

**FACTORS AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO
WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECRETARIAT
CHALLENGES**

by

MMOKELA MEISIE CHOEU

MINI-DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

in the

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT & LAW

at the

UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

SUPERVISOR: Prof M.M. Kanjere

DECLARATION

I, Mmokela Meisie Choeu, declare that “**FACTORS AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO, A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ADMINISTRATIVE AND SECRETARIAT CHALLENGES**” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been and acknowledged by means of complete references and that this work has not been submitted before for any other degree at any other institution.

.....
Mmokela Meisie Choeu

.....
Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A special appreciation goes to God the Almighty, for His grace, the gift of life and the strength to further my studies and;

- ❖ Professor M.M. Kanjere. Thank you for your very professional advices at all times, aspiring guidance, encouragement, invaluable constructive criticism, patience and the professionalism you portrayed throughout our interaction. Keep it up, the world needs people like you!
- ❖ My grandson, Kabelo, you are an amazing seven-year-old; my study partner who prayed with me throughout. I could talk to you and you understood. At times you would offer answers unknowingly, allowing me time to have a nap whenever it was needed. Thank you so much Buddy.
- ❖ My deepest gratitude to my precious daughters, Nthabiseng and Mpho. I wonder what life would be without you! Your love, motivation, patience and support throughout my studies did not go unnoticed. Thanks for listening to my frustrations. In you I have the best of friends, you are my greatest supporters. I love you so much, may God bless you abundantly.
- ❖ My beloved mother, Raesibe Selinah Choeu who is late, for always believing in and encouraging me. Your prayers strengthened me. Thank you Mosebjadi, may your soul continue to rest in peace.
- ❖ My late grandmother Mahlako Ramaesela Mnisi, for your greatest role in my life, for listening to me and offered advices always. Rest in peace, Koko!
- ❖ My late sister Tiny and my brother Tumelo, who always inspired me to go for what I believed in. May you rest in perfect peace.
- ❖ My late father, Ramaila Choeu, for raising and loving me unconditionally. May your soul rest peacefully.
- ❖ To the participants, for your willingness to participate in this study.
- ❖ To my employer, University of Limpopo, for granting me the opportunity and permission to conduct my research.

ABSTRACT

For South African higher education institutions to compete globally, they must be able to provide quality service to their clients and stakeholders. The increasing competition puts pressure on institutions to strive to be the best. The importance of quality service delivery cannot be over-emphasised. Students are there to receive education that will enable them to meet the market requirements which will, in turn, improve the economy of the country. Therefore, all staff members of the university, including the administrative staff of Faculty of Science and Agriculture, cannot be excluded from this.

Recent challenges and the University of Limpopo have also exerted a lot of pressure on the administrative staff and secretaries to deliver quality services to its clients. The administrative staff from the Faculty of Science and Agriculture are not excluded from the above challenges, hence the study on factors affecting service delivery at the University of Limpopo focuses on them. The performance of the administrative staff in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture depends on the factors that influence them to deliver quality services in the area of the study. Service delivery at the University of Limpopo was fraught with challenges such as lack of clarity on policies and alternative strategies, inadequate resources, lack of managerial skills, monitoring and evaluation. The study also seeks to investigate the factors that hinder effective service delivery by the administration at the university. The data were obtained by means of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. These were then used to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges that were encountered by the respondents in the area of the study. The findings of the study confirm that there are negative factors that are associated with the implementation of service delivery in the area of the study. Lack of staff development and relevant training to the administrative staff were regarded as the main challenges that hinder quality service delivery in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture. In conclusion, the study also suggests some strategies and recommendations that can enhance effective service delivery in the area of the study.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of my beloved mother, **Raesibe Selinah Choeu**, who never got to see the woman that I am today, my late grandmother **Mahlako Ramaesela Mnisi**, my late brother **Tumelo** and late sister **Tiny**. May your souls continue to rest in perfect peace. I love you! My grandson Kabelo, daughters Nthabiseng and Mpho: you are the greatest gift I could ask for.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Higher education has become a marketplace driven by a number of factors such as changing demographics, a high level of technology, high costs (tuition, accommodation and books) and the high numbers of students seeking education (Nealon, 2005). This has resulted in institutions of higher learning competing for students. The competition does not only happen through the provision of different programmes but, most importantly with the provision of quality service delivery. As a result, students regard themselves as customers apart from being learners in class. The provision of service should be sustainable in order to ensure good administration.

Mashele (2014:6) attests that the education industry is an important sector in society because it provides education, which is a mammoth task. The main customers, as stated above, are students. This puts pressure on all units of the university to offer the best service at all times. Units include enrolment and admissions, finance, bursary, different faculties, security and so on. Students, being external clients, and the academic staff as internal clients, should receive quality service from secretaries and administrative staff. The core functions of the University of Limpopo is teaching, learning, research and community engagement. For academics to be able to do their job without problems, they need support which should be provided by the administrative staff. The vision of the university further reads; “to be a leading African University focused on the developmental needs of its communities and epitomising academic excellence and innovativeness”.

To achieve this vision, the university needs employees who are committed in providing quality service to its clients. Mashele (2014:5) attests that, like other Public Service organisations, the university is facing many factors that impact on the effective service delivery. These include changes in Higher Education Institutions which have placed a new external pressure on employees to improve their way of carrying out their daily activities. One of the key challenges facing the institutions of higher learning in the rural

areas is to recruit skilled and qualified personnel who will deliver quality service to their clients. The University of Limpopo is not excluded from the aforementioned challenge. According to Cascio (2003:201), recruitment is the process whereby an institution's human resources division attracts, recruits and selects the right type of staff the organisation needs. Recruiting and selecting the right people helps the organisation in realising its goals, and this includes the provision of quality service. Mello (2014:1) supports that employees are an indispensable asset of any public institution. Success, failure or effective utilisation of other resources in the public section depend largely on the calibre of employees an institution has in its employ. On the other hand, students are most important people to any institution, because without them there is no school, college or university. Therefore, they should not be seen as a burden or as interrupting employee's work but rather as their purpose. Providing quality service to students should not been seen as doing them a favour but they are actually doing employees a favour by giving them an opportunity to be of service to them.

The University of Limpopo is situated in one of the poorest areas of South Africa. This institution is mostly receiving officers and secretaries who attended the neighbouring rural high schools. Some of these officials got their secondary education under bad conditions and poor teaching instructions hence poor service delivery in the area of the study results. This problem has been limiting the performance and service delivery of some units in the University.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Employees are considered to be the most vital resource of most organisations and therefore they invest a lot of money in the human resource processes, ensuring that they recruit and select the best. These processes are done to ensure that the organisations deliver quality service to their clients, internally and externally, and to realise their (the organisations') objectives. Recruitment, training, selection, incentives and other related factors are some of the challenges that impede service delivery in the area of the study. Lack of the above processes hampers the quality of service delivery at the University of Limpopo. For a unit or department to succeed, it requires the manager to train and develop their administrative staff. In-service training and staff development can always

enhance capacity building and in turn administrative staff in different units would be able to provide quality service. Lack of continuous capacity building also impacts negatively on service and poor customer relations.

This university is situated at the rural area of South Africa where there is scarcity of resources. It is mostly getting money from the government subsidy, unlike other universities (former white universities) which receive income or donations from the private sectors, hence poor service delivery to its customers (Nyathi, 2014:4). Lack of quality services and good customer relations also has a negative impact on the reputation of the university and its products. The above circumstances make it difficult for the unit managers to recruit the best quality of administrative staff in the country. Most of the highly qualified administrative staff do not want to work in rural areas and in the former disadvantaged institutions, hence there is a lack of quality service delivery in the area of study. Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk & Schenk (2003:9) attest that organisations can be successful if they deliver the right goods in the right way. This refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation. The right goods refer to the products and or services that a particular organisation provides.

Apart from the above problems, there are also factors such as lack of resources, infrastructure, accommodation and other related issues that make it difficult for the administrative staff to provide quality service to its customers.

The above-mentioned problems have necessitated the researcher to embark on a study of factors affecting service delivery at the University of Limpopo. The persisting challenges have remained unattended to for a long period of time, hence this study is justified. The study will assist the unit managers to use correct mechanisms for recruiting and selecting best administrative staff from different parts of the country who will deliver quality service to their customers. The above processes have compelled the researcher to investigate the issue of service delivery in the area of the study. This study wants to highlight the knowledge gaps in relation to factors affecting service delivery at the University.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to investigate the factors that affect service delivery at the University of Limpopo, with special reference to administrative and secretariat challenges.

1.4 Objectives

In order to realise the above aim, the following objectives were pursued:

- ❖ To investigate service delivery standards delivered by the administrative staff at the University of Limpopo.
- ❖ To determine how the administrative staff provides service to both internal and external customers.
- ❖ To develop strategies that can be implemented when up-skilling the administrative staff.

1.5 Research questions

The study will attempt to answer the following key questions;

- ❖ Do members of the administrative staff adhere to service delivery standards at the University?
- ❖ Does the administrative staff provide quality service to all stakeholders in their sphere of operation?
- ❖ Which strategies can be developed to re-skill the administrative staff?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study on factors affecting service delivery at the University of Limpopo with special reference to administrative and secretariat challenges will help the university in the following ways:

- ❖ The study will highlight issues that can help the unit managers to recruit and select quality administrative staff. This will affirm the managers to understand the principles of recruitment and selection process.
- ❖ It will assist the unit managers to adhere to professional code of ethics and professionalism.
- ❖ The study will contribute to theoretical foundation and to Human Resource Management practices.

- ❖ The study will also assist the senior management to develop relevant strategies for the selection and recruitment of administrative staff at the university.

One of the intentions of this study is to add to the body of knowledge. The researcher also wants to reduce the knowledge gap in Human Resource Management. The theories and deliberations will also be used by other future researchers.

1.6 Definition and clarification of concepts

The key concepts will assist the researcher to clarify, analyse and get meaning of words stated in the study. The following concepts will be defined and analysed by the researcher:

Service Delivery: it can be defined as the performance of work or duty by an official or an act of helping others, or power to control or make use of resources, or of an organisation or system providing the public with something useful or necessary (The Universal Dictionary 1961:1394 – 1395).

Recruitment: Pilbeam and Corbridge (2002:115) define recruitment as a process which aims at attracting appropriately qualified candidates for a particular position from which it is possible and practical to select and appoint a competent person or persons.

Recruitment policy: an organisation's recruitment policy outlines the objectives of the recruitment process and provides guidelines as to how the recruitment process should be carried out (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2005:226).

Retention: Frank, Finnegan & Taylor (2004:3) define retention as an effort by an employer to keep desirable workers in order to meet business objectives. It refers to the process of keeping the loyalty of existing employees and persuading them not to work for another company. According to Samuel and Chipunza (2009:411), the main purpose of retention is to prevent the loss of competent employees from institution as this could have adverse effects on productivity and service delivery.

Selection: this is a process which involves the application of appropriate techniques and methods with the aim of inducting a competent person or persons, (Pilbeam et al.

2002:115). It is a process of collecting and evaluating information about an individual in order to extend an offer of employment. Such employment could be either a first position for a new employee or a different position for an existing employee.

Training: Warnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield (2015:342) define training as a process whereby people acquire capabilities to aid in the achievement of organisational goals. It is identified as task oriented and focuses on improving the learners' job performance. According to Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, (2003:376) training is focused on helping employees' performance in their day to day jobs.

Performance management: it is defined as the process through which managers ensure that employees' activities and outputs are congruent with the organisation's goals (Noe et al., 2003:327). Performance management makes sure that the activities of employees are congruent with the organisation's objectives. *Management by Objectives* is a system in which specific performance objectives are jointly determined by subordinates and rewards allocated on the basis of progress.

1.7 Chapter division

The chapters of the dissertation can be outlined as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and background. The researcher presents an orientation to the background of the study. The delimitation, purpose of the study, significance and plan of the study are also outlined.

Chapter 2: Literature review on staff development: Relevant literature on recruitment, selection and performance management is reviewed. This is done to locate the current study within the body of knowledge.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology: In this chapter, the researcher describes and explains different research paradigms, the research design, method and techniques that have been used to collect the data for chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Data collection and analysis and discussion of results: In chapter 4 the researcher uses different research instruments to collect, analyse and interpret data. The results are analysed against the factors that hamper effective recruitment and selection of employees in the area of the study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations: In this chapter the researcher presents the findings from literature review, empirical study and semi-structured interviews. Recommendations will be made against the objectives and the findings that will be discussed in the study.

1.8 Conclusion

Chapter one has given an overview of the research and the rationale for embarking on this research journey. The statement of the problem, the purpose, the significance and the division of the chapters were also outlined.

In the next chapter, a review of selected relevant literature on factors affecting service delivery in the institutions of higher learning will be deliberated in full. This will be done to locate the current study within the existing body of knowledge.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW ON FACTORS THAT AFFECT SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a review of literature related to service delivery provided by the administrative staff in the institutions of higher learning will be presented. The purpose of exploring what has already been researched is to locate the current study within existing body of knowledge. The chapter is organised as follows:

- A brief review of the theoretical framework regarding service delivery.
- Critical analysis of previous research and literature which may place the present study in the appropriate context in terms of research questions stated in chapter 1.
- And lastly, the conclusion will be given in the form of a summary at the end of the chapter.

