

**EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS AND OPINIONS ON THE LEAVE AND ABSENCE ADMINISTRATION OF THE
HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT OF THE SEOTLONG CIRCUIT "IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE"**

BY

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DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my late parents:

MOGOLOGADITJE (NGWATO)

AND

RAESIBE (MAHLAKO)

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Thanks giving appreciations are heavily passed to the Lord God for inspiring me to walk through this journey to the last hour.

To my family:-

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DECLARATION

I declare that the Mini-dissertation:

EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS AND OPINIONS ON THE LEAVE AND ABSENCE
ADMINISTRATION OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE UNIT OF THE SEOTLONG CIRCUIT”
IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE”.

hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the degree of Master
of Public Administration (degree & field of research) has not previously
been submitted by me for a degree at this or any University; that it is my
work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has
been duly acknowledged.

Surname, Initials (Title)

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

Public personnel administration, like any other aspect of public administration, has rules and regulations which direct the diverse categories and levels of personnel on how they are expected to function in a public institution. Managing resources is a purposeful action of the human resource unit aiming at assisting managers at all levels to optimally utilize personnel who are under their control in accordance with the official organization. Although managers are faced with various challenges in their units which hamper productivity, efficiency and progress, they remain accountable for a work not done according to the standard and goals set. In order to meet those set standards and goals, the manager must be able to control employee absenteeism and its cause.

The main purpose of the education circuit is to render management support services, such as circuit management, curriculum advisory services and learner assessment, school governance and corporate services. One of the personnel functions of the Human Resource Unit is the management and administration of conditions of service that include pensions, leave, housing and medical scheme. The administration of leave include the following:

- ensuring that teaching and non-teaching staff complete the leave forms when they go on leave;
- ensuring that leave applications are recommended and approved by the relevant senior officials;
- ensuring that relevant evidence is attached where it is needed; and
- ensuring that the leave applications are following the right procedure as well as considering the time factor to the district office where they will be captured.

The main reason for conducting this study is to propose remedial interventions, based on empirical research, for the following problems:

- Leave applications are not properly processed;
- Leave applications are poorly controlled and staff are often absent from work without leave;
- Leave applications do not reach the Human Resource Unit at the district office for processing and;
- The Human Resource Unit lacks the capacity and skills to process all the leave applications

These problems lead to staff taking leave days that they are not entitled to, wastage of financial and human resources and low levels of productivity. These deficiencies need urgent remedial interventions.

2. Problem statement

The leave administration process is long and delayed since it starts sometimes from school and via Circuit Office to District Office where leave credits are being captured. Capacity constraints also include lack of delivery due to insufficient resources such as personnel and cars, and inappropriate skills and experience.

This study proposes to investigate the pattern of leave of absence among personnel with regard to leave dispensation as stipulated in Determination on leave of absence in the Public service of 2005. This will assist in coming up with concrete data leading to the review of the said legislation to enable managers of effectively and efficiently manage personnel at Seotlong Circuit as well as in other institutions and public departments in future. According to the salaries and benefits in the Public Service (no date: 19) the need for effective leave administration system and process in the Public Service is to:

- Comply with the legal requirements entrenched in the Basic Conditions of Employment act, 1998.
- Promote the health and safety of employees.
- Allow the employee to recuperate from illness/injuries.

- Accommodate the employee's family, professional, civil and personal needs.

Annual leave is an ethical entitlement available to every employee to rest and attend to personal matters. Poor administration of annual leave resulted in officials benefiting more than one time and this will delay service delivery. Sick leave is an entitlement available to recover from an illness or injury and the poor administration of sick leave resulted in officials abusing it. Incapacity leave is additional sick leave granted conditionally at the employer's discretion. Inadequate and deficient leave administration result in abuse and misuse by officials. Special leave, especially examination, must be captured to support the academic achievement. The employees are charged with misconduct for not applying for leave when they are absent for writing examinations. Poor administration of maternity leave delays the process of appointing a temporary official and that will result in poor service delivery. Family responsibility is entitlement available to attend family matters. Poor administration of these different types of leave resulted in officials benefiting more than they are entitled to and will negatively affect the quality of service delivery, especially education. Ultimately, it leads to lower productivity and wastage of financial resources.

3. Aim of the study

The study aims at evaluating the administration of leave. In evaluating the administration of leave, the emphasis will be placed on how leave administration is contributing to achievement of objectives of the institution. The study will also identify weaknesses and deficiencies in the current leave system and the findings will be used to recommend interventions to improve administration of leave in the Seotlong Circuit.

