resource development, and Employee support (as measured by HRDES) and Recognition (as measured by RQ) and Control (as measured by ECQ)

predict 89% of the variance in People care (as measured by OCQ) and 78% of the variance in Structure (measured by OCQ). Three variables made statistically significant contributions to the regression model as revealed by the  $t$  values: Responsiveness/Cooperation ( $t = -10.66, p < 0,01$ ), Human resource development ( $t = 6,61, p < 0,01$ ) and Employee support ( $t = -3,43, p < 0,01$ ). The standardised regression coefficients for each of the predictors were: Responsiveness/Cooperation ( $\beta = -0,67$ ), Human resource development ( $\beta = 0,52$ ) and Employee support ( $\beta = -0,22$ ). Therefore, Responsiveness/Cooperation, Human resource development, and Employee support were the best predictors of People care.

For Structure, seven variables made statistically significant contributions to the regression model: Responsiveness/Cooperation ( $t = 6,06, p < 0,01$ ), Supervision ( $t = 12,03, p < 0,01$ ), Openness ( $t = -2,30, p < 0,05$ ), Human resource development ( $t = -5,77, p < 0,01$ ), Employee support ( $t = 5,87, p < 0,01$ ), Recognition ( $t = 6,54, p < 0,01$ ) and Control ( $t = 3,00, p < 0,01$ ). The standardised regression coefficients for each of the predictors were: Responsiveness/Cooperation ( $\beta = 0,54$ ), Supervision ( $\beta = 0,82$ ), Openness ( $\beta = 0,25$ ), Human resource development ( $\beta = 0,64$ ), Employee support ( $\beta = 0,52$ ), Recognition ( $\beta = 0,44$ ) and Control ( $\beta = 0,19$ ). Therefore Supervision, Human resource development, Responsiveness/Cooperation, Employee support and Recognition contributed most to the variance in Structure.

The results of multiple regression analyses with Efficiency and Communication (as measured by OCQ) as dependent variables and Responsiveness/Cooperation, Supervision, Openness, and Feedback, (as measured by RSOF), Human resource development and Employee support (measured by HRDS) and Recognition and Control (as measured by RQ and ECQ) as independent variables are reflected in Table 9.

Table 9

*Multiple Regression Analyses with Efficiency and Communication as Dependent Variables and Human Resource Practices as Independent Variables*

Variable	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
	B	SE	Beta					
Efficiency						21,26	0,50	0,48
(Constant)	34,52	9,21		3,75	0,00*			
Responsiveness	-0,18	0,08	-0,30	-2,28	0,02*			
Supervision	-0,25	0,15	-0,17	-1,89	0,10			
Openness	-0,56	0,15	-0,81	-3,72	0,00*			
Feedback	0,49	0,12	0,35	3,95	0,00*			
Human resource development	0,01	0,07	0,02	0,11	0,91			
Employee support	-0,32	0,18	-0,24	-1,79	0,08			
Recognition	0,07	0,20	0,04	0,37	0,71			
Control	0,48	0,20	0,22	2,40	0,02*			
Communication						18,85	0,47	0,44
(Constant)	2,61	5,24		0,50	0,62			
Responsiveness	-0,25	0,04	-0,75	-5,56	0,00*			
Supervision	-0,38	0,09	-0,45	-4,37	0,00*			
Openness	0,20	0,08	0,40	2,39	0,02*			
Feedback	0,26	0,07	0,33	3,68	0,00*			
Human resource development	-0,00	0,04	-0,02	-0,11	0,91			
Employee support	0,14	0,10	0,19	1,40	0,16			
Recognition	1,03	0,11	0,89	8,98	0,00*			
Control	0,37	0,11	0,31	3,27	0,00*			

Table 8 shows that the model predicts 50% of the variance in Efficiency and 47% in Communication. For Efficiency, three variables made statistically significant contributions to the regression model as revealed by the *t* values: Responsiveness/Cooperation ( $t = -2,28, p < 0,05$ ), Openness ( $t = -3,72, p < 0,01$ ), Feedback ( $t = 3,95, p < 0,01$ ) and Control ( $t = 2,40, p < 0,05$ ). The standardised regression coefficients were: Responsiveness/Cooperation ( $\beta = -$

0,30), Openness ( $\beta = -0,81$ ), Feedback ( $\beta = 0,35$ ) and Control ( $\beta = 0,22$ ). Openness, Feedback and Responsiveness/Cooperation contributed most to Efficiency.