Mavuso (2010:5) indicates that universities are created to provide quality education and skills to the members of the society from various spheres of life. To accomplish the above purpose, both academic and administrative staff needs to work jointly and support one another to achieve the intended objectives of the institutions of higher learning. For the administrative staff to deliver quality service, they need to be provided with the relevant resources and equipment. A brief discussion of the National Framework for Higher Education is presented below.

2.2 National Framework for Higher Education in South Africa

The administrative staff should understand the National Framework so that they remain relevant in their provision of service. Their day to day responsibilities include supporting the activities of the university. They are also an important part of the university and their duties include recruiting the best students, registering them and ensuring they are registered for the correct programmes and modules as prescribed in the university calendars, ensuring that the rules are adhered to, capturing of marks, preparing graduation lists for the programme, and ushering of students to the graduation. Based on

the above, one can safely conclude that the administrative staff is responsible for the life-cycle of the students at the university and further has to support the academics in their daily duties. The members of the administrative staff are the ones who receive the most important clients of the university, namely students and stakeholders, and further provide service to fellow employees, the lecturers, whose duties include educating the nation. And this, in turn, ensures that the University of Limpopo realises its vision of being a leading African University which focuses on the developmental needs of its communities and epitomising academic excellence and innovativeness.

Therefore, it is important for members of the administrative staff to ensure that the service they provide to students, stakeholders and fellow employees is of high quality; else the good intentions of the university will be futile and goals will not be realised or delayed. For administrative staff to always remain relevant, they need to understand the framework, its principles and the strategies.

2.2.1 Legal framework of public institutions of higher learning in South Africa

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 as the supreme law of the country, provides for service delivery as one of the important factors in order to redress the imbalances of the past. Government officials are tasked to carry out the mandate of the constitution of providing the best service to the citizens. Managa (2012) confirms that it is imperative that government hold officials accountable for any abuse of power, and ensure efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness and transparency in the local sphere. The institutions of higher learning cannot be left out; they are entrusted with the responsibility of providing high quality service in order to ensure better education for all; as enshrined in the constitution.

2.2.1.1 The Constitution of RSA, 1996

The role of the government in education is contained clearly in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996; section 29(1) protects the right to basic education for everyone. The Bill of Rights, Chapter 2, outlines the rights to education. Section 29 (1) (b) further contains that the state should make further education increasingly available and accessible to the citizens. This section imposes a responsibility on the state to put in

place, uphold and further provides an education system with educational programmes available in all its forms and at all levels. Institutions of higher education should be able to offer different programmes and students should be allowed to pursue a qualification of their choice as per the admission requirements. The University of Limpopo has got different programmes that the public choose from and administrative staff should ensure that service quality is of high standard in assisting its clients to go through this process. They should have a good understanding of the calendars for different school or faculties.

Section 29 (1) (b) of the Act redresses the imbalance of the past as the education system was filled with inequalities. The objective of education is to develop the society and make lives better, which in turn improves the economy of the country. Where the state provides progressive education, it is not only assisting the society but also putting the country on the map and making it better. Hence the quality of service delivery by institutions of higher learning is important.

The National Framework for Higher Education in South Africa has been developed as a guide that seeks to advance an understanding of higher education and has put forward a strategic implementation approach that universities and colleges can use to improve the quality of service delivery. These strategies were developed to redress and to transform the legacy of the past created by the former apartheid regime. To resolve the above, the Minister of Higher Education has been entrusted with the powers as indicated in the Higher Education Act.

2.2.1.2 Higher Education Act No. 23 of 2001

According to the Higher Education Act No. 23 of 2001 section 21 (2)(a) the education institution is deemed to be a public higher education institution established under this Act or a subdivision of such public higher education institution as the case may be. The act states that the institutions of higher learning also involve the assets, liabilities, rights and obligations of the universities.

The aims of the Higher Education Act include, amongst others, regulating higher education, providing for the establishment, composition and functions of a Council on

Higher Education, governance and funding of public higher education institutions, providing for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor, providing for the registration of private higher education institutions, providing quality assurance and quality promotion in higher education, providing transitional arrangements and the repeal of certain laws and providing for matters connected therewith. These include all process that the Ministry of Education together with Council for Higher Education should engage in, as they are providing for education in the country.

The Act further outlines the following principles:

- ❖ To change curriculum or programmes so they can address the economical and development needs of the country.
- ❖ To redress the imbalances of the past.
- ❖ To provide the best opportunities for learning and the creation of knowledge.
- ❖ To promote the values which underlie an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom.
- ❖ To respect other religions and belief systems.
- ❖ To respect and encourage democracy, academic freedom, freedom of speech and expression, creativity, scholarship and research.
- ❖ To pursue excellence, promote the full realisation of the potential of every student and employee, tolerance of ideas and appreciation of diversity;
- ❖ To respond to the needs of the Republic and of the communities served by the institutions.
- ❖ To contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, in keeping with international standards of academic quality.

The above principles outline the role of the government in the provision of Higher Education Services by establishing a single co-ordinated higher education system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based higher education. The University of Limpopo as an institution of higher learning, cannot be excluded from the above-mentioned principles, and as such needs employees who are committed to providing quality service in order to be in line with the Act.

Furthermore, for the above to happen, the South African citizens should acquire their basic education because it is free or less expensive at government schools and be able to proceed with higher education as it is not more difficult because of the National Student Scheme which is discussed below.

2.2.1.3 The National Student Financial Aid Scheme, Act 56 of 1999

The state saw it fit to come up with measures to assist communities by providing basic education free in South Africa and implemented the National Financial Students Aid Scheme Act 56 of 1999 (NSFAS), which assists students who cannot afford to pay for their education at higher institutions. The Act provides for the establishment of a financial aid scheme for students at higher education institutions, which would provide financial assistance to eligible students who meet the requirements for admission to a higher education programme. The scheme brought a relive to families and the students get to pay back the debt only after they have completed the studies and got employed. This provides peace of mind as students can study without financial burden. The scheme is funded by taxpayers' money as it is a government initiative and it is offered as a form of a loan. Apart from the financial relive, the government established another method of providing education to those who could not finish their studies while they could, due to different reasons.

2.2.1.4 Adult Basic Education Training Act 52 of 2000

The Adult Basic Education (ABET) Act 52 of 2000 provides for implementation and support for adult education. The objectives of the Act include, among others, to regulate adult training, to provide for establishment, governance and funding of public adult learning centres, assurance and quality promotion in adult education and training and to provide for transitional arrangements. The aim of the Act was to develop the communities and to carry out the mandate of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The programme is aimed at reducing the level of illiteracy amongst adults in the country. It is aimed at people who did not go far with their studies and who are afforded an opportunity to further their studies through this programme.

2.2.1.5 The White Paper 3 on higher education, Notice 1196 of 1997

The Education White Paper 3 looked at transforming the higher education system in the country. The aim was to focus on the transformation of the higher education system, to reflect the changes that are taking place in society and to strengthen the values and practices of the new democracy (White Paper 3). It further states that the higher education system must be transformed to redress past inequalities, serve new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities. It includes incorporating a number of public institutions in South Africa for a fair distribution of resources. This results in the merging of the colleges, including education, agriculture and nursing colleges into the higher education system, and the merging of universities and technikons. This was done with an aim to avoid duplication of and waste of resources in higher education. South African universities went through a major change when the merger took place, a move that saw, for example, the birth of University of Limpopo due to the amalgamation of the University of the North and the Medical University of South Africa. Quality service delivery became the centre of the process as it included administration, very many meetings, travelling to ensure that the merger happened smoothly.

Apart from the need to familiarising themselves with the above legislation, administrative staff and unit managers need to familiarise themselves with the concept service delivery because without quality service delivery, the country will not be able to realise all these; and the factors and the role of administrative staff towards the concept of service delivery at the University of Limpopo.

2.3 The concept of service delivery

The term *service delivery* has been defined by various authors from different perspectives. Riekert (2001:90) refers to service delivery as providing a product or service by the government or by a government organisation to a community, which was promised to the community, or which is anticipated by the community. Services are the results from the execution of a variety of functions or processes, while public services are considered to be some or most of the outputs of administrative agencies (Du Toit et al, 2002:24). Service is offered by one party to another. Subsequently, because services are

intangible, a service does not result in the transfer of ownership of any of the factors of production. According to the Constitution of Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996, service is an entitlement to the person who should receive it. This is further supported by the White Paper 3 of the Batho Pele principles. Therefore, public sector institutions or organisations are obliged to give service where is due.

According to Gronroos (2001:264), service is defined as a process that is the result of an outcome put together through partly coinciding production and consumption processes. From the above definitions it is clear that service includes issues such as behaviour, act, deed, performance, effort and other related aspects in the delivery of service. It is evident that the delivery of quality service involves various issues and processes. The processes involve the provision of a quality product, execution of variety of functions provided by various parties and outcome. Apart from the above-mentioned processes service delivery also includes issues such as behaviour, act, deed, performance, effort and other related factors. For administrative staff to achieve the above objectives, they need to understand different types of service delivery agencies. To support this statement, Mawila (2014:8) describes service as an act, deed, performance or an effort. According to Palmer (2009:264) service is regarded as a product. This product can also be seen as an intangible and tangible element within a particular service. In South Africa, providing services has become a right to the recipients; and that is why there are so many service delivery protests. They are about the delivery of basic resources to communities. In the next section the researcher outlines the different types of service delivery agencies to further highlight the importance of service delivery from a different angle.

2.3.1 Types of service delivery agencies

Nkuna (2014:9) outlines different types of service delivery agencies as follows:

2.3.1.1 Administrative agencies

These are agencies that provide services directly to other national departments and provincial administrations rather than directly to the public. From this statement it is clear that all public institutions are expected to provide services to the members of the public.

The administrative staff at the University of Limpopo is expected to deliver quality service to its clients from the public domain.

2.3.1.2 Provincial service delivery agencies

These include provincial departments such as the Department of Health, Agriculture and Education, and, for example, particularly the components within them such as hospitals, tax offices, and institutions of higher learning and so on, which deliver services directly to the public. The University of Limpopo is not excluded from the above agencies.

2.3.1.3 Statutory agencies

They include agencies such as the Public Service Commission and the Auditor-General, which are established by the Constitution (1996) or other legislation as bodies independent of the executive with important regulatory and monitoring functions with respect to the public service. Universities as public institutions are not immune from being checked by the Commissions and the Auditor-General, if the government deems it fit. The implications of service delivery within the university will be discussed in full in the next section.

2.4 Service delivery agencies and their implications on the role of administrative staff towards service delivery at the University of Limpopo

From the above information, it is clear that the University of Limpopo is not excluded from the process stated. For example, the university is a transformative agent governed by the statutory law, it is under the Department of Higher Education and should deliver services as delegated by the law of the government and its mandate to train the students who will in turn be employed by different departments. To achieve the above processes, administrative staff as an agent of change needs to deliver quality services as required by the Public Service Act and the law of the country.

For the members of the administrative staff to achieve the above duties diligently, they need to be aware of and to adhere to the Batho Pele principles as contained in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele White Paper) Notice 1459 of 1997 of public service delivery within organisational culture and democratic values. They

need to understand the values and the issues related to the university functions as a public institution. The Batho Pele White paper can be seen as an approach and guideline on how services should be provided to the South African citizens: it is the concept of “*putting people first*”. The University of Limpopo, as a public institution, is obliged to adopt culture of effective service delivery, and so is the administrative staff.

2.4.1 The principles of public service delivery and the applications of the Batho Pele Principles in relation to service delivery and to the University of Limpopo

Democracy and accountability require every member of the administrative staff in the university to gear their ability within the following principles (DPSA 1996:6).

2.4.1.1 Consultation

The users and consumers of public services should be consulted about the level and quality of the services they receive and, wherever possible, to be given a choice about the services that are offered (Batho Pele White Paper, Section 4.1). The communities should be consulted and afforded an opportunity to participate in the service delivery programmes. This will help the service providers as they would know what communities require as people staying in that particular area, and setting their priorities. Provision of service in this case should become a co-operative and participative effort between government and the communities.

For the administrative staff to perform better and to provide quality services, they need to be constantly consulted by their unit managers. This process will enable them to know how they perform and render quality services in the university. This process will motivate and assist them to render quality service to all clients and stakeholders within and without the university.

2.4.1.2 Service standards

The users and consumers of public services should be told what level and quality of service they will receive so that they are aware of what to anticipate. Section 4.2 of the Batho Pele White Paper provides that citizens should be told what level and quality of

services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect. Service standards refers to the degree of excellence of the service provided to consumers.

The unit managers are expected to set service standards for their administrative staff members, so as to assist them to check the level of performance. In order to achieve this process, the unit managers must also write the service standards and displays them in their offices so as to make their clients aware of what administrative staff members are doing in their day to day operations.