4. Objectives

In order to achieve the aim of the researcher, the specific objectives are:

- to assess the perceived satisfaction levels of staff with the administration of leave
- to determine the reasons for absence amongst staff, contribute and propose interventions to improve the administration of leave and to reduce absenteeism levels of staff

5. Research questions

- What are the satisfaction levels and perceptions of employees within the Seotlong Circuit?
- What is the leave pattern?
- How can leave be managed?
- Are the personnel informed about the new leave determination? (Determination on leave of absence in the Public Service)
- How feasible is the implementation of the official leave pattern?
- What are the implications of leave on service delivery?
- What are the main causes of leave, and how to address them?

6. Literature review

Leedy (1993: 45) asserts that literature review can provide new ideas and approaches, which had not occurred to the researcher in order to indicate that the government takes the issue of administration of leave of absence in the Public Service serious and the following policies and documents were introduced:

- Public Service Staff Regulations of 1994
- Determination on Leave of absence in the Public Service of 2005
- Policy and Procedure on incapacity Leave and ill-health Retirement
- A Directive on Leave of absence in the Public Sector
- Public Service Act of 1994
- Labour Relations Act of 1995
- PSCBC Resolution 7 of 2000
- PSCBC Resolution 5 of 2001

All the above mentioned policies and procedures are aimed to improve administration of leave of absence in order to improve service delivery in the Public Service. The researcher will apply these informative sources to obtain maximal information by experts to shed light on the identified problems and the sources will provide guidelines that will enable the researcher to arrive at central facts regarding the problems. The researcher will be equipped with all the tools and techniques he needs to gather facts in order to analyse, interpret and deduce from the data to arrive at a solution to the research problems.

It is of vital importance for the researcher to scrutinize and contextualize issues under discussion from relevant sources related to the study. This will have a great advantage of confirming such discussions to a delineated specific field of study, thereby ensuring that the interrogations are focused. The study under discussions examines data about patterns of leave of absenteeism among personnel at the Seotlong Education Circuit.

In the Public Services, guidelines indicate that, any employee who does not make it to work must therefore report that absence to his/her supervisors, at least before 10H00. Although employees are aware of that, it sometimes becomes very difficult to practice accordingly, especially for those who reside in remote areas with no telephone lines.

It is essential that every research project begins with a review of the existing literature (Mouton, 2005: 86). The researcher will, therefore, research past and existing work done by other researchers on the same topic to gain more knowledge. Selective sources from the library will be used. It is sometimes impossible to look at everything that has been done on the topic (Baker, 1988: 92). Using written records and documents, there may be copies of studies done about similar aspects which this study intends pursuing that will be looked at in view of Baker's (1988:93) advice.

The researcher will apply this informative source to obtain maximal information by experts to shed light on the identified problem, and the sources provide guidelines that enable the researcher to arrive at central facts regarding his problem. The researcher will be equipped with

all the tools and techniques he needs to gather facts, orders, analyse, interpret and deduce from the data to arrive at solutions to his researched problem.

In order to achieve the research objectives books, manuscripts, journal articles, newspapers and reports on leave and absence administration in the library and the other work done by other researchers will be perused. The review what has been published already on leave and absence administration will be revisited to prove research done in this study. Chapter two is solely dedicated to address the question of literature reviews.

Meggison as quoted in Andrews (1995: 222) asserts that absenteeism is a serious problem that is progressively increasing. Absenteeism can in fact be caused by unforeseen circumstances, such as physical or psychological disorder. He suggests that leave must be controlled and disciplinary action be taken if abused. Expected circumstances are for example, carelessness or lack of discipline. On the other hand, Gillies (1994:285) postulates that employees will absent themselves from work even for minor health problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, colds, allergies, back pains as well as for fractures, serious life threatening illnesses. It is also mentioned that industrial studies show no relation between a work's illness, absence and the amount of overtime worked, but a correlation has been found between unexcused absence and "double jobbing" which means that someone is employed by more than one employer resulting in exhaustion. This is also the case with the Seotlong Education Circuit personnel, where employees do moonlighting in private institutions and come back to their original employment; especially those with special qualifications like technicians (artisans) and teachers.