For Communication, six variables made statistically significant contributions to the regression model as follows: Responsiveness/Cooperation ( $t = -5,56, p < 0,01$ ), Supervision ( $t = -4,37, p < 0,01$ ), Openness ( $t = 2,39, p < 0,05$ ), Feedback ( $t = 3,68, p < 0,01$ ), Recognition ( $t = 8,98, p < 0,01$ ) and Control ( $t = 3,27, p < 0,01$ ). The standardised regression coefficients for the predictors were: Responsiveness/Cooperation ( $\beta = -0,75$ ), Supervision ( $\beta = -0,45$ ) Openness ( $\beta = 0,40$ ), Feedback ( $\beta = 0,33$ ), Recognition ( $\beta = 0,89$ ) and Control ( $\beta = 0,31$ ). Recognition, Responsiveness/Cooperation, Supervision and Openness contributed most to Communication.

## DISCUSSION

The objectives of this study were to determine the reliability and validity of the Human Resource Practices Questionnaire (HRPQ), and to investigate whether the human resource management practices contribute to the organisational climate of a municipality in the North West Province of South Africa. The results revealed that there is a relationship between human resource management practices and organisational climate. The study also indicated that the following human resource management practices are perceived as low in the municipality: human resource development, control, employee support and supervision and all organisational climate dimensions are also perceived as low: people care, efficiency, structure and communication.

The results showed that the internal consistencies of all the sub-scales of the HRPQ and OCQ displayed very acceptable Cronbach's alpha scores as shown in Table 6. The internal consistencies of the human resource management practices sub-scales and those of organisational climate inventory displayed very high factor loadings, and are acceptable according to the guidelines as set out by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). The results of this study indicate a high reliability of the scales of both instruments.

In terms of human resource management practices, *human resource development* refers to the municipality providing sufficient in-service training to do the work expected of employees and also providing sufficient training in communication skills, as well as focusing annually

on performance feed-back. Furthermore, it deals with employees fully understanding policies on training as well as with employees being able to discuss their personal problems with training specialists. Human resource development also deals with supervisors being able to discuss employees' shortcomings they experience in their work. *Control* refers to control over performance in the municipality and employees being productive every working day. Control also deals with managers receiving training in both leadership and managerial skills.

*Employee support* relates to supervisors discussing their employees' performance with them on a regular basis, and also skills development receiving high-priority attention in the municipality. It also deals with available opportunities for employees to receive training on job related skills. Furthermore, employee support refers to employees receiving sufficient support in times of illness and when they experience personal problems, and to managers not neglecting the well-being of employees. *Supervision* implies sufficient opportunities existing in the municipality for employees to discuss their problems with managers and employees knowing what the core values of the municipality are. Supervision also deals with trust between the managers and their subordinates, as well as well as supervisors frequently asking employees opinions on work-related matters.

*Responsiveness/cooperation* means feelings that supervisors understand employees' problems at work, and good cooperation prevailing in directorates. Responsiveness/cooperation also means managers involving employees in decision making, and employees working as teams. *Openness* refers to management style not being autocratic, and employees being able to express themselves freely. Openness also relates to directorates/ sectional meetings being held regularly to give feed-back in relation to work arrangements, and communication also occurring regularly between senior managers and junior personnel. *Feedback* implies employees being satisfied with communication in departments/sections and being allowed to criticize the way things are done, and also supervisors always being willing to communicate with employees. Furthermore, feedback means that interpersonal relationships among colleagues are healthy and employees are informed about all the activities in the municipality, and which communication channel to follow when they experience problems at work. *Empowerment* refers to employees being rewarded for a job well done, and emphasising positive rewards and perceived fairness of the pay and promotion policies.

The findings of this study revealed that the following human resource management practices dimensions were perceived as low among municipal staff: human resource development, control, employee support and supervision. All dimensions of organisational climate also received low mean scores, namely communication which received the lowest mean score compared to the other dimensions, efficiency, people care and structure. All these aspects were found to be problematic in the municipality.