2.4.1.3 Courtesy

The Batho Pele White Paper (section 4.4) calls for courtesy and consideration towards the users and consumers of public services. People should be treated in a professional, respectful and friendly manner at all times irrespective of their colour, gender, age and so on.

The administrative staff members need to be trained on customer relations managements, so as to know how to treat their clients from within and outside the University. Courtesy involves listening skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving, protocol and other related issues in human relations.

2.4.1.4 Access

This principle calls for the public to ensure that all citizens have equal access to the services to which they are entitled (Section 4.3). This refers to issues like the physical access to the buildings (whether all people including the physically challenged will be able to get to the offices without a problem}, understanding of customer's language and whether officers are approachable enough. Administrative staff members should have access to the resources to help them perform their daily tasks with ease.

This principle refers to equal access that everybody is able to reach the benefit irrespective of social class, race, gender, religion and physical condition (Batho Pele White Paper: Section 4.3). No one should be discriminated against in receiving services

because of their colour, language, and so on. This places an obligation on the university to provide service in an efficient manner and economic manner.

2.4.1.5 Information

The users and consumers of public service should expect full, accurate information about the services they are entitled to receive. The principle of more efficient and effective information (Batho Pele White Paper: section 4.5) calls for public institutions to inform their users in a clear and forthright manner of the services they provide and how to reap the most benefit of those services.

The unit managers should be encouraged to give relevant information to administrative staff about the core business of the University. Relevant information will always assist the administrative staff to provide quality service delivery in their various units in the institution of higher learning.

2.4.1.6 Openness and transparency

The public should expect to be told how national departments and provincial administrations are run, how much they cost, and who is in charge. This is provided by Section 4.6 (Batho Pele White Paper), which calls for the public service to be open about how its organisations are managed. Openness and democracy are features of a democratic system of government and important to the improvement of service delivery.

2.4.1.7 Responsiveness

The users and consumers of public services should expect that, when the promised standard of service is not delivered, they will be offered an apology, a full explanation and a speedy and effective remedy, and that any complaint will produce a sympathetic, positive response.

2.4.1.8 Value for money

The public should expect that public services will be provided as economically and efficiently as possible (Section 4.8, Batho Pele White Paper). That is, the quality of service should relate to the cost value.

The above information gives evidence that provision of services is not a privilege in South Africa but an expectation from the society. Service delivery is the provision of basic needs which applies to also institutions of higher learning. The competition is high among the universities and as such students choose where they want to pursue their studies; the National Student Fund, mentioned earlier in the paper, makes it easy for students to choose institutions which offer good value for their money. Therefore, to stay in business means customers should get efficient service effectively.

The selection, recruitment and retention of the administrative staff at the university should be related to value for money. This process can be realised from the quality of service that some of the members of the administrative staff are rendering. The performance of these officials should be linked to and evaluated against the remuneration they get at the end of the month. Hence this process is called *value for money*. This process should also be linked to service standards to achieve its intended objectives in the organisation.

For the administrative staff at the University of Limpopo to succeed, the unit managers need to set service standards. All the university employees should work according to the plan developed from the service standards. The plan needs to be reviewed every now and then to compare the previous performance with the current one, so as to improve in the future. To support this statement, Dodoo (1997:120) states that the plan should review past performance against agreed upon target, analyse prospects for the future, review available options and propose a broad strategy for the future.

From the above information, it is evident that service delivery standards can serve as a performance measure to determine the quality of service delivery in a public institution.

Apart from the service standards linked to their performance, the unit managers must also be aware of factors that influence administration staff towards service delivery.

2.5 Factors affecting service delivery of administrative staff at South African universities

Mavuso (2013:7) identifies the following challenges that are faced by administrative staff in the universities.

2.5.1 Lack of career path

Most of members of the administrative staff at various universities are not encouraged to further their studies. Some of the universities do not have financial assistance for their administrative staff, unlike for academic staff members. Their job is regarded as routine work and hence academic knowledge is not a requirement for their promotion.

Furthermore, it is difficult for administrative staff members to reach the highest height in their career path because of the nature of the organisational structure in the institutions of higher learning and the administrative staff at the University of Limpopo is not excluded from the above challenge. They are only financially assisted if they intend studying for a qualification that is not outside their scope of work. For example, a secretary cannot be funded if he/she is studying for Bachelor of Commerce, Law or Science degree. Such employees have to finance themselves.

2.5.2 Lack of motivation

According to Khosa (2013:6), one of the challenges that demotivate the administration staff is lack of recognition within the University. To support this statement, we note that the University of Limpopo is motivating the academic staff by giving them annual awards such as the best researcher of the year, teaching awards, and recently, community engagement awards, but presently, the administrative staff is not given any rewards for their hard work, and hence they are demotivated and unenthusiastic to deliver quality services in their respective units.

2.5.3 Inadequate provision of resources

Some of the administrative staff is performing poorly because of a lack of relevant resources and equipment in the units. Khosa (2013:11) attests that some of the administrative staff has potential to perform better at the university level, but lack of resources hinders their expectations in their sphere of operation. These include proper office space, computers and so on. From this statement, it is evident that lack of resources can always impact negatively on the delivery of quality services by administrative staff at the university.

2.5.4 Lack of in-service training

Mawila (2014:9) indicates that administrative staff members in institutions of higher learning do not perform well due to the lack of regular in-service training organised by their unit managers. Employees who attend in-service training are always innovative and deliver quality service.

If administrative staff would be allowed to attend different development programmes, they would always be innovative, perform better and deliver quality services in the university. The university is using the Integrated Tertiary System (ITS) to carry out and perform all activities, from student application to graduation and also for employees' human resource related matters. This is an important system and mistakes can cost the institution a lot. The administrative staff members need to be trained so as to perform said activities in an efficient and effective manner; but this is not the case as most of them lack training and learn from those who have been around for some time. When a new administrative official is employed, they are given an office and how they carry on from there is their own problem. Therefore, training is a very important factor because a lot of people get affected if one makes a mistake in one's daily tasks.

2.5.5 Lack of consultation

The effectiveness of every university depends on the way managers consult their staff members (Mavuso, 2010:11). For the members of administrative staff to perform better and deliver quality service at the university level, they need to be consulted by their managers before decisions are taken about their duties and responsibilities. This will

make administrative staff to feel as part of the faculty in particular, of the university as a whole.

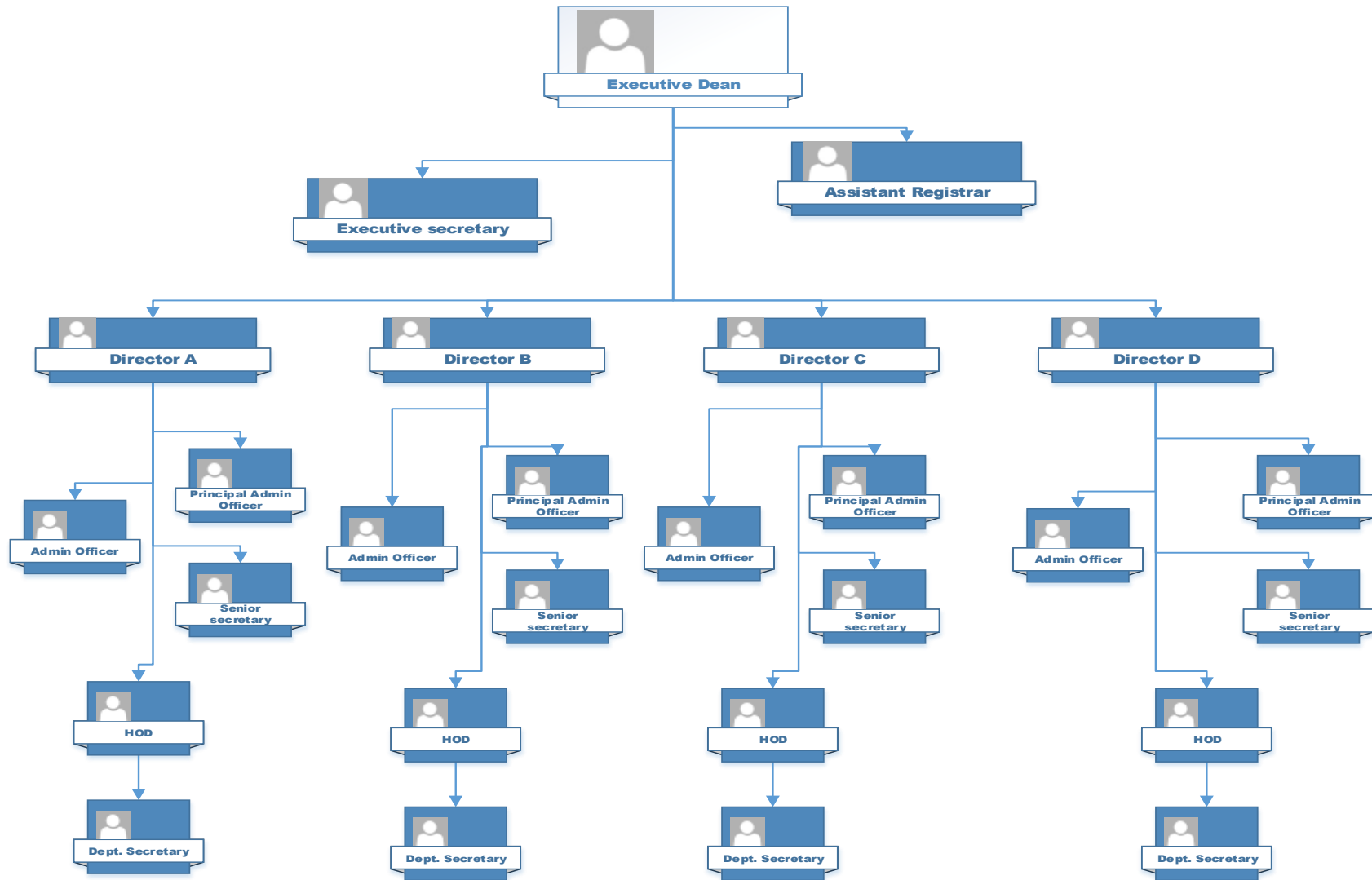
Apart from the ones above, there are also other factors that impact negatively on the administrative staff performance and the service delivery in the university.

2.6 Factors that affect service delivery at the University of Limpopo

2.6.1 Organisational structure

One of the factors that impact negatively on the functions of administrative staff is top-down approach. This is realised as indicated in the organisational structure in Figure 1. Due to the university being large, the researcher will only focus on Faculty of Science and Agriculture.

FIGURE 1: Organogram for Faculty of Science and Agriculture



It is clear from the above structure (Figure 1) that tasks can only be delegated from top to people at the lower level. It further illustrates that the Head of Department (HoD) can only delegate his duties to the lecturer in cases of academic staff and the assistant registrar to administrative staff

2.6.1.1 Factors relating to delegation

Delegation is described as an instruction to an employee to decide and to take action on tasks and to let the superiors know on the progress made. According to Smit, Cronje, Brevis & Vrb (2011:223), delegation is the process of assigning responsibility and authority for an organisation to be able to achieve its intended goals. Berkun (2005:242) states that delegation is used to describe the set of handing of specific tasks or responsibilities. Clement and Gido (2009:351) emphasise that delegation involves empowering and developing people's skills and motivates them to work more effectively. The Unit managers are expected to drive their daily plans successfully and they can do that if they engage their subordinates. To support this notion, Nyathi (2014:14) states that unit managers should not regard themselves as super-human to satisfy personal demands made upon them by top management. To reduce their stress emanated from delegated authority, they must delegate certain duties and transfer authority and responsibility to their subordinates. This process will assist administrative staff to have more meaningful division of work and more efficient work performance to subordinate will impact positively on service delivery and develop staff in the area of study.

Ngobeni (2014:6) describes delegation as a management function which is expected to be carried out by senior managers when they assign duties or tasks and responsibilities to their subordinates. According Nyathi (2014:10), delegation takes place according to seniority and hierarchical structure and linearly concentric, this means that the senior manager delegate tasks directly to various supervisors. The above statements are supported by what Motaung (2011:11) indicates about the impact of service delivery depending on the implementation of successful delegation. To achieve this, it is required that unit managers focus on achieving some measure of tangible results right from the beginning to the end of the process. This involves delegation to those who must get the job done, with the expectation that they will produce specific, bottom-line results fairly and quickly. The achievement of the above process depends on the reasons which their managers identify to delegate to their subordinates in their sphere of operation.

2.6.1.1.1 Reasons for delegation in the work place

The complexity of the tasks of senior managers makes it not easy for them to have time to carry out all their tasks effectively; therefore, it is necessary for them to delegate some of their tasks in order to be able to have enough time to concentrate on activities which cannot be delegated. Mahlakoane (2012:16) identifies the following reasons why delegation in an organisation is important: delegation of tasks with accompanying authority often leads to quicker action; faster expert decisions, which can be significant factor in the training and advancement of administrative staff, but which can also lead to higher levels of motivation; better attitudes and focus on challenging tasks because they spend on planning.