Taylor as quoted in Gillies (1994:286) mentions that, workers with high absence rate usually demonstrate excessive tardiness as well. They either come late at work or become extremely inactive (Gillies, 1994:286). The most common causes for absence are sick and special leaves.

According to Booyens (1995:350), control of leave abuse must be done through monitoring of leave patterns of all employees with particular attention paid to high frequencies of single day offs and use of first or last work days for sick leave as well as days before and after holidays and pay days. It is emphasized that supervisors should use their own discretion in asking for a

medical certificate as proof of illness or in paying an unexpected visit to the home of the sick employee when they become suspicious. Employee's should also indicate their reasons for absence on leave form when returning to work. Managers should take disciplinary steps when an employee's number of sick leave incidents (not days) exceeds five per year (Levesqus as quoted in Booyens, 1995: 350). Supportive evidence must be produced to ensure that leave is not abused.

Dalten and Mesch as quoted in Spector (200: 237) did a mini survey where subjects are to classify their absence into one of the two categories: due to illness or due to other circumstances. It was found that the two types of absences had different correlates. Absence due to illness, but not other circumstances, was related to job satisfaction and gender, (the dissatisfied respondents and women were ill more frequently) whereas absence due to other circumstances was related to job tenure and the absence policy. These results suggested that the different types of absence had different causes that might be reduced with different procedures.

According to Spector (2000:264-266), there are employees and organizational factors that have been associated with accidents as causes of illnesses affecting employees' performance, and these include personality characteristics (for example neurotism), experiences (for examples recent death in the family), and behaviors (for example alcohol consumption, smoking or drug usage). These illnesses can only be addressed through proper selection of employees as well as training of personnel, to the design of the workplace. There is a Human Resource Development Unit at the Greater Sekhukhune Education District, which Seotlong Education Circuit is a component of, which specifically addresses recruitment and training issues of the teaching and non-teaching personnel. Moorhead and Griffin (2007:89-90) mention that, when people are dissatisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to take leave even when they are fine and healthy and may even leave the organization for more attractive jobs elsewhere. Conversely, it is said that when employees are satisfied, they come to work regularly and are less likely to seek other employment elsewhere. There is a high turnover at the Seotlong Education Circuit of personnel who leave for other provinces and overseas countries.

7. Definition of concepts

- **Leave**

Permission to be absent from duty. (Compiled by Market House Book Ltd 1998)

- **Absence**

Non-availability over a short period of service. Reporting late for duty is regarded as “Short non-availability” (Fox & Meyer 1995:1).

- **Administration**

It refers to the execution of activities by persons charged with common objective (Fox & Meyer 1995:3) According to Fowler & Fowler 1990:16, administration refers to the management of public affairs.

8. Research Design

8.1. Choice and rationale of design

A research design is a plan or blue-print of how the researcher intends conducting the research (Mouton, 2005:55). This study will focus on the improvement of leave administration in the Seotlong Circuit in Limpopo Province. An investigation what could be done to improve leave administration and how leave policy and procedure can be used to improve administration will be investigated. For this reason, exploratory analysis will be appropriate.

9. Researcher Methodology

9.1 Study Area

The area of study will be the Seotlong Education Circuit in Greater Sekhukhune District (Limpopo Province). The study will focus on the Human Resource (HR) Unit of the Seotlong Education Circuit. This section deals with matters relating to the conditions of service such as pensions, leave, housing, and medical scheme matters.

9.2 Population

The target population of this research project will consist of all 30 administrative staff and 238 educators employed by the Department of Education in Seotlong Circuit.

9.3. Sample size and selection method

A cross sectional survey method will be used. This method has been chosen due to its advantage of obtaining types of information from respondents: biographical particulars, typical behavior, opinions, beliefs, convictions and attitudes (Brynard and Hanekom, 1997: 124). Questions will be asked impersonally through a questionnaire for the whole population of N=268, whereas random sample of 10 members will be selected for interviews.

9.4 Data collection Method

9.4.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is a document normally distributed through the post to be filled out by the respondent himself in his own time (Behr, 1988: 155). The researcher is going to draw up questionnaires for completion by respondents. The questionnaires will be employed and dealt with in chapter four.

9.4.2. Interview

The participants will be interviewed in face-to-face interviews because it is conducted in a relaxed atmosphere. In the process, the notes of what is taking place in the fieldwork would be taken (Mouton, 2005: 105).

9.5. Data analysis method

As results of the quantitative approach followed, the analysis and interpretation of the data will be done by way of deductive reasoning, beginning with the research questions and moving towards finding answers to it.