The study further revealed that human resource development, employee support, control and supervision were perceived as low. Consequently they do not lead to maximum productivity and enhanced service delivery. The findings seem to support those findings of a study undertaken by Tapscott (2007) which revealed that a serious shortage of skills and capacity to deliver prevailing in the municipalities. Carrell et al. (1998) also found that employee training and development is seen as a key factor in meeting the employers' strategic, business and operational goals. Further, Greenhaus and Callanan (1994) established that organisations depend on the talents of their workforce to succeed. The study by Huselid et al. (1997) supports the contention that investments in people through training are a potential source of competitive advantage.

The study by Mathebula (2006) confirms the finding in relation to communication in organisational climate study that most municipalities in the North West Province do not have communication personnel and those that have communicators do not involve them in decision-making structures, and that communication personnel lack basic communication tools such as computers, printing machines, phones, vehicles as well as access to internet and E-mail facilities, a result, municipal communicators are not able to communicate with the public. Good communication is an essential part of developmental local government and it is evident that unless communities across the social economic spectrum understand the business of the council they had elected and know how their rates and service charges are being spent, municipalities are not meeting their obligation to the developmental local government (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006).

It is also important to discuss the poor scores revealed in the study on the human resource management practices, namely control, employee support and supervision. Poor communication between senior managers and junior staff creates inaccessible and remote supervision and leads to lack of guidance, lack of support and lack of control, and that

severely impacts on the ability of employees to deliver quality services to the public. Employees may not also understand what is expected of them; they may also claim that their lack of service delivery is due to the misunderstanding regarding what they are expected to do. Kreitner and Kinicki (2001) believe that managerial decisions and organisational policies are ineffective unless they are understood by those responsible for enacting them. The work climate created by managers contributes directly to subordinates' feelings of self-worth and sense of self-determination (Deci, Connell, & Ryan, 1989). It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that one of the most inhibiting forces to successful group performance is lack of effective communication (Robbins et al., 2003).

Rustenburg municipal Lekgotla-HR report (2008/2009) states that there have been large numbers of resignations, and these resignations are mainly at higher levels. As a result of these resignations, there are constant changes in leadership with resultant constant changes in operational strategies and direction, as well as performance objectives, which in turn destabilises operations and diverts focus from core performance objectives. Constant changes in operational strategy and strategy direction can result in diminished motivation, dedication and commitment, which in turn manifests in deteriorating performance and work standards.

The last objective of this study was to test the relationship between human resource management practices and organisational climate. Product-moment correlations and multiple regression analysis were used to reach this objective. The following results have been found in this study. Firstly, that supervision relates strongly to human resource development, efficiency and people care. On the other hand, there is a less strong relationship between supervision and control. The above finding supports the finding that lack of service delivery in the municipalities has also been identified to be caused by a range of other factors, namely poor supervision, lack of support from managers, lack of team spirit and lack of human resource development (Mlambo-Ngcuka, 2006). Secondly, human resource development relates strongly to employee support, people care and efficiency, and less strongly to control and structure. This finding confirms the finding of Armstrong and Murlis (2008) that an organisation, through its human resource management practices, can provide motivation and increase commitment by engagement and putting employees where their views can be openly expressed, thereby recognising their contribution to the organisation.

The results of the multiple regression analyses indicate that responsiveness and human resource development contributes most to people care (friendly environment, supportive management, and feelings of belonging), which also implies that human resource development and responsiveness are good determinants of people care. Supervision, human resource development, responsiveness, employee support and recognition contribute to structure (the feelings employees have about the constraints in a group, how many rules, regulations and procedures exist). Recognition, responsiveness, supervision, and openness contribute most to communication. Literature supports this finding that employees need to know not only how well they have achieved their objectives or carried out their work, but also to know that their achievements are appreciated. Managers should also listen to and act upon suggestions of their employees (Armstrong & Murlis, 2007).

This study contributes to better the understanding of the human resource management practices in place, such as human resource development (provision of sufficient in-service training and communication skills and performance feed-back), control (managers receiving training in leadership and managerial skills, and employees being productive daily), employee support (employees receiving sufficient support in times of illness and when employees experience personal problems), and supervision (sufficient opportunities existing for employees to discuss their problems with managers, and managers frequently asking employees for personal opinions on work-related matters), which are not able to enhance effective service delivery and also how those human resource management practices relate to organisational climate in the Rustenburg municipal area. The study has demonstrated that human resource development, control, employee support and supervision are not effective human resource management practices in the specific municipality.