2.6.1.1.2 Types of delegation

There are two ways of delegating tasks with the accompanying responsibility and authority which can be employed:

Linearly, which refers to delegation taking place according to seniority and hierarchical structure and secondly, **linearly concentric**, which means that the manager delegates tasks directly to various (Nyathi, 2014:10). For unit managers to support performance they must delegate certain responsibilities to administrative staff.

2.6.2 Factors relating to participation

Participation is one of the fundamentals in staff development and it is an important component of motivation (Khosa, 2013:55). Participation permits administrative staff to decide what kind of action they should take to improve performance and achieve the objectives of the university. Participation includes active involvement of staff members in decision-making, which means they become the subjects and not the objects in their duties. The purpose of the involvement of administrative staff in decision-making is to make them conscious of what is expected of them, so that they can identify their own priorities in the light of available resources. Participatory management allows subordinates the right to make decisions on behalf of their seniors and take responsibility for that. For administrative staff to achieve the intended objectives, their skills need to be developed.

2.6.3 Factors relating to training

Training and development play an important role in every organisation, be it big or small, and its approaches differ from one organisation to another because of the different services offered. According to Warnich et al. (2015:669), training is a process whereby people acquire capabilities to aid in the achievement of organisational goals.

In support of the above definition, Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk, Schenk & Tshiongamulenzhe (2014: 565) attest that employee training is job-related learning provided by employers, and its main aim is to improve employees' capabilities (skills, knowledge, attitudes, and so on) so that they can execute their existing work activities and tasks according to set standards and at enhanced levels of performance. The effectiveness of the training depends on the way the objectives of the unit are aligned with the university goals. Training cannot be overstated, it is very important in every organisation. Some organisations offer training for their new employees for the first month or so, and keep providing training to their old employees every time the market changes. Trained employees always stay competent. This is similar to a car, which needs service from time to time, so as to warrant its performance.

2.7 Enabling factors for effective service delivery

2.7.1 Service delivery and management by objectives

Management By Objectives (MBO) is a vigorous system which seeks to incorporate the needs of an organisation to clarify and attain its profits or results and growth with the need of managers to contribute and develop themselves. Van der Merwe (2007:7) attests that MBO is a system which is used by organisations to identify goals that are jointly determined by both the employee and the manager. The appraisal is done occasionally to determine the progress and rewards are based on the progress. Thus, it is a highly participative style of managing, placing the emphasis on results and leaving the individual managers wide discretion as to the manner in which they achieve them (Mahlakoane, 2012:20). MBO is a technique in which the fixing of targets is a basis of achieving greater effectiveness throughout the whole or part of an organisation. To achieve this process, the managers should take the elements of MBO approach into consideration. The basic elements are illustrated below in Table 1.

The effects of MBO on the needs of organisations and of administrative staff

Table 1: Employee needs and organisational responses

Staff needs	Organisation needs
1. What do you expect from me?	Classification of departmental and unit objectives Establishing priority areas and tasks Developing improvement plans.
2. Give me an opportunity to perform	Organisational planning Resource allocation Delegation of authority
3. Am I on the right direction?	Control information Performance review Staff inspection Management services
4. Provide help and guidance where and when needed	Career development Performance review.

(Source: Mahlakoane, 2012:20)

The achievement of the objectives of an organisation depends on how employees' performance is linked with their participation and their abilities. This involves unit managers working together with administrative staff as a team and knowing what they require in order to improve their performance.

2.8 Performance management as an enabling system for effective delivery of service

Quality service cannot be available if performance management systems are not in place. Performance management takes place within a performance management system. For quality service delivery at the University, administrative staff should perform duties to the best of their ability. The quality of performance targets depends on the type of management systems that need to be used by the administrative staff to execute the

important of service delivery in the institution. Performance management systems need to be well articulated by the unit managers before the service standards are set. Performance needs to be appraised so as to check the quality, timeline, access and quantity. Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart and Wright (2006:328) indicate that performance appraisal is only one component of performance management as it involves the administrative and relatively isolated duty of measuring aspects of an employee's performance. To achieve the objective of this process, the university must use appropriate approaches to enhance the performance of administrative staff in the sphere of their operation.

Noe *et al.* (2006:327) define performance management as the process through which managers ensure that employees' activities and outputs are congruent with the organisational goals. From this statement, it is clear that the success of the above process depends on the alignment between performance and strategy within the organisation.

Fryer, Anthony, & Ogden (2009:89) affirm that performance management is action, based on performance measures and they report that it results in improvements in employee behaviour, motivation and work processes and promotes innovation.

A well planned and integrated performance management system has as its objective the creation of a working environment in which the employee (and the manager) can achieve incremental self-actualisation by developing his/her expertise while developing maximum results for the organisation in line with its objectives (FASSET, 2011:4). A well-structured performance management system should support organisational goals and those of operational units (teams or sections). Clear job descriptions should be developed and be aligned with the goals of the organisation and those of units or departments. Performance management is a partnership between employee and supervisor to improve performance, build effective feedback and communication, enhance employee growth and development, and development goals that are consistent with the organisation's strategic plan. Bana and Shitindi, (2009:69) attest that performance management is a means of getting better results from organisational teams and individuals by understanding and

measuring performance within an agreed framework of goals, standards and competence requirements.

A question which needs to be asked constantly by the unit managers is, how service delivery can be improved by the administrative staff in the university. According to Statistics South Africa (2001:14) the process can always pose challenges if the service delivery standards are not placed within the performance management system. For the institution to move towards achieving a set of performance targets they need to monitor quality, quantity, access and timeliness (Statistics South Africa, 2001c:14).

- **Quantity:** It measures the number of statistical output produced
- **Timeliness** measures whether the outputs are released within the expected timeframe.
- **Access** measures how the statistical outputs are made available and disseminated, and the number of users who receive them.
- The quality of statistical services is measured by conducting user satisfaction surveys that have the potential to show the level of user satisfaction with the services provided.

2.9 Significance of performance management in service delivery

Fortunately, in South Africa there are legislative frameworks that govern or guide how performance management should be introduced in organisations. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No. 75 of 1997) in South Africa, sets out performance expectations between the employer and employee and these are often articulated practically in the contract of employment. The Labour Relations Act (No. 66 of 1995) supports the above in that it offers methods that employers can use to rate poor performance in the workplace. The legislative frameworks serve as a control measure between the employer and employee.

The same applies at the University of Limpopo, but in addition to the above legislation, the university recently introduced a Performance Management System that helps to improve performance among the employees. This tool on the other hand, serves as a

motivation because those performing well are rewarded in the form of performance bonuses at the end of the year. Unit managers are the ones who make recommendations of such incentives. The disadvantage of this system is that because administrative staff is not trained and other problems mentioned in the sections above, the possibility of them receiving these incentives is very slim. It is important that the following approaches should be taken into account in order to improve performance.

2.9.1 Performance management approaches

There are many approaches that can be used by the institutions of higher learning to enhance performance and quality service delivery. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher has only discussed five performance management approaches to achieve the intended objective of the research.

2.9.1.1 The comparative approach

The comparative approach is a measure of an individual's performance by comparing one's performance to that of others. Noe et al. (2006:341) outline different methods and techniques used to evaluate employee's performance as follows:

- Ranking where the supervisor positions his subordinates from best performer to worst performer;
- Forced distribution where employees are in groups;
- Paired comparison takes place when the supervisor compares every employee with every other employee in the work group, if an employee is given a score of 1(one) they are considered to be the higher performer' (Noe et al., 2003:338). This procedure needs the manager to compare each worker separately with every other (Mlambo, 2010:36). The ranking of each employee is determined by the number of times he/she was judged to be better than another worker. Thus every employee is compared with their colleagues in a group.

The main strength of the comparative approach is that it is useful when employee performance needs to be distinguished. This approach also reduces the problems of leniency, strictness and central tendency, which is valuable in making administrative decisions (Noe et al., 2003:338).

However, the weaknesses of the comparative approach included:

- The techniques are not linked to the overall strategy of the organisation;
- The ratings are subjective and therefore the validity and reliability of the assessment is dependent on the manager.
- The techniques do not provide the specific information necessary for feedback purposes.
- The techniques do not measure performance against absolute standards of performance (Mavuso 2010:7).

2.9.1.2 The attribute approach

This approach emphasises the identification of employee attributes necessary for the organisation's success. The employee is measured against the attributes (Mavuso, 2013:6).

This approach includes techniques such as:

- Graphic rating scales where the supervisor rates the subordinate on particular traits and characteristics; and
 - Mixed standard scales where the supervisor rates the subordinate against relevant performance dimensions (Noe et al., 2003).
- The strengths of the attribute-based techniques include:
- They are commonly used by organisation as they are easy to develop and can be generalised across a range of jobs; and
 - If designed properly, they can be reliable and valid (Noe et al., 2003).
- The weaknesses of the attribute approach to performance management include:
- The techniques provide for little strategic congruence.
 - Performance standards are usually vague and may be interpreted differently by different rates (providing for now validity and reliability);

- The techniques do not provide specific and relevant performance feedback information; and
- The techniques may bring about defensiveness in employees (Noe et al 2003).

2.9.1.3 The behavioural approach

The behaviour approach defines behaviours necessary for effective performance in particular job. In assessing performance, managers identify the extent to which a subordinate has exhibited the required behaviours (Noe et al., 2003).

2.9.1.4 Results approach

According to Noe et al. (2003), the results approach is based on the principle that results are the best indicator of how a subordinate's performance has contributed to the organisational success. Chauke (2009:40) confirms that in a results approach the outcomes are the best indicator of how a subordinate's performance has contributed to success of the organisation. The focus of this approach is on the "product" of one's efforts not on the "person".

(i) Results based techniques include:

- Management by objectives where the goal setting is cascaded down throughout the organisation and the goals become the standard against which an employee's performance is measured; and
- Productivity measurement and evaluation system of higher productivity which involves a process of motivating employees to higher productivity (Noe et al., 2003).

(ii) The strengths on the results approach include;

- "Subjectivity is minimised as objective and quantifiable indicators of performance are used;
- Usually highly acceptable to both supervisors and subordinates
 - An employee's results (performance) are linked to organisational strategy "(Noe et al., 2003).

(iii) **The weaknesses of the results-based technique include;**

- Objective measurements may be defiant in that they may be influenced by factors beyond the employees' control (such as economic recession); and
- Employees may only focus on the performance criteria against which they are to be measured (Noe et al., 2003).

2.9.1.5 The quality approach

The emphasis of the quality approach is on the improvement of customer satisfaction through a customer orientation and the orientation of errors. The design of the quality-based performance management system should therefore focus on the following key factors (Masoga, 2012:22):

- The assessment of employee and system factors;
- The relationship between managers and employees in solving performance problems
- Internal and external customers in setting standards and measuring performance; and
- Using a number to evaluate employee and system factors (Noe et al., 2003).

(i) **The strengths of the quality approach include;**

- The quality approach incorporates and capitalises on the strengths of both the attribute and results approach to performance measurement; and
- It adopts a system approach to performance measurement (Noe et al., 2003).

From the above theories it is clear that all the approaches are good as long as they are used appropriately. For the unit managers to enhance the performance of administrative staff and provision of quality service delivery, they need to render the above approaches into practice. The application of these approaches will also assist the unit managers to alleviate some of the challenges that the administrative staff and the secretaries are facing towards service delivery. For the administration staff to provide quality service, they need both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation that emanates from within and from the organisation.

2.9.2 Service delivery and motivation

Grobler, Wörnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2002:237) describe motivation as the force that energises human beings to behave in a certain manner and continues to do so even in one or more predictions, with the ultimate aim of achieving organisational objectives. Mawila (2014:10) Motivation is described by as the force that influences human beings to behave in a particular manner and continues to do so despite the problems, with the aim of achieving organisational objectives. Motivation of employees is critical and can be achieved by creating an environment that is inviting and a happy place to work.

For members of the administrative staff to provide quality service delivery they need to be motivated by their unit managers. Every effective organisation depends on the way its employee gives quality service to the people. Their energy need to be rekindled so as to give their full potential to the organisation. Motivation is one of the strategies that can be used by the unit managers to motivate their staff in the university. Administrative staff is not excluded from the above process. To support the above definition, motivation is also defined as the willingness to exert high levels of effort to reach organisational goals, conditioned by effort's ability to satisfy some individuals' needs (Nyathi, 2014:20). For the unit managers to achieve their intended goal in the university, they need to boost the morale of their administrative staff. Administrative staff at the University of Limpopo should also be urged to bring their full potential so as to improve the quality of service delivery in their sphere of operation.

For the unit managers to relate the above process into practice, they need to understand the concept motivation. Before the researcher applied this concept into real situation, the concept will be defined and analysed in the next section. Bagraim (2011:82) provides that motivation is a force within people that arouses, directs and sustains behaviour. Motivation drives employees to behave in certain ways in relations to their work, their organisation(s), their peers, their subordinates and/or supervisors, and so forth. It is a factor that energises and directs co-related behaviours. Good managers understand what motivates their employees and push them to be committed to their jobs.