As mentioned, the pre-structured questionnaire consisted of both open-and closed ended questions (numeric data), while the data will be entered in the statistical package for the social science (SPSS Version 17). The scores will be analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

9.6. Ethical Considerations

The participants have the rights of privacy and for this reason, no one is forced to participate against their will. Their rights as stipulated in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa will always be protected in the progression of the study. Respondents will be informed about the purpose and the procedure. Interviewees will not be compelled to participate. They will be informed that the participation is voluntary. They will also be informed that responses will be anonymous and as such their names will not be disclosed. The data collected will be kept confidential and that they can withdraw at any stage if they feel uncomfortable.

10. Outline of research report

The proposed study will be divided into five chapters outlined as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter will outline the background of the envisaged study. The chapter will also focus on the research problem and the main purpose of the proposed research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature selected will give the background or leave administration benefit and their practice and identity existing gaps in leave administration.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

In this chapter, the envisaged study will outline how the research methodology would have been handled. This will refer to target groups, sampling and research technique applications.

Chapter 4: Results

In Chapter 4, data will be presented, analyzed and interpreted.

Chapter 5: Conclusion(s) and recommendations

The conclusion(s) of the envisaged research will be made based on the findings of the research. The recommendations will be drawn from the conclusion.

11. Conclusion

The chapter deals with the aspects related to the orientation of the study. The problem statement is clarified and the aim of the study followed by the specific objectives is outlined. The relevance of the topic and the significances of the study are indicated. To guide the study progressively, the research questions are also indicated. The area of the study is shown and the ethical considerations are outlined. In view of the orientation nature of the chapter, the sequence of the subsequent chapters is also outlined.

Pattern of leave among public personnel is an aspect of Human Resource Management, which needs to be looked into closely. Personnel, who absent themselves from their work without any reason must not be left without disciplinary action against them. This is what the study is aiming to achieve in the Seotlong Circuit.

Sick leave pattern like other absences must be managed according to the statutory requirements as well as Institutional Policies and guidelines. It is important that all personnel of Seotlong Circuit are informed about the new leave legislations as yardstick for quality service. The feasibility of implementing sick leave according to resolutions and legislation must be studied to ensure that everyone abides by these rules. The next chapter discusses the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The chapter serves to give a broad understanding of the impact of leave and absence administration on service delivery at Seotlong Circuit in the Department of Education in Limpopo Province.

It is of vital importance to scrutinize and contextualize issues under discussion from relevant sources related to the study. This will have greater advantages of confirming such discussions to a delineated specific field of study, thereby ensuring that the interrogations are focused. The study under discussion examines data about pattern of leave and absence administration among teaching and non-teaching personnel in the Seotlong Education Circuit.

Determination on Leave of Absence in the Public Service of 2005 provides a policy framework and practical implementation strategy for the more efficient, effective and equitable provision of the public service. Ten kinds of leave are contained, namely, annual, normal sick, temporary, leave for occupational injuries and diseases, maternity, adoption, family responsibility, special, leave for office bearers or shop stewards of recognized employee organizations and unpaid leave.

2. The role of administration in a department

Leave of absence today is generally viewed as the most complex employee problem. According to Grobler et al (2005:570), it is possible to isolate variables that influence decisions to attend work: and the following factors contribute to absenteeism in the workplace:

- **Personal factors**

These factors include age, gender and marital status, length of services, education and health and income level. Employees who are single and younger than thirty years for example, have little commitment, as most are not yet married and do not have families. Also those who are longer than ten years in service, are found to be more responsible than those who think they have nothing to lose and can absent themselves from work at any time.

- **Organizational factors**

These factors indicate organizational size, work group size, nature of supervision, overtime, incentive schemes and type of work. In small organizations, employees have fewer challenges and get bored, thus become tempted to be off duty. Poor supervision encourages leave of absence in all aspects.

Employees move in and out as they wish without anyone supervising their movements. Proper records are usually not kept to see who is not in. A tendency of employees absenting themselves immediately after overtime completed is commonly observed.

- **Attitudinal factors**

These factors include job satisfaction and state of economy. Job satisfaction usually encourages employees to come to work frequently. They are motivated and see the value of coming to work always. Also if employees are well-paid, they will be at work as expected.

- **Social factors**

These factors include inadequate transport system, difficulties people experience in townships and hostel violence (Grobler et al (2005:570)). Where there is proper infrastructure like roads and railway lines, employees do not have problems of coming to work.