The limitation of the present study is the use of cross-sectional design which made it difficult to prove causal relationships. The longitudinal study is recommended. Lastly, the limited focus on one municipality can be limiting the results in terms of generalisation of the findings to other municipalities.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that the municipality undertake a review of their recruitment and selection process, and conduct an audit on a pool of available resources vis-à-vis the desired competencies within their respective departments/units to

identify skills gaps. A critical review of the recruitment process, including competency testing, would reveal the extent to which rigour has to be applied in the selection and placement of candidates. Interventions to address shortfalls would ensure that there is the right match of a candidate's skills and competencies to those required for the job, and assist in reducing the likelihood of poor service delivery attributable to incapacity or skills shortage. This finding is also in line with Robbins (1998), namely that the objective of effective selection practices is to match individual characteristics (abilities, experience) with the requirements of the job, because when management fails to get a proper match, both employer and service delivery suffer.

Employee support, supervision and control have also been identified as lacking in the municipality, and performance management system also appears not to be understood by employees. This is so due to the fact that communication is also lacking in the municipality. Due to this fundamental lack of understanding among members of staff regarding what is and is not acceptable, and what is and is not expected, why is, and is not acceptable/expected, service delivery in the interim becomes hampered. Since management's capability is an important pre-requisite for the effective service delivery, the training of management in this regard, as well as in basic management competencies (to address general management deficiencies) need priority attention. Managers should enhance transparency around key performance processes and decisions through regular communication with staff members. Managers should also ensure that all staff members are aware of the strategic priorities of their departments so that they can appreciate their roles within their departments/units and also have a deeper understanding of the performance management system (PMS). A real understanding by everyone in the municipality of a service vision and its underlying principles is very crucial. This implies a corresponding service culture and management style in departments/units that supports such a vision.

Managers must exercise courage to make unpopular decisions in managing poor performance, because the lack of it is seen to be a broader management incompetency. If not, managers must be held accountable to it since it is seen to be the basic management fundamental. Poor performance affects the costs for both the municipality and the taxpayer, since it translates into higher than necessary payroll costs. The above is in line with what Gordhan, (2009) indicated, namely when managers do not ask the tough questions in relation to under performance, poor performance will continue to be the trend in *South Africa*.

Furthermore, organisational climate surveys should be conducted on a regular basis to identify issues concerning staff members so that managers are able to address concerns as soon as they are raised. Finally, it is also important to mention that 17,9% of employees in the municipality have service of more than ten years, and that there have been large numbers of resignations in the municipality – mainly at managerial level. Due to the above, a retention strategy urgently needs to be developed and implemented. Retaining people with skills is vital for the municipality, and the public who so desperately need the services it provides.

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter is aimed at providing conclusions in respect of the findings from the three empirical studies regarding organisational climate, human resource management practices and service delivery in the municipal environment. The conclusions are discussed in relation to the different objectives set out in three different research articles. The limitations of the studies are also discussed and recommendations are made to the municipality. Finally, recommendations are made for future research in this area.

#### **5.1 CONCLUSIONS**

The general objective of this research was to standardise the Organisational Climate Questionnaire (OCQ), the Human Resource Practices Questionnaire (HRPQ) for the municipal employees of the Rustenburg municipality and the Standard of Service as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire (SSPPQ) for the public who are served by the Rustenburg municipality.

The first objective of this study was to establish the reliability and validity of the OCQ for municipal employees in the Rustenburg local municipality, and also to examine the relationship between organisational climate and various biographical characteristics such as age, gender, length of service, marital status, race, job level and also educational qualifications. According to Veldman (1995), organisational climate refers to the psychological structures of organisations and their sub-units, and can also be described as the personality or character of the organisation's internal environment. Organisational climate is defined by Ekvall (1990) as a conglomerate of attitudes, feelings and behaviours that characterises life in an organisation. Litwin and Stringer (1968) defines climate as the sum of the perceptions of the individuals working in that organisation. While formally established guidelines as to the key elemental components of climate are yet to find universal acceptance, the explanatory powers of the concept lie in its potential to conceptually link organisational and individual behavioural phenomena (Falcione, Sussman, Herden, 1987; Moran & Volkwien, 1992). It is this promise that has attracted researchers, including Jones and James

(1979), Middlemist and Hitt (1981) and Joyce and Slocum (1982), who have argued in favour of a multi-dimensional approach to the issues of measurement.