The unit managers in the university should be encouraged to use various strategies and techniques that can motivate the administrative staff to provide better service to their clients. Mashele (2014:8) outlined the following techniques that can enhance the commitment and motivation of the administrative staff:

- Full participation of employees in setting goals and determining indicators to reach them.
- Inform employees regarding their work relation to others in the organisation.
- Empowering employees through training to ensure that they succeed.
- Pay employees at least the going rates for jobs within fields, although a retention rate will be a better motivator.
- Give credit and praise for a job well done.
- Employees need to be treated fairly, with respect for human dignity and consideration.
- Encourage acquisition of additional knowledge and skills, and resolve problems with employees.
- Keep people informed about the progress of the work done and make each person part of the team.

Apart from the above techniques managers need to be aware of some of the theories that can be used to enhance the motivation of administrative staff in the university.

2.9.2.1 Theories of motivation

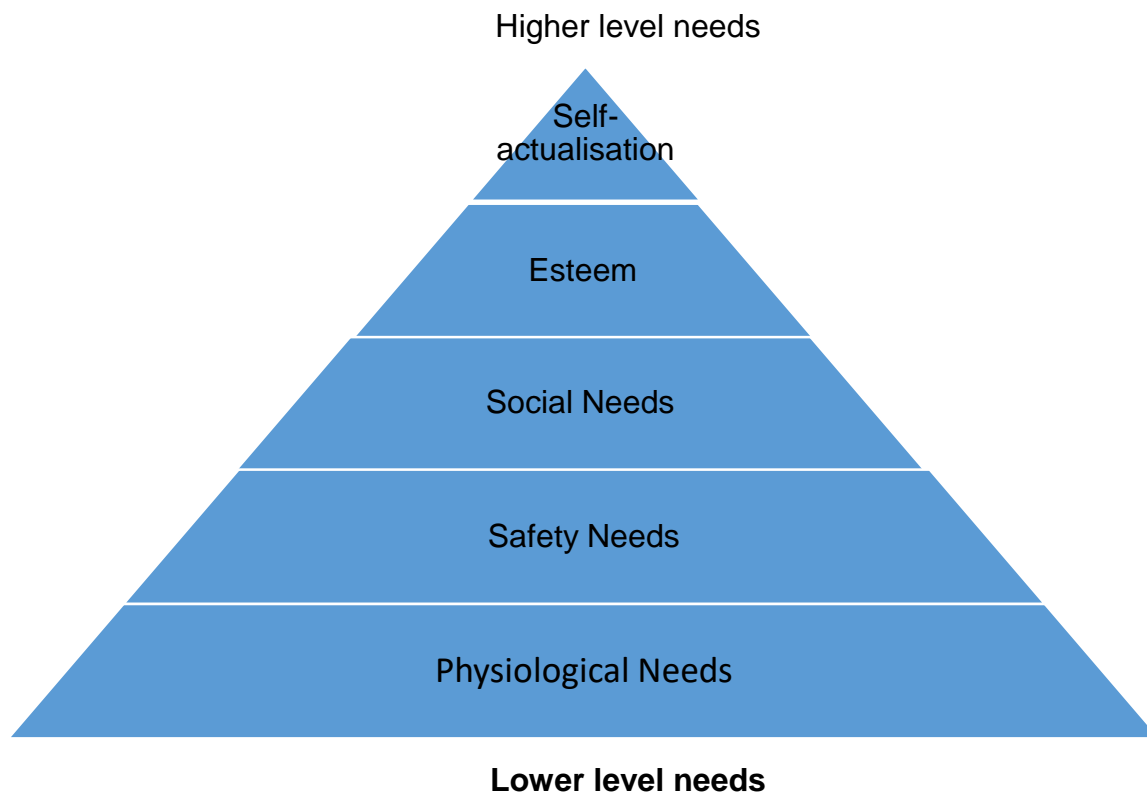
There are two types of theories of motivation, namely content and process theories. For the purpose of this study the researcher focuses on content theories that can enhance motivation, namely Maslow's hierarchy of needs, McGregor's theory, McClelland's achievement theory, Herzberg's two factor theory and Alderfer's ERG theory. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will only discuss Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow's theory is classified under the need theories that emphasise that people have needs, and once they are satisfied, others arises.

Maslow's theory, which postulates that within every person there exists a hierarchy of five need levels, is depicted in Figure 2 below (Swanepoel et al., 2014:361).

2.9.2.1.1 Maslow's theory of motivation

Abram Maslow's theory emerged from the belief that motivation comes from the desire to satisfy some need. Through this, Maslow developed his hierarchy of needs as demonstrated in figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Maslow's hierarchy of needs



Source: Swanepoel et al. (2014:361)

Swanepoel et al. (2014:361) identify five levels of Maslow's need hierarchy, which are briefly discussed as follows:

- ❖ **Physiological:** These include satisfying basic needs such as hunger, thirst, and the provision of shelter, sex and other biological survival of the individual.
- ❖ **Safety:** These include security and protection from the physical and emotional harm.
- ❖ **Social:** Need to belong, liked and friendship.

- ❖ **Esteem:** They include mental state such as self-liking, autonomy, achievement and external factors such as status, recognition and attention.
- ❖ **Self-actualisation:** this is about the need to become what one is capable of becoming, the needs for growth and development, achieving one's potential and self-fulfilment.

The importance of putting the needs in that order is that one can progress to the next level if the previous one has been satisfied. Bagraim (2011:82) confirms that good managers should understand and know what motivates them. Motivation has to do with incentives, needs, tensions and other forces that channel and channels human behaviour. According to Maslow (in Robbins, De Cenzo & Coulter, 2013:426) an unsatisfied need motivates the employee and satisfied ones do not.

2.9.3 Maslow's theory of needs and its implications for the performance of administrative staff towards service delivery

Motivation plays an important role in people's lives. Organisations, in their quest to employ highly qualified staff, are still not guaranteed that once the recruitment process is completed, they will get people who will perform and eventually reach organisational goals. Werner, Schuler & Jackson (2012:83) attest that even the most capable employees will not perform well unless they are motivated to do so. There are two main types of motivation, namely intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is motivation from the inside, for example, hunger, curiosity and so forth. On the other hand, extrinsic motivation refers to motivation from the outside; they are, for example, concerned about acceptance by others, money and so on (Mavuso 2010:15).

Therefore, needs are motivators and are satisfied in a stepped hierarchical fashion, with lower level needs being satisfied first. Needs are motivators when they are unsatisfied.

The view of basic needs, that was advocated by Maslow, flows from the idea of homeostasis. This suggests that the body constantly seeks to achieve a balance of its constituent elements. When the balance of the body is disturbed, for example, through hunger, the person is motivated to eat, though thirst to drink and though tiredness to sleep.

Now the question arises: how can the unit managers assist the administrative staff to meet their needs with respect to development programmes?

2.9.3.1 Physiological needs

The unit managers should ensure, among other things, that the working environment is user-friendly, light levels and temperature in the offices are acceptable, that they have breaks for food and water and that the lavatories are within reach. In this way, administrative staff should be able to focus on their day to day work and not be distracted by unmet physiological needs.

2.9.3.2 Safety needs

The unit managers should provide for safety measures at the work-place. Administrative staff should have trust in the employer that they have a regularly paid job for the probable future so that they may be able to plan forward. The administrative staff should not be on temporary basis for a long time as it creates uncertainties. They should also believe that they will not lose possessions. The possessions in this case refer not only to material goods like house, a home, or car, but also to future earnings like pension, sick pay and any guaranteed pay increases or promotion.

2.9.3.3 Love needs and a sense of belonging

The unit managers should dedicate their initiatives towards ascertaining that administrative staff feels that they are recognised as members of a group or team. This may be addressed by having groups or teams working in close physical proximity and having regular group get-togethers for business purposes and possibly for leisure. Team building trips and exercises will help administrative officers to realise that they are considered to be part of the group.

2.9.3.4 Self esteem

The unit managers should help administrative staff to feel self-worth and that their circle of contacts recognises them as being important. This may come from job titles, access to special perks, and the best administrator of the year awards or just from being known as a hard worker and so on. Unit managers should arrange for rewards in their units to motivate administrative staff, for example, some kind of recognition.

2.9.3.5 Self-actualisation

Self-actualisation is one's natural desire to pursue or fulfil one's potential. This may be difficult to obtain within an organisation if one's potential or their aspect of personal excellence does not fit in with the needs of the organisation. The administrative staff should be allowed to study further as they do not want to be in the same kind of positions forever. They need to study and achieve more in life. The process leads to good motivation and depends on the effectiveness a quality leader. Good leaders are the ones who motivate and influence their subordinates to provide quality service in the organisation.

2.9.4 Service delivery and leadership

Apart from the above approaches, there are also leadership theories that can also enhance the quality of service delivery in the area of the study. For the unit managers to understand how leadership traits should be applied to employees' performance they need to understand the concept leadership and its implication towards service delivery. The effectiveness of administrative staff depends on the application of leadership traits in the institutions of higher learning. The main question which needs to be answered in this study is, "what is leadership?" and "what are the implications to service delivery"?

Leadership is one of the most important traits of every manager. The concept leadership has been defined by various authors from different perspectives. Larson and Gray (2011:339) indicate that leadership involves recognising and articulating the need to significantly alter the direction and operation of the project, aligning the people to the new direction of motivating them to work together to overcome hurdles produced by the changes and to realise new objectives. In support of this definition Daft (2012:209) attests that leadership is about setting objectives and generating enthusiasm and motivation amongst the projective teams.

Waddell, Jones and George (2011:172) define leadership as the process by which a person exerts influence over other people and inspires, motivates and directs their

activities to help achieve group or organisational goals. Influencing the behaviours of others is central to leadership.

In support of the above, Mavundza (2009:9) defines leadership as follows:

- Leadership – a process whereby leaders influence followers in order to achieve organisational objectives or goals through change.
- Leadership – a process of communication and motivation to influence employees to act and work towards achieving organisational goals.
- Leadership – an influence of relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes and outcomes that reflect their shared purposes.

Swanepoel et al. (2014;385) confirm that leadership is the strongest factor that is associated with organisational commitment and satisfaction. It is the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who need to achieve organisational goals.

From the above definitions, it is clear that leadership is a subject of extreme importance in management. This also applies to the University of Limpopo. The effectiveness of every leader depends on the way the individual influences others to follow. This process can only be achieved if the leader is using appropriate theories of leadership.

2.9.4.1 The implications of leadership styles to service delivery

An organisation survives because a particular leadership style works for them. There are three important leadership styles that the researcher has outlined in this study, namely autocratic, democratic and Laissez faire leadership style.

2.9.4.1.1 Autocratic style

The unit manager identifies a problem, imposes a decision to administrative staff and expects them to carry out the decision. The administrative staff is not given an opportunity to participate in the decision-making processes. The autocratic style is leader-centred and the leader is showing maximum concern for the production and minimum concern for interpersonal relations (Swanepoel et al., 2014:388). The manager is authoritarian in the sense that he/she makes decision, formulate policies with minimal participation from other staff members. The manager allocates work without full consultation of staff members.

The manager rules by commands and orders, and every customer to the unit is referred to his office because staff members' participation is very minimal. Owens (2007:272) states that when problems are presented to him/her, the manager may or may not consult anyone of the staff members in taking a decision. He/she does not tell the members of the staff how she/he has arrived at that decision.

2.9.4.1.2 Democratic style

The manager identifies a problem, presents it to the staff, and the manager listens to the decisions of the staff. The manager regards administrative staff as co-workers or team mates who should own decisions by participating on every level of decision making. The leadership style is group centred, in the sense that the group is allowed to decide on matters that affect them, formulate and implement decisions instead of implementing what has been decided by the leader alone (Swanepoel et al., 2014:388). Such managers lead through participation and discussions of their fellow workers. The administrative staff attends to clients and stakeholders, establishes what their needs are before they can be referred to the unit managers. They are sometimes limited to take decisions because they are regarded as support only. They do not form part of the decision-making of their units.

2.9.4.1.3 Laissez-faire style

Swanepoel et al. (2014:388) indicate that the manager defines the problems and the restrictions within which the decision should be made and then leaves it to the staff to make a decision. Remember that a manager does not have all the hands to do everything; he/she becomes a member of the group of staff that takes a decision. When the supervisor uses this leadership style, they believe that staff members will carry on the project without them. When the leaders delegate a staff member to take the responsibility, the leader himself or herself disappears completely from the action and allows the staff members to take a decision over the matter. The staff members who are given the responsibility will perform a task and conclude on the matter without the supervision by the leader.

In conclusion, laissez-faire leadership style is not suitable for teams which need a lot of support and supervision from the manager. Democratic and autocratic leadership styles

can be used alternatively, depending on the situation prevailing at faculties and the units. All these situations need the manager to know his/her own strengths and weaknesses, so that he/she knows the leadership style he/she is good at, analyses the situation and implements the leadership style chosen.