3. Leave administration benefits and their practices in the Public Service

According to Proclamation 1091 of 1994 Public Service Staff Regulations, Chapter C, (41) the purpose of leave of absence is to regulate an officer's or employee's absence from duty by means of the granting of leave of absence within the framework of provisions and measures as set out in that chapter. It is an entitlement available to the officer or employee to rest and attend personal matters.

The scope and content of leave of absence is clearly set out in the initial policy document of the Public Service Staff Regulations of 1994 which stipulates that leave of absence is a privilege and is granted only with due regard to the exigencies of the Public service. Leave cannot be claimed as a right and when an officer or employee leaves, he or she cannot claim payment in respect of the cash value of leave standing to his or her credit.

According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, leave of absence is a time that any employee is allowed to spend away from work for a particular purpose (Longman, 2004. 918).

3.1. Annual leave

As outlined in Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997, Annual Leave Cycle means the period of 12 months' employment with the same employer.

The annual leave cycle is a 12-month's period and commences 1 January of each year. At the end of this 12-months period an employee has a further 6 months to utilize any unused annual leave days for the previous cycle. In other words, an employee has 18 months within which he or she could utilize his / her annual leave. Any unused leave days available by the end of the grace period are forfeited.

If an employee has less than 10 years service he or she is eligible to 22 working day's annual leave in a leave cycle or if he or she has 10 or more years of service, he or she is eligible to 26 days working day's annual leave in a leave cycle. If an employee is appointed in the course

of a leave cycle, he or she will be eligible to a pro rata annual leave entitlement only. The employee is required to take a continuous period of annual leave for a period of at least 10 working days in a leave cycle.

As a general rule, an employee may not stay away from work unless he or she has applied for annual leave and has been advised by his or her supervisor that the application has been approved, unless exceptional circumstances exist. For this purpose the employee's leave application form, i.e. the Z1 (a) form, must be completed and signed.

In the event where an employee terminates his or her services, or if the application for annual leave was declined due to operational requirements, and could not be rescheduled in the course of the leave cycle unused, annual leave credits are paid out. For this purpose, at the end of the 18- month period a written request, supported by written proof of refusal of the annual leave, and that it could not be rescheduled, by the Head of Department or delegated authority must be submitted.

3.1.1. Beneficiaries of leave payout in the event of death

In the event of death, an employee may designate one or more beneficiaries to whom his/her leave payout may be paid. If a beneficiary has not been nominated, the leave payout may be paid in full to the spouse/ life partner or if there is no spouse / life partner, in equal shares for the benefit of minor and other children (including legally adopted children): or if there are no children, to the employee's estate.

3.2. Normal sick leave

The purpose of normal sick leave is to enable an employee to recuperate from an illness or an injury (not an injury on duty). An employee is entitled to 36 working days paid normal sick leave in a sick leave cycle. A sick leave cycle is a 36 months period. The current sick leave cycle commenced with effect from 1 January 2007. Unused normal sick leave lapses at the end of the sick leave cycle.

In the case where an employee knows in advance that he or she must go for a clinical procedure, such as an operation, he or she must submit his or her application on the Z1 (a), the leave application form. However, should an emergency arise or if the employee is overcome with a sudden illness/ injury he or she must notify his / her supervisor immediately either through telephone, relative, friend or colleague.

An application for normal sick leave within 5 working days must be submitted, after the first day of absence, personally or through a relative, friend or colleague.

According to Determination on Leave of Absence in the Public Service of 2005, if an employee is absent for three working days and more he or she must submit medical certificate for period of sick absence. A medical certificate may be requested, irrespective of the number of days an employee is off sick, if a pattern or trend has been established in the use of sick days. An employee will also be required to submit a medical certificate regardless of the duration of the absence if he or she has taken sick leave on more than two occasions during an 8- week period.

There are underlying reasons and dynamics why sick leave problems are perpetuated at workplace:

➤ Unmet expectations:

Nel et al (2001: 582) indicate that new employees enter into an organization with certain expectations relating to skills and abilities, equal treatment, receiving respect or satisfactory working condition. If these aspects are not met, it is said that the employee could abuse leave as a mechanism to withdraw temporarily from the job situation.

➤ Job person match:

If an employee's personality, abilities and skills are not congruent with job requirements, the person becomes either bored or stressed out and withdraws from the situation by being absent.