The scales showed acceptable internal consistencies. The four-factor structure of the OCQ was confirmed namely people care, structure, efficiency and communication. Statistically and practically significant differences were found between the levels of organisational climate dimensions (i.e. people care, structure, efficiency and communication) and some of the biographical characteristics of organisational climate, namely service years, age, and job level. This implies that when people care or service increases, efficiency also increases. However, the finding of this study is contrary to that of Combrink (2004) who did not find any statistically significant difference on service years and age between the independent variables in the study. It is also worth mentioning that 17,9% of the employees have been with the municipality for more than 10 years.

MANOVA analyses were done to investigate the relationship between organisational climate variables, namely people care, structure, efficiency and communication and various biographical characteristics, namely job category, race, directorate and sex. There is a significant difference in communication between job level 1 and job level 3. Employees in higher levels do not communicate well with employees in lower levels. This particular relationship has a negative effect on service delivery and work relationships. In analyses of Wilks' Lambda, statistically significant differences were found only for job category and sex. The Wilks' Lambda for job category is the lowest, implying that job category contributes to the model most and therefore is an important factor. According to the results of the tests of between subject effects, efficiency and communication are significantly related to job category.

The second objective of this study was to assess the reliability and validity of the Standards of Service as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire (SSPPQ) on a sample of the public of Rustenburg municipality area and to investigate whether the municipal staff adheres to the Batho Pele principles when delivering service. Service delivery has been defined by Riekert (2001) as the provision of a product or service by a government body to a community that was promised to or which is expected by the community. Service delivery also means supplying users with services needed or demanded. Martin (2000) indicated that service delivery should be designed around the need of end-users, rather than around departmental

bureaucracies, or the convenience of delivery institutions. The definition of service delivery suggests that customers as end-users of services are concerned about the nature of services they receive, and how those services can help them. It therefore means that services should be a means to a better life (Fox, Schwella & Wissink, 1991). Zeithamil and Britner (2000) conclude that an organisation's internal processes should be designed with customers' value and customers' satisfaction in mind.

This study confirmed the validity and reliability of the SSPPQ. The study also extracted a two-factor structure, each with acceptable levels of internal consistencies. The two factor structure is labelled Consultation and Efficiency. Most of the Batho Pele principles received negative responses from the public. The results showed that customers who feel that they are not sufficiently consulted on services also feel that the services they received were not effective. Knowledge of the service environment was perceived as poor, and consultation on services was perceived as a challenge.

This confirms the finding by Mathebula (2006), namely that most municipalities in the province do not have communication personnel, and those that have communicators do not include them in decision-making structures. Furthermore, communication personnel lack basic communication tools such as computers, printing machines, phones and vehicles as well as access to internet and E-mail facilities. As a result municipal communicators are not adequately informed of the developments in their municipalities; therefore they cannot communicate the development information to the public. Another finding is that sufficient skills and experience to carry out the principle of consultation in the municipality are lacking. The study by Tapscott (2007) confirms the above finding that there is a serious lack of skills and capacity in the municipalities, and also that political promises and a crisis of expectations are still the order of the day in the municipalities. Most of the Batho Pele principles are not adhered to in the municipality when delivering service to the public.

The third objective of this study was to assess the reliability and validity of the Human Resource Practices Questionnaire (HRPQ) for a sample of Rustenburg municipal employees in the North West Province of South Africa, and also to determine the relationship between human resource practices and organisational climate. The definition of human resource practices suggests that human resource practices enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the organisation (Stravrou-Costea, 2005), and human resource practices are also

organisational processes that enhance individual competencies and organisational capabilities. It has often been argued that, given the importance of the customer/ employee interaction to the service encounter, human resource practices have a role to play in securing high levels of service quality (Schneider & Bowen, 1993). As a primary service delivery arm of government, the efficiency of the municipality is critical, thus it is absolutely vital for the practices of the municipality to be examined continuously in order to ensure that its performance is optimal and service delivery is accelerated. This way, poor service delivery can be identified earlier and appropriate measures can be taken to address it expeditiously and also renew the service delivery modalities.

Human resource practices lead to organisational effectiveness by creating a supportive climate (Ferris, Hochwarter, Buckley, Harrel-Cook and Frink, 1998) and shaping employee behaviour and attitudes (Huselid, 1995). Managers must know how different procedures and practices will stimulate these worker needs and how worker motivation can be enhanced.