2.10 Proposed model to service delivery challenges at the University of Limpopo

The South African higher education institutions are facing increasing competition from both local and global competitors. It is important for institutions of higher learning to offer services that are of high quality. People talk easily of how bad or good they were treated, their experiences and perceptions can easily influence others. There are many institutions and so it is very easy for one to change from institution to the other. It is no longer an issue of affordability for one to choose a particular institution; the government has provided relive and as a consequence everyone can go to an institution of their choice. For the University of Limpopo to retain its clients, the researcher has proposed the following model:

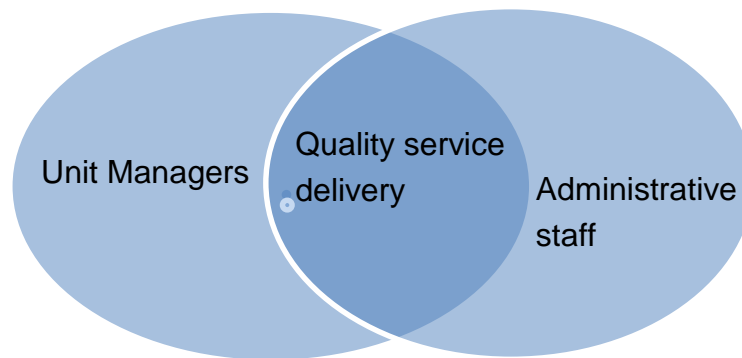


Figure 3: The collaborative model for enhancing service delivery: developed by the author

This model, as illustrated in Figure 3, suggests that managers and administrative staff should share a common goal of quality service delivery. Collaboration in service delivery is an important component as no department or individual can work in isolation. Sullivan, and Skelcher (2017:1) describe collaboration as a way of working with each other in a joint project where there is a shared interest in positive outcomes. Different units need each other to reach the set goals of the organisation. They should work as partners gearing to address the needs of the community or the customer in an effective and efficient manner. It helps in improving the quality of service and having satisfied clients. The unit managers at the University of Limpopo need to collaborate with their administrative staff so that the quality of service of the university can be improved and maintained. In this case the university will be able to retain their clients. Also, if administrative staff is efficient their support to academic staff will improve, as things will be done in time.

2.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter has presented the review of relevant literature on the factors that affect the administrative staff not to perform and provide quality service in the university. Aspects such as service standards, delegation, motivation, management by objectives, participation, leadership, performance and so on, were also discussed in full in this chapter. A theoretical model that can be used to enhance service delivery at the university was also proposed.

In the next chapter, philosophies, approaches, design methods and techniques that were used to collect, analyse and interpreted data in chapter 4 will be outlined in full.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on research methodology that the researcher used to identify the objectives of the study. The main objective was to investigate factors affecting service delivery among administrative staff and to investigate service delivery standards adhered to by administrative staff at the University of Limpopo. The objectives were further to determine how the administrative staff provides service to both internal and external customers. The final objective was to develop strategies that can be implemented when up-skilling administrative staff.

Research methodology refers to the design and research techniques that have been used to collect and analyse data in the study. Before starting with the research process, the researcher had to identify the research approach, design and methodology. This process was important in ensuring that the correct methods were applied for continuing with the data collection and data analysis stages of this research study. In order to ensure that the above process takes place, it is necessary for the researcher to have a working plan of the overall research design to ensure that the researcher is able to provide the answers to the research questions (Leedy and Ormrod, 2010:3). To achieve the above process, the researcher has outlined the rationale for the methodology.

3.2 Rationale for the methodology

Yin (2003:11) defines research methodology as a detailed plan method on which one intends conducting research. It specifies the methods and procedures for collection, measurement and analysis of data. Leedy and Ormrod (2015:12) refer to research methodology as the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project, to some extent; this approach dictates the particular tools the researcher selects. The research methodology employed in this study was used to identify and investigate the factors that impact on service delivery with regard to administrative staff performance in the area of the study.

The above process can only be realised if the researcher has chosen an appropriate research design for the study.

3.3 Research design

The research design is developed once the researcher has identified the research question. Research design is described as a plan of how the research will systematically collect and analyse the data that is needed to answer the research question (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014:40). According to Cooper and Shindler (2006:71), research design is the blue-print for fulfilling research objectives and answering questions pertaining to the problem and phenomena being investigated. Nyathi (2014:21) confirms that research design is a strategy to conduct the research and it incorporates a specific methodology, to address the question of how the research was performed in relation to the primary problem statement by specifying, amongst other things, the selection of a perfect approach and technique for collecting data. A research design will normally include how data will be collected, what instruments will be used, how the instruments are used and the intended means for analysing data collected. To support the above definitions, Mavundza (2009:48) defines research as plan of procedures for data collection and analysis that is undertaken to evaluate a particular theoretical perspective. According to Hussey and Hussey (1997, in Nkuna, 2014:6) a research design consists of the following steps:

- Identifying the research problem;
- Determining the purpose of the research;
- Developing the theoretical framework;
- Defining research hypothesis/questions;
- Defining terms;
- Identifying limitations of the study;
- Deciding on methodology; and
- Determining expected outcome.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the researcher has described different philosophies that can be used to collect and assess data from the area of the study.

3.4 The research philosophies

There are different types of research philosophies that can be employed to collect data in the study. They are also referred to as paradigms. Due to the nature of the study, the researcher has only discussed four types of philosophies, namely positivism, phenomenology, feminist and combined philosophies.

3.4.1 Positivist research philosophy

According to Bertram et al. (2014:25) positivists assume that there is one truth about natural or social events, but that we can never come to know it completely. Collins (2010:38) states that positivism stems from human experience and comprises of discrete, observable elements and events that interact in an observable and regular manner. It has a view of only factual knowledge gained through observation which includes measurement and the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation. The research findings are usually observable and quantifiable. To support this view, Nyathi (2014:21) attests that positivist researcher formulate general findings which are used to predict outcomes from known causes. In this study the researcher did not use positivist strategy because it relies on measurement and quantifiable data, which cannot be used to get the human emotions, beliefs, values and value judgement which are critical in the area of the study. This concept maintains that scientific knowledge is the only true knowledge of the world and is perceived through senses.

3.4.2 Phenomenological research philosophy

According to Leedy et al. (2005:108), phenomenological research is a qualitative method that attempts to understand participants' perceptions and views of social issues. In phenomenological research the views of a few participants concerning a specific phenomenon are collected in an effort to understand these participants' perceptions and understating of a particular phenomenon (situation).

3.4.3 Feminist philosophies

This refers to the need to examine research background to determine validity and trustworthiness of accounts. Feminist philosophies believe in the need to report women's

voices without exploiting them. It is the need to use methods in a self-disclosing and respectful way (Nyathi, 2014:9).

3.4.4 Combined research philosophies

These are also referred to as mixed methods. Many research problems have both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. To fully address them, the researcher must then use both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Leedy et al., 2015:329). There is no research philosophy which can be regarded as the best without weaknesses. The above philosophies have strengths and weaknesses; hence other researchers prefer a combination of the two.

3.5 Research design approaches

Research can be conducted using multiple methods. The research design is the blueprint for fulfilling research objectives and answering questions. Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:30) describe research design as a way of visualising and carrying out the research including how the findings are put together. It forms the basis that specifies the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing data. Research approaches are plans and procedures for research that entail moving from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Creswell, 2014:3). The design of a research study commences with a research topic and a structured research methodology.

3.5.1 Quantitative research approach

Quantitative research aims at quantifying the data collected in the research process. According to Fox and Bayat (2007:7), a quantitative approach is concerned with systematic measurement, statistical analysis and methods of experimentation, which means that in a quantitative approach there are systems that need to be followed in order to achieve accurate measurement. Thus, quantitative research attempts to answer questions using measured variables to explain, predict and control phenomena.

Brynard and Hanekom (2014:8) state that quantitative research is associated with analytical research, and its purpose is to arrive at a universal statement, that is, the

researcher assigns numbers to observations. There are multiple types of quantitative research, including survey research, correlational research, and causal-comparative research. A limitation associated with quantitative research is that it could be inflexible. For example, when a researcher compiles questionnaires and surveys, participants are asked questions in the same order. Mixed method research on the other hand, is more flexible in that the researcher can also ask open-ended questions. In addition, standard question formats could lead to structural bias. In this research study the quantitative research design included the online questionnaire that was completed by students and teachers. This online questionnaire translated results into numerical data.

Qhosola (2011:45) argues that the quantitative research method places a heavy emphasis on using formalised standardised questions and predetermined response options in questionnaires and surveys administered to large numbers of respondents. It may be unwise to try to draw a hard-and-fast distinction between quantitative and qualitative approaches. The appropriate approach is determined by the nature of the variables under consideration and the objectives of the research (Chauke, 2009:5).

3.5.2 Qualitative research approach

Qualitative research is an approach for discovering the meanings people assign to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014:21). Because the procedures are not strictly formalised, the scope is not defined. Chauke (2009:5) states that qualitative refers to the research that produces descriptive data, generally the participant's own written or spoken words pertaining to their experience or perception. Generally, there are no numbers that are assigned to those observations. In quantitative research, the way of knowing reality is by exploring the experiences of others regarding a specific phenomenon.

According to Chauke (2009:5) qualitative research underpins and provides an in-depth understanding of the social world of research participants by studying their experiences and perspectives. Qualitative research acknowledges the perspectives of the participants involved in the research study and advocates attempting to understand individuals by observing their behaviour, attitudes and perceptions. Nyathi (2014:7) attests that

qualitative research is an interpretive approach to investigating subjects in their natural surroundings. The qualitative research methodology is flexible, unlike the quantitative method, but demands that the researcher should follow a well-defined data collection framework with a structured research design. In the qualitative approach, the researcher seeks to create meaning of a phenomenon from the views of participants. In addition, qualitative research is investigative and provides the groundwork for the research (Nyathi 2014:8).

Procedures are not strictly formalised in qualitative research; the scope is more likely to be undefined, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted. This can be applied to the study of the past and that of current events. Qualitative methods generally aim at understanding the experiences and attitudes of the respondents. Its aim is to answer questions about the “what”, “how” or “why” of a phenomenon rather than “how many” or “how much” which are answered by the quantitative methods. Qualitative methods are used when trying to understand the perspective of the participants.

Partington (2003:109) says that a qualitative method is connected to a design where data is collected in the form of works and observations as opposed to numbers and analysis is based on interpretation of data collected as opposed to statistical analysis. A qualitative method is a method of data collection in which the procedures are not strictly formalised, the scope is likely to be unidentified, and a more philosophical mode of operation is adopted. This method enables the researcher an in depth understanding of first-hand information and phenomenon.

For the researcher to achieve the intended objectives of the study, the qualitative research approach has been employed to get a deeper understanding of factors that impact on administrative staff on their performance and service delivery in the sphere of their operation. The quality of the information depends on the population and the sample size that the researcher has chosen, namely the twenty-four administrators in the Faculty of Sciences and Agriculture. In one of the next sections the researcher shows the relevance of population and sampling methods to the study.

3.6 Delimitation of the study

The University of Limpopo is located in one of the poorest provinces in South Africa. It is situated in Turfloop (Mankweng), a rural area in the Limpopo Province. It comprises of four faculties, thirteen schools and a number of divisions. All these divisions are manned by both academic and administrative staff. For the purpose of this study, the researcher has only focused on the Faculty of Science and Agriculture. This faculty has 4 schools with 24 administrative staff members.

3.7 Target population

Brynard and Hanekom (2014:57) describe population as a group in the universe which possesses specific characteristics. According to Khosa (2013:55) population refers to the identifiable total set of elements of interest being investigated by the researcher. How the elements in a particular population respond to certain stimuli can be used to make inferences regarding that population. Masoga (2014:49) attests that, population comprises the total collection of all the elements or units of analysis (members of population) about which a researcher requires to reach distinct conclusions. A population is thus, the full group of potential participants to whom a researcher wants to generate the findings of the study. The target population under consideration of 24 administrative and secretaries was obtained from the Faculty of Science and Agriculture in the University of Limpopo.

3.8 Sampling

Sampling involves making decisions about which people, settings, events or behaviours to include in the study (Bertram et al., 2014:59). The researcher decides how many people; groups or objects will be observed. Masoga (2014:13) states that sampling is the process of selecting the aggregate or totality of the objects or individuals regarding which inference is to be made based on the study. Malovha (2013:5) confirms that a sample is any subset of the population.

The above definitions show why the researcher chose a purposive sampling method in this study. The university is large and as such has distinct departments, and as a result the researcher focused on one Faculty with 24 administrators. The entire population thus

form part of the study as it was small. There are two types of sampling that are taken in to consideration by the researcher, namely probability and non-probability sampling.