➤ Organizational Culture:

If a permissive culture exists within an organization regarding absence, employees will consider sick leave as a benefit that needs to be utilized, or else it will be lost. As a form of absence, sick absence occurs when a person is absent owing to a reported illness, whether genuine or not. The organization policy will clearly have to state at what stage a medical certificate is required.

3.2.1 Acceptance of medical certificate

For purposes of normal sick leave, medical certificates issued and signed by the practitioners and persons who are certified to diagnose and treat patients and who are registered with the following professional councils established by an Act of Parliament are accepted:

- a) The Health Professions Council of South Africa
- b) The Allied Health Professions Council of South Africa
- c) The South African Nursing Council

3.3. Temporary incapacity leave

According to role of service delivery improvement and Batho - Pele Principles, incapacity leave is a benefit an employee can apply for when he or she has exhausted all his or her normal sick leave. It should be managed in terms of the policy and procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement with assistance of employer's Health Risk Manager.

According to Determination on leave of absence in the Public Service 2005, temporary incapacity leave is not an unlimited number of additional sick leave days at an employee's disposal. It is additional sick leave, which is subject to an investigation and is granted at the employer's discretion.

If an employee has exhausted his/ her normal sick and based upon the advice of the treating medical practitioner need to be absent from work due for recuperation, he or she may apply for temporary incapacity leave with full pay. The policy and procedure to deal with applications on incapacity leave is contained in the Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill – health Retirement (PILIR). Therefore, for purposes of applying for temporary incapacity leave, the employee must utilize the applicable application form prescribed in terms of PILIR in respect of each occasion. The application must always be supported by a medical certificate. Additional supporting available medical reports and information, as well as written motivation with the application must be submitted.

If the employee knows in advance that he or she must go for a clinical procedure, such as an operation, he or she must submit an application in advance. However, should an emergency arise or if the employee is overcome with a sudden illness/ injury he or she must notify the supervisor immediately telephonically or through a relative, friend or colleague.

The application for normal sick leave must be submitted within 5 working days, after the first day of absence, either personally or through a relative, friend or colleague.

The application for temporary incapacity leave will be assessed in a scientific, objective and fair manner by Health Risk Manager, who in turn advises the employer on its finding. The employer will with due consideration of all the facts decide on the granting of incapacity leave.

3.3.1 Acceptance of medical certificates

For purpose of temporary incapacity leave the employer only accepts medical certificates issued and signed by practitioners registered with the Health Professional Council of South Africa and who are legally certified to diagnose and treat patients.

3.4. Leave for occupational injuries and diseases

An employee shall be granted occupational and disease leave for the duration of the period that he or she cannot work as a result of injury caused at work or if he or she has contracted an occupational disease. In order to be granted the occupational injury disease leave, the employee must bring a claim for compensation (in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act 68 of 1993) received to recompense as far as possible for the cost arising from the accident.

A study performed in veterans Association Health System revealed that the most common work – related injuries were back and leg injuries with lifting and pulling (Hefferin and Hill, 1976). This is also noticed at the Seotlong Education Circuit. It has been mentioned that because health and illness are on a continuum and a worker is too ill to work, is not determined solely by a physical condition, the manager should improve those aspects of work environment and work design that are known to decrease employee's work motivation. The issue of legislation and discussions by government departments with only a small section of employees' representatives may be contributory towards this problem. This can be achieved by the use of democratic style of supervision and also by maintaining open communication with subordinates. Tea parties to celebrate one's birthday are an ideal situation.

Scheneller in Gillies (1994, 289) mentioned that Administrators in one medical centre were able to reduce health care employees' traditional vacation. Holiday and pay sick leave were combined into two accounts: a paid leave account and an extended illness account. Employees were allowed to take paid leave days at their own discretion, subject only to the supervisor's approval. Employees were also allowed to take extended illness days only after all the paid

leaves and leave account had been exhausted.

3.5. Maternity Leave

According to Hyde (1995:300), maternity leave refers to the leave a woman takes from work at the time of the expected birth of a baby, usually for purposes of both physical recovery and caring for the baby. Employees are entitled to 4 consecutive months' paid maternity leave to commence at any time from four weeks before the expected date of birth: or on a date from which the attending medical practitioner certifies it is necessary for the employee's health or that of the unborn child.