According to Schneider and Bowen (1985), service delivery and human resource practices jointly assist in improving quality and influencing service. Youndt, Snell, Dean and Lepak (1996) added that the link between organisational practices and service require a deeper understanding of how to manage people to improve competitiveness. One way to encourage supportive internal service relationship is by measuring internal service levels (Zeithami & Britner, 2000). This can be done by performance appraisal. This practice assists in keeping employees motivated. To grow and maintain a workforce that is customer oriented and focused on delivering quality, an organisation must work with and train its employees to ensure service performance (Zeithami & Britner, 2000).

The scales of the Human Resource Practices Questionnaire (HRPQ) showed acceptable internal consistencies. The study confirmed a relationship between human resource management practices and organisational climate. The study showed that responsiveness and human resource development contribute most to people care. Supervision, human resource development, communication, employee support and recognition contribute to structure. Openness, feedback and responsiveness, contribute most to efficiency. Recognition, responsiveness, supervision and openness contribute most to communication.

## 5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The first limitation of the study was the use of the cross-sectional design. It is a view of the researcher that this study must be viewed as a starting point for a longitudinal research project, which could focus on organisational climate, human resource practices and service delivery in the municipality over a period of time. Longitudinal data would allow for a better understanding of the true nature of organisational climate, human resource practices and service delivery in the municipal environment. Longitudinal research will also enable the researcher to develop causal models.

The second limitation of the study was the exclusion of the biographical questionnaire with the Standards of Service as Perceived by the Public Questionnaire (SSPPQ). The exclusion of the biographical questionnaire limits the knowledge of the equal representation of a diverse population which could have improved the value of this study. Some participants were afraid to complete the questionnaires despite all the assurances of confidentiality. This negative attitude on the part of the respondents was a contributory factor to the exclusion of the biographical questionnaire.

The third limitation of this study was its reliance solely on self-report measures. According to Schaufeli, Enzmann and Girault (1993), the exclusive use of self-report measures in validation studies increases the likelihood that at least part of the shared variances between measures may be attributed to method variance. However, a review of self-report measures regarding perceptions and affective reactions to jobs and work environments revealed little evidence of common method variance (Spector, 1987). Similarly, other researchers have demonstrated that even if interactions between the constructs are found, they pose no real threat with regard to the findings obtained (Dollard & Winefield, 1998; Wall, Jackson, Mullarkey & Parker, 1996).

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations in respect of the municipality under study as well as recommendations for future study are made in this section.

### 5.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation

As a sphere of government, the municipality is expected to render services effectively and efficiently. It is also expected to continually renew and improve its service delivery modalities to make them more accessible to segments of the community who have been marginalised from receiving such services. This entails expanding services whilst simultaneously maintaining acceptable standards within affordable parameters.

Accordingly, management must constantly improve optimal utilisation of the resources at its disposal. Given the labour intensive nature of the municipality, it is critical that the optimal performance of its employees is ensured. While much effort has been made to improve performance levels within the municipality, criticism continues concerning poor service delivery and lack of responsiveness to the needs of the people.

The public is proliferated with perceptions of poor levels of service delivery by and within the municipality. These perceptions can largely be attributed to deep-rooted perceptions in the public that municipal officials are generally incompetent and are not accountable. These concerns can be addressed through measures such as undertaking a critical review of recruitment and selection practices, including competency testing and introducing tighter measures and screening to regulate the quality of candidates entering the municipal service, and conducting an audit of a pool of available resources vis-à-vis the desired competencies within their directorates to identify skills gaps. Targeted training which has a direct relationship to work content should also be introduced. Institutionalising managerial accountability for performance management, and in particular poor performance, and also educate employees on the performance management system on an ongoing basis is also important.

Managers should also promote work attitude changes through recognising and rewarding value-adding activities and conversely, penalising behaviours that erode values. In this

regard, managers will be expected to champion the behavioural change programme and take accountability for positive and negative outcomes. Managers are also advised to have organisational climate surveys so that they can become aware of the employees' needs and be able, where possible, to address these needs.