3.8.1 Probability sampling

Leedy et al. (2015:177) state that in probability sampling, the sample is chosen from the overall population by random selection – that is, it is selected in such a way that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. Cooper et al. (2006:166) maintain that probability sampling is one that is based on the concept of random selection in which each sampling unit in the defined target population has a known, non-zero probability of being selected for the sample. To support the above statement, Saunders, Lewis, Phillip and Thornhill (2003:51) indicate that every element in probability sampling has at least some chance of being part of the sample. Neither of these conditions generally holds for non-probability sampling. Probability sampling allows the researcher to guess roughly what they will find if they had considered the total population. Different techniques of probability sampling are described below.

3.8.1.1 Simple random sampling

Masoga (2012:9) refers to simple random sampling as a sample from a population in such a way that each element of that population the same way has got a chance of being drawn. Leedy et al. (2015:179) state that in random sampling every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. This is the simplest form of probability sampling. There is no biasness or predetermination in the selection process.

3.8.1.2 Systematic sampling

Systematic sampling involves choosing individuals or perhaps clusters, according to a predetermined sequence, with the sequence being determined by chance (Leedy et al., 2015:180). This kind of sampling selects elements of the population at the beginning with a random start and following the sampling fraction selects every element. It is simple to design, easier to use and to determine sampling distribution of mean or proportion. It is less expensive than simple random.

3.8.1.3 Stratified sampling

Stratified sampling is used when the research population consists of subgroups who may have different opinions or experiences of the world (Bertram et al., 2014:61). Stratified sampling divides a population into sub-populations or strata and uses a simple random sampling process on each stratum. In order to include all the subgroups, the bigger sample must include samples from all subgroups or strata (Bertram et al., 2014:61). The researcher controls the size of the strata. The simple random sampling method described above does not ensure that all the individuals with certain characteristics will be included.

3.8.1.4 Cluster sampling

In cluster sampling, sometimes a population of interest is spread over large area, such that it is not feasible to make a list of every population member, instead the researcher obtains a map of the area showing political boundaries or subdivisions (Leedy et al., 2015:180). With cluster sampling, the sampling unit is not the individual element or member but rather a naturally occurring group of individual members.

In cluster sampling the researcher must ensure that the clusters have been efficiently defined, then randomly select the required fraction, select a number of clusters and then proceed with the appropriate probability sampling procedure (often stratifies sampling to ensure full coverage of all the strata in the population of each cluster)

3.8.2 Non-probability sampling

Masoga (2014:10) describes non-probability sampling as non-random, subjective and purposive in that the researcher may select the sample using criteria other than those associated with randomness of selections. Below are the types of non-probability sampling.

3.8.2.1 Quota sampling

Quota sampling is described a variation of convenience sampling. It involves setting quotas and then using convenience sampling to obtain those quotas.

3.8.2.2 Haphazard sampling

These are samples that are cheap, quick and include things such as interviews with people on the streets.

3.8.2.3 Snowball sampling

Mahlakoane (2012:18) states that it is a method that is named, based at an analogy, that starts small but becomes larger as it rolls and picks up additional snow. This happens when individuals from the relevant population are approached, then individual acts as informant and identifies people from the same population for inclusion in sample. In snowball sampling, each research participant is asked to identify other potential research participants who have a certain characteristic. This technique may be used for a hard to find population (where no sampling frame exists).

3.8.2.4 Accidental sampling

This is the most convenient type of sampling as members of the population are readily available for research purpose to become participants. If the research is about educators in general for example, the sample will be comprised of those educators who are available at school that day.

3.8.2.5 Purposive sampling

In purposive sampling, people or other units are chosen, as the name implies, for a **purpose** (Leedy et al., 2015:183). This type of sampling is used when the researcher relies on his/her experiences or previous research findings to deliberately obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population (Masoga, 2014:52).

In this study the researcher has used purposive sampling to achieve the intended objectives of the study. This sampling method has been realised through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The researcher has employed the above research technique, because she wanted to understand the experiences of administrative staff that were representing the different departments in the study. To supplement the above

techniques, the researcher has outlined some of the research instruments that can be used to collect and analyse data.

3.9 Research instruments

For the researcher to be able to conduct the research, it is important that appropriate instruments are used to achieve the intended objectives. Leedy et al. (2005:12) refer to these instruments as tools and also indicate that a research tool is a specific mechanism or strategy the researcher uses to collect, manipulate, or interpret data; interviews and questionnaires were used as research instrument.

3.9.1 Questionnaire

The researcher in this study used structured questionnaires to collect data from 24 participants. A questionnaire is described by Bertram et al. (2014:73) as a list of questions to which the respondents answer. It can contain either closed or open-ended questions. It is also cheaper and less-time consuming than conducting the interviews and very large samples can be taken. In this proposed study the researcher employed a questionnaire to collect information on a large scale that helped the researcher to understand and evaluate the factors impacting on service delivery of administrative officers. To augment the above research technique, the researcher also used structured interviews to collect and assess data in the area of the study. Both the members of the administrative staff and secretaries were interviewed so as to get clarity on their functions in different units in the area of the study.

3.9.2 Interviews

An interview is described as a conversation between the researcher and the respondent. However, it is a different from an everyday conversation in that the researcher is the person who sets the agenda and asks questions (Bertram et al. 2014:80). Interviews provide very different data from other observations, as they allow the researcher to capture views of the participants. They are used with the assumption that the participants' perspectives are meaningful, knowable and able to be made explicit and that their perspectives affect the success of the project. With interviews, the researcher gets to

have face-to-face contact with participants and this is important when opportunity for follow-up questions arises.

Two different types of interviews in qualitative research are structured and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are a means of collecting data for a statistical survey rather than through a self-administered questionnaire. Interviewers read the questions exactly as they appear on the survey questionnaires. A semi-structured interview is a method of research frequently used in the social sciences. Semi-structured is open, allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interview as a results of what the interviewee says.

3.9.2.1 Structured and semi-structured interviews

In a structured interview, the researcher uses an interview schedule, which is a set of questions in a predetermined order (Bertram et al., 2014:80).

According to Chauke (2009:20), the advantages of interviews are that:

- interview procedures are appropriate for creating cooperation among participants;
- the interviewer has an opportunity to ask follow-up answer questions searching for adequate answers;
- the interviewer is able to establish relationship with the interviewee

Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from 24 administrators in the area of the study. This process was followed to collect a large amount in-depth of information from these experienced administrators.

Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the researcher has only used semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants. Interviews allows the researcher to be present during the interview with participants. To get valid information, the administration of interviews has been also presented.

3.9.3 Administration of interviews

The data were mostly collecting using questionnaires and interviews. The researcher has invited all the responded into a safe place where the participants were interviewed one by one. This process was done to maintain the validity and reliability of the instrument.

3.10 Data collection

Research generally relies on empirical information; this means it is based on collection of data (Bertram et al., 2014:71). The information discussed in the literature review was applied to the area of the study. The data collected were assessed and analysed. The accuracy of the information depended on the research instrument that was used. The data were collected from 24 administrative officers who had experience in service delivery. The researcher has employed structured interviews to collect data from the participants.

3.11 Data analysis

According to Saunders, Lewis, Phillip and Thornhill (2003:381), the nature of qualitative data has implications for both their collection and their analysis. Data analysis refers to the process of unpacking the object, phenomenon, entity, process or event that the researcher will be investigating (Saunders et al., 2003:234). The qualitative data that have been collected by the researcher have been sorted and categorised. To achieve the above process, the researcher has classified the qualitative data into themes and sub-themes. After the classification, the data have been transcribed, translated, coded and interpreted. The analysis has been done in relation to the factors that impact negatively on the functions of administrative staff towards service delivery in various units.

The quality of information depends on the validity and reliability of data analysed in the study.

3.12 Validity and reliability

Researchers use a variety of strategies to support their findings. Different strategies are appropriate in different situation, depending on the nature of the data and the specific methodologies used (Leedy et al., 2015:103). To get the reliability and validity of information desired from the data collected, the researcher used Statistical Package for

the Social Science (SPSS), a software to process and analyse the data obtained from the respondents in the area of the study.

3.12.1 Validity

The credibility of qualitative research depends on its validity. Maree (2010:27) states that validity is concerned with the appropriateness of the conclusions made by the results. It refers to how well a test measures what it is purported to measure. Heppner and Heppner (2004, cited in Mabuza 2011:3), state that the instruments used in the collection of data must be constructed in such a way that they collect the valid data required in order to answer the research questions as closely as possible. This adds to the strength of the final results and whether they can be considered as accurately describing the real world. Yin (2009:40) describes validity as a test of truthfulness that checks whether the measuring instrument is actually measuring what it purports to measure. Leedy et al. (2015:115) have outlined the following types of validity:

- **Face validity:** it is the extent to which an instruments looks like it is measuring a particular characteristic. It requires the research instruments to be relevant to participants in the study. This can be established by asking friends, colleagues and individuals from the target population to comment on relevance, balance and adequacy of the research instrument in relation to the research objectives to ensure that they are not misrepresented to others.
- **Content validity:** It is the extent to which measurement instrument is a representative of a sample of the content area (domain) being measured. This is similar to face validity except that the researcher must seek the opinion of the experts in the fields on the adequacy of his/her research instruments.
- **Criterion validity:** This refers to the capacity of respondents' ratings and responses to items on the instrument to predict behaviour outside the immediate framework of the research instrument.
- **Concurrent validity:** This refers to the extent to which the results of an assessment instrument correlate with another, presumably related, measure; it

indicates whether the level of responses to items on the research instruments parallel other facets of the respondents' overall behaviour.

Due to the nature of the study, the researcher has used the different validation methods to measure the indented objective of the research.

3.12.2 Reliability

Thomas (2004:105) describes reliability as the extent to which a research instrument will give the same results on different occasions. It has more to do with the accuracy of measurement the researcher is applying. Reliability refers to the dependability or consistency involved in the findings of the study (Mabuza 2011:3). This means that for a research tool to be reliable, it should give the same results all the time or in all occasions when testing is done.

The different reliabilities are briefly outlined below:

- **Parallel reliability**, which is a measure of equivalence and it involves administering two different forms of measurement to the same group of participants and obtaining a positive correlation between the two forms.
- **Test-retest reliability**, which essentially involves administering the same research instrument at two different points in time to the same research subjects and obtaining a correlation between the two sets of responses.
- **Inter-rater reliability**, which is a measure of homogeneity. With this one measures the amount of agreement between the two people who rate a behaviour, object or phenomenon.

The researcher depended on the trustworthiness of the participants since their responses cannot be based only on being reliable or valid.

3.13 Trustworthiness

According to Leedy et al. (2015:336), trustworthiness is the extent to which other individuals perceive the study's findings to be convincing and worth taking seriously. Trustworthiness of data is linked to authenticity, neutrality, conformity, consistency, applicability, creditability, transferability and dependability and is equated to external

validity, internal validity, reliability and objectivity in quantitative research. Baruth (2013:201) is of the view that the concept *trustworthiness* has replaced the more conventional ideas of *reliability* and *validity* in qualitative research. To ensure trustworthiness of this research study, the researcher digitally recorded and transcribed each interview session. This was done to present an accurate account of the actual participants' responses.

3.14 Elimination of biasness

Leedy et al. (2015:385) refer to bias as any source of influence that may distort the data obtained or conclusions drawn. In this study the researcher tried to eliminate biasness by not permitting the personal preferences of the participants to influence how they respond, by developing semi-structured interview questions so that all respondents would have a crystal clear understanding of the process.

3.15 Ethical considerations

According to Nyathi (2014:10), ethics is defined as the moral principles by which a person is guided. Ethics has to do with behaviour that is right or wrong. Ethics is an important consideration in research, particularly with research involving humans and animals. Research ethics needs to be respected and adhered to; it is the most important part of research as it helps to prevent any form of abuse. Paul (2010:65) attests that the kinds of ethical issues raised by the research process involving human beings should be treated with respect, should not be harmed in any way and should be fully informed about what is being done with them. It is important that all research studies follow certain ethical principles in order to ensure that no one suffers adverse consequences as a result of the research.

The researcher tried to adhere to the professional code of ethics throughout the study. Mahlakoane (2012:12) states that ethics are a set of moral principles that are suggested by an individual or group that are widely accepted and which offer rules and behaviour expectations about the most correct experiment subject and the respondent, employees, sponsor, other research assistants and students.

In this study the following ethic principles were taken into consideration.

3.15.1 Ensure that permission is obtained

The researcher requested and was permission granted to conduct the research in the University of Limpopo. Henning et al. (2004:72) states that permission for participants should be secured through the submission of formal requests. A code of ethics and professionalism was maintained and adhered to throughout the study.

3.15.2 Ensuring that there is consent

The research was conducted only with participants (secretaries and administrators) who had agreed to take part in the study. The participants were made aware of what the research was all about and signed a consent form. Participants were further made aware that participation was not compulsory and that they were allowed to withdraw when they felt like doing so.

3.15.3 Safety and no harm

The participants were given assurance about their safety during the research study. The protection of the wellbeing of the participants was taken into consideration. Protection of the participants is very important.