3.6. Adoption leave

If an employee adopts a child that is younger than two years, he or she will qualify for adoption leave to a maximum of 45 working days. If both spouses or life partners are employed in the Public Service, both partners will qualify for adoption leave provided that the combined leave taken does not exceed the 45 working days.

3.7. Family responsibility leave

Family Responsibility is an entitlement available to attend to family matters. An employee will be granted 3 days leave per annual cycle for use if his or her spouse or life partner gives birth to a child or the employee's child, spouse or life partner dies, or an employee's immediate family member dies.

The aggregate of family responsibility leave days taken, as indicated above, shall not exceed 5 days in an annual leave cycle, unless special circumstances warrant further leave at the discretion of the Head of Department.

3.8. Special leave

An employee may apply for special leave for example, studies and exams in terms of the department's special leave policy.

3.9. Leave for office bearers or Shop Stewards of recognised employee Organizations

If an employee is an office bearer or a shop steward of a recognized employee organization, he or she will receive up to 10 working days paid leave per annum for activities related to his or her union position. In order to access this leave the necessary supporting documentation with the application must be submitted.

3.10. Unpaid leave

If an employee has exhausted his or her annual leave, the Head of Department may grant unpaid leave should further leave be required. The Head of Department shall only in exceptional circumstances grant more than 184 calendar days of unpaid leave in a period of 18 months.

4. Leave management, employee attendance monitoring and compliance with leave policy

4.1. Leave management

According to Circular No. 38 of 2009, Limpopo Department of Education, Monitoring of Employee Attendance and Leave Management, except in exceptional circumstances, the employee may not stay away from his place of duty unless an application for leave of absence has been lodged in writing and he/she has been informed by the Head of the Department that the application has been approved. Supervisors must ensure that employees under their care complete leave forms and that their leave applications are approved before they go on leave.

Leave applications must be submitted to the Human Resource Directorate for processing. Supervisors must keep a leave register indicating the number of leave days taken by employees

and the type of leave taken, to ensure that a leave is not taken in excess. Leave and attendance register must be made available on request by the Manager: Human Resource Management or the Auditor General for audit purposes.

4.2. Monitoring of employee attendance

According to circular no 38 of 2009, Supervisors/Principals must complete the prescribed form (Annexure B) to report absenteeism by employees at schools and immediately forward the information to the designated employee at the Circuit Office within two working days. The Circuit Manager should consolidate statistics received from schools using the prescribed form (Annexure C0 and forward the information to the designated employee at the District within two working days.

The designated employee at the District Office should consolidate statistics obtained from the Circuit Office using the prescribed form (Annexure D) and forward the information to the designated employee at the Head Office within two working days. The designated employee at Head Office should consolidate statistics obtained from the District Office using the prescribed form (Annexure E) and ensure compliance by District Office.

4.3. Compliance with leave policy

According to circular No 38 of 2009, supervisors must ensure that leave is not taken in excess of what the employee is entitled to. Further Institution-based educators are regarded as being on annual leave during closure periods that are outside of scheduled working time. The non-completion of leave forms by employees prior to taking leave constitutes an act of misconduct, which may result in disciplinary action being instituted against the employee concerned. Failing to submit completed leave forms for capturing and processing by supervisors, constitutes an act of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action being instituted against the supervisors concerned.

5. Various sources of opinions

Taylor, cited (in Gillies 1994. 286) mentioned that, workers with high illness or absence rate usually demonstrate excessive tardiness as well. They either come late at work or become extremely inactive. In this literature, it is mentioned that the most common cause for illness are respiratory diseases, gynecological disorders and back problems. To support this information, at Seotlong Circuit, personnel suffer from such infertility and illness, pneumonia resulting from HIV/AIDS illness. It is also indicated that a study performed in the Veterans Association Health System revealed that the most common work-related injuries were back and leg injuries associated with lifting and pulling (Hefferin and Hill, 1976). This is also noticed in Seotlong Circuit.

It is mentioned that because health and illness are on a continuum and worker's decision that he or she is too ill to work, is not determined solely by a physical condition, the manager should improve those aspects of work environment and work design that are known to decrease employee's work motivation. The issue of legislation and discussion by government department with only a small section of employee's representatives may be contributory towards this problem. This can be achieved by the use of a democratic style of supervision and also maintaining open communication with subordinates. Tea parties to celebrate one's birthday are an ideal situation.

According to the Seotlong Circuit personnel, the primary cause of absenteeism in the circuit was low moral among personnel which was caused by