According to the Lekgotla HR report (2008/2009), resignations are mainly in the higher levels. This refers to constant changes in leadership with resultant constant changes in operational strategy and direction, as well as performance objectives, which in turn destabilises operations and diverts focus from core performance objectives. Constant changes in operational strategy and direction can result in diminished motivation, dedication and commitment, which in turn manifest in deteriorating performance and work standards. The municipality should therefore implement a retention strategy to be able to address this concern. The municipal managers should improve the level of participation of all employees in their strategy formulation and develop commitment and ownership to the business objectives.

Poor communication between senior managers and junior staff manifests in lack of guidance, employee support, control and supervision. This ultimately takes a toll in the motivation of employees. Formalised communication systems should be in place. This can be multi-directional (horizontal with peers, upwards with management or downwards from management). Communication serves as an important vehicle to convey knowledge, and within performance management practices in particular, it is vital to communicate the following:

- Performance expectations;
- Performance standards;
- Performance against expectations; and
- Performance against standards.

The more thorough and frequent the communication, the better the chances that vital elements of knowledge, insight and understanding will have been shared and the lesser misunderstanding and misconceptions will be.

Consultation and communication structures must be developed to ensure effective internal communication, as well as consultation between managers of service points and other operational components within the municipality. Consultation and communication between relevant stakeholders of related services should be attended to. Municipality should move from patron/client relationship to one of focusing on partnership with stakeholders. Adequate systems also need to be established to promote consultation between the municipality and citizens to ensure that the needs of the internal and external clients are responded to effectively and efficiently. The functioning of all call centres should be investigated and upgraded to address shortcomings. Front-line employees must be trained and empowered to be responsive to customer needs and requests, and also be able to recover on the spot when things go wrong.

Managers should also be encouraged to work as front-line employees several times a year. Having this requirement, gives management an opportunity to experience the challenges faced by employees. It therefore becomes easier to manage front-line employees when the supervisor understands what they are going through on a daily basis, and what the expectations of the public are, daily (Davidson, 1999).

The municipality should also develop formalised complaints handling mechanisms and effective systems to monitor these complaints. Counter service staff should be trained and sensitised in handling the public. The front-end service delivery process needs to be in the immediate vicinity of its clients to ensure an appropriate business context and efficient service delivery. The back-end of the delivery process requires being centralised in a consulting or shared service mode. The people management professionals should play a role as strategic business partners with a long-term, strategic perspective and a strong customer orientation. This role needs to be balanced with a strong expert people champion role to support employee needs.

The study on the perceptions of the public was based on the principles of the Batho Pele. All the dimensions of the questionnaire are equally important. The reliability of the service or product cannot be assessed without service standards. The same applies to such principles as courtesy, information and redress which influence the assessment of dimensions of responsiveness and assurance. The findings that the public are of the view that the Batho Pele principles are not adhered to reflects the expectations and experiences of the citizen in this

regard; therefore the Batho Pele principles should be adhered to in the municipality. The Batho Pele principles guide government in the delivery of services.

### **5.5 Recommendations for further research**

In spite of the limitations of the study, the findings may have very important implications for future research and application. The results of this study were obtained from a small sample of one municipality in South Africa which might probably have limited generalisation of the findings. It is therefore recommended that a larger population group that is representative of the population on a national level be used in a sample.

Organisational Climate Questionnaire needs further research on a larger sample group with a multi-dimensional approach. The lack of valid and reliable instruments for measuring organisational climate and human resource management practices in the municipality has been a problem, and the study has confirmed the OCQ and the HRPQ as reliable measuring instruments for use on municipal employees.

Another problem has been the exclusion of the biographical questionnaire when administering SSPPQ on the public in the municipality. Because this is one of the few studies in this field on the municipal public in South Africa, it is recommended that future studies delve into this problem. The study has confirmed that the SSPPQ is a reliable measuring instrument for use on the municipal public.

The absence of a longitudinal study in this field of study remains a problem. Due to time constraints, the design of the study was synchronic which, according to Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli (2000), prevents more complex forms of non-recursive linkages from being examined. The present study could therefore not resolve this problem. It is recommended that a longitudinal study be used in future research. The present study is also based on self-report measures which, according to Spector and Jex (1991), leaves room for such data to be contaminated by common method variance, because both the dependent variables tend to only rely on the information from the respondents. Therefore it is recommended that future studies should not depend solely on self-report measures, but that appropriate designs rather be considered alongside it.

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