3.15.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

The principle of anonymity is well inked with that of confidentiality, however information given to participants in confidence does not enjoy legal privilege (Mashele, 2014:8). The data provided by participants was treated with confidentiality and the respect. The names of the participants are not mentioned in the study and pseudonyms were used to maintain anonymity.

3.16 Conclusion

In this chapter, various research philosophies, strategies, methods and research techniques were discussed and analysed to show their relevance to the study. The choice of the research designs and their applicability to the area of the study were discussed in full. Research instruments validity and reliability were also discussed. The limitations,

elimination of biasness and ethical considerations of the study were also outlined in this chapter. From the above information, it is clear that there is no single research approach and method that can be regarded as a solution for investigating the research problem. All the research approaches, methods and strategies are relevant as long as they are used appropriately. The approaches and methodology that have been discussed this chapter were employed to collect, analyse and interpret the results in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of data derived from 24 administration staff, namely from 14 secretaries and 10 administrative officers. They are all members of administrative staff who have got experience in service delivery within the university context. The data were obtained through structured interviews. The factors that hamper the administrative staff to deliver quality service have been clearly outlined and presented from the semi-structured interviews.

Challenges such as lack of support systems, inadequate training, lack of clarity, lack of adherence to service delivery standards, lack of alternative strategies, monitoring and evaluation and other related variables that have a negative effect on service delivery are clearly analysed in this chapter.

4.2 Data analysis and interpretation of results

In this chapter semi-structured interviews have assisted the researcher to get an in-depth experiences and reliable data from the administrative staff. Mawila (2014:7) describes data analysis as “a process of unpacking an object, phenomenon, entity, process, or event that the researcher is investigating”. Data analysis of qualitative nature is described as non-numerical analytical procedures in which the research examines the meanings of people’s words and actions. To achieve this process, the researcher has cited some of the stories and verbatim responses from the respondents. The approach that best suited the researcher was the one that Mawila (2014:9) describes as an interpretative descriptive approach.

In this approach, the researcher selects, interprets the data and waves descriptive participants’ words, raw data from respondents derived from the interviews and his or her own interpretations into a rich and believable descriptive narrative (Nyathi, 2014:7). Therefore, thematic data analysis was used in this study.

The purpose of data analysis was to explore the challenges faced by administrative staff on service delivery in the area of the study. The data analysis and discussion of results has enabled the researcher to arrive at suitable recommendations and conclusion outlined in chapter five.

4.3 Data analysis through semi-structured interview

In this section, the researcher has collected data through structured interviews. These interviews were conducted among twenty-four administrative staff members who were familiar with the delivery of services in the area of the study. Factors that hinder and motivate administrative staff to provide quality service in the university were derived from the responses to the interviews.

The following responses were obtained from the interviewees:

1. Administrative staff and adherence to service delivery standards

Out of twenty-four respondents interviewed, nineteen confirmed that there was lack of adherence to service delivery standards amongst the administrative staff in the area of the study.

To support this, some of the respondents remarked that:

‘.... With my little knowledge and academic background, I found it difficult to adhere to service delivery standards’.

‘... Lack of service delivery standards negatively affect the quality of work done by administrative staff in our organisation’.

From the above responses, it is clear that there is a lack of required service delivery standards, hence quality of work in the area of the study is poor.

2. Training and service delivery standards

Out of twenty-four respondents interviewed, eighteen claimed that a lack of training affects service delivery standards in the area of the study.

Some of the respondents commented that:

‘... I cannot be expected to work according to service delivery standards because I was not trained in this regard’.

‘... Most of the administrative staff is not performing in line with the requirements of the service delivery standards because no one has trained them in the organisation’.

From the above analysis it is clear that lack of training prevents the administrative staff to perform according to the required standards. Lack of training impacts negatively on service delivery standards, hence poor service delivery in the area of the study.

3. Lack of support systems and service delivery

Out of twenty-four respondents interviewed, nineteen agreed that a lack of support systems is one of the main causes of poor service delivery in the area of the study.

Upon sharing their views, they had these things to say:

‘... No one can provide quality services if there are no support systems to enhance the quality of work’.

‘... Most of the administrative staff are idling around because there is no support system in place to improve the quality of service delivery in the area of the study’.

From the above information, it is evident that there are not enough support systems to enhance and improve the quality of work in the organisation. Lack of provision of support systems demotivates the administrative staff to provide quality service in the area of the study.

4. Service support systems, staff and students

Out of twenty-four respondents interviewed, sixteen indicated that there is a lack of service support systems in the area of the study,

To support above statement, some of the respondents commented that:

‘... Our administrative staff is not providing quality services, due to lack of relevant of relevant service support systems’.

‘... The support system that we have in our unit does not assist administrative staff to provide quality service to our students’.

From the above analysis, it is evident that most of the respondents believed that lack of support systems hampers the administrative staff to deliver quality services to different stakeholder in the university. These anomalies mostly affect the students as the main stakeholders in the above-mentioned organisation.

5. Insufficient resources and service delivery

Out of twenty-four respondents interviewed, seventeen confirmed that a lack of sufficient resources keeps administrative staff from resolving challenges faced by students and staff in the area of the study.

Some of the respondents remarked:

‘...most of the administrative staff does not provide quality service because of insufficient resources that are meant to cater/assist students in the institution’.

‘...most of the administrative staff always wants to assist stakeholders, but due to lack of sufficient resources they struggle to provide quality services to their clients’.

From the above responses, it is clear that the administrative staff is not providing quality service because of insufficient resources such as relevant equipment, HR, inadequate classrooms and other related challenges. The above problem calls for the management to provide necessary resources, so as to support the administrative staff to provide quality service in the institution.

6. Department, needs analysis and service delivery

Out of twenty-four respondents interviewed, eighteen believed that their departments did not check needs analysis before the training was organised.

Some of the respondents had these to say:

‘...most of the department organise training for administrative staff without proper analysis of the training needs’.

‘...training before need analysis demotivates most of the administrative staff because they are compelled to attend training which is not [a] priority to their service delivery’.

From the above information, it is clear that the majority of the respondents do not want to attend training which is not related to their needs and service delivery into their organisation.

7. Human Resource, monitoring and service delivery

Out of twenty-four respondents interviewed, sixteen claim that the Department of Human Recourses does not monitor and evaluate the training programmes that are meant to develop administrative staff and to improve the quality of service delivery in the area of

the study. Some of the units provide training that appears irrelevant to this objective, which is a problem.

Some respondents commented that:

‘...the absence of monitoring and evaluation made some of the units not to offer relevant training programmes to their administrative staff, hence poor service delivery’.

‘...our Human Resources section does not always monitor and evaluate training programmes that are meant to develop administrative staff; hence most of them are not providing quality service in the institution’.

From the above analysis, it is evident that the Human Resources Department did not monitor and evaluate the training programmes before implementation. Lack of monitoring and evaluation had a negative effect on the quality of service delivery in the area of the study.

8. Alternative strategies and service delivery

Out of twenty-four respondents interviewed, fifteen indicated that the senior management did not have an alternative strategy that was meant to assist the administrative staff to deliver quality service in different units of the university.

Some of the respondents remarked that:

‘...how can you expect the administrative staff to deliver services, if there is no alternative strategy developed by management’?

‘...the unit managers do not request their seniors to provide an alternative strategy that can assist the administrative staff to deliver quality services in the area of the study’.

The above information shows that a lack of an alternative strategy from the top management, made the administrative staff not to provide quality of service. Relevant alternative strategy can always assist and motivate administrative staff to deliver quality service in different units and the university as a whole.

4.4 Synthesis

From the above responses, it is clear that the administrative staff is faced with numerous challenges that affect their day-to-day operation and the quality of service delivery in the

area of the study. Factors such as inadequate training, lack of support systems, lack of adherence to service delivery standards and other related anomalies hamper the administrative staff in providing quality service. The comments made by various respondents call for unit managers to provide the necessary support mechanisms that can enhance or assist administrative to adhere to service delivery standards.

4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to identify factors that hinder the administrative staff to provide quality service in the area of the study. The responses derived from structured interviews were analysed and interpreted in this chapter. This study has revealed some of the challenges that impact negatively towards the delivery of services in the area of the study. The above analysis has assisted the researcher to suggest appropriate recommendations that would assist the administrative staff to provide quality services in the university.

In the next chapter, an overview of the study, findings, recommendations and limitations of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The analysis of the research data which produced evidence by some responses and literature references were outlined / cited in the previous chapters. This qualitative research study suggests contributions to the deeper understanding of the perceptions and the responses of administrative staff towards the quality of service delivery in the University of Limpopo.

This chapter has presented the conclusions drawn from the research study and recommendations based on the research results. These recommendations will assist the administrative staff in providing quality service in the area of the study. The limitations of the study were also identified by the researcher.

5.2 Conclusions and implications of the research based on the stated objectives

The attainment of the objectives, conclusions and implications is based on the following objectives:

- To investigate service delivery standards delivered by administrative staff at the University of Limpopo.
- To determine how the administrative staff provides service to both internal and external customers.
- To provide possible strategies that can be employed to upskill administrative staff.

5.2.1 To investigate service delivery standards delivered by administrative staff at the University of Limpopo

In this study the research concluded that the majority of the participants acknowledged that there is a poor standard of service delivery. Some of the respondents believed that the poor service standard is caused by the scarcity of resources in their sphere of operation (operational level). A lack of resources impacts on the delivery of service to clients, policymakers and other stakeholders.

5.2.2 To determine how the administrative staff provides service to both internal and external customers

Respondents in this study were faced with numerous challenges in their provision of services in the area of the study. Most of these respondents claimed that a lack of supporting mechanisms makes them not to provide quality service to their internal and external customers. Some of the respondents confirmed that they were given minimal training to enhance their skills by the institution to improve service delivery. Inadequate training caused by a lack of supporting mechanism will always have a negative effect on service delivery in the area of the study.

5.2.3 To provide possible strategies that can be employed to upskill administrative staff

The respondents indicated that the lack of an alternative strategy on the staff development is one of the causes of poor service delivery. These can have a bad implication on the delivery of services by the administrative staff in the area of the study. Some of the respondents believed that ongoing training could always improve their ability and skills to provide quality of service in the area of the study.

All of the above processes can only be achieved if the line managers would monitor and evaluate the needs of the administrative staff in their units. A lack of monitoring and evaluation always causes a mismatch between the training programmes and the skills needed in the units. The mismatch and irrelevancy of the programmes can lead to minimal service delivery.

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings from the primary data, the following motivated recommendations are made.

Objective one: Adherence to service delivery standards

1. The unit managers should be encouraged to empower their administrative staff to adhere to the service delivery standards as required by the labour law.

2. The administrative staff should be encouraged to attend training, so as to improve delivery service standards, and further to improve the quality of work in the area of the study.

Objective two: Provision of support systems

3. The senior management should be encouraged to provide service support systems, so as to assist administrative staff to enhance quality service delivery in the institution.
4. The administrative staff should be encouraged to utilise the support system effectively, so as to satisfy the students and stakeholders that they are serving in different units. Good support systems always provide quality service delivery to the students as the important clients in the university.

Objective three: Possible strategies to upskill the administrative staff

5. The unit managers should be encouraged to acquire relevant resources that can assist the administrative staff to resolve different challenges faced by both the staff members and the students.
6. The department concerned should be encouraged to conduct a needs analysis before the training is organised to improve the skills of administrative staff in every unit of the institution.
7. The Human Resource Department should be encouraged to monitor and evaluate different training programmes that are meant to enhance service delivery in different section in the university.
8. Senior managers should be encouraged to develop alternative strategies that will assist the administrative staff to deliver quality service in different units in particular, and the university as a whole.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

All research studies are intended to suggest further research because there is no research which is complete in itself. The following topics are suggested for further research:

- The impact of inadequate training on quality service delivery in the institution of higher learning.
- The effects of irrelevant qualifications on service delivery in the university.
- The role of the Human Resource Management on effective staff development towards service delivery.
- Exploring the factors that demotivate administrative staff to provide quality service delivery in the university.
- The perception of unit managers towards the role of administrative staff on service delivery in the university.

5.5 Limitations of the research study

This study cannot claim that it has revealed all the challenges experienced by the administrative staff on service delivery in the university. This would be naive, since problems are not static but dynamic and situational.

Furthermore, the researcher has experienced a negative attitude displayed by some of the participants who were reluctant to take part in the study. The researcher has also experienced financial and time constraints during the collection of data from the target population. However, the researcher has managed to achieve the intended objectives of the study.

5.6 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors affecting service delivery at the University of Limpopo, with special reference to administrative and secretarial performance. This chapter presented the conclusions and implications of the qualitative data, recommendations to address the findings and the limitations of the research study. According to the responses derived from the participants, inadequate training and lack of support systems are regarded as the main cause of poor service

delivery. Suggestions for the solutions of the problems stated in Chapter 1 have been briefly discussed in this chapter.

The study was merely an eye-opener to the university management, unit managers, stakeholders and administrative staff. This study calls for the stakeholders to look upon some of the recommendations made by the researcher for possible ways to assist administrative staff to provide quality service delivery in the area of the study.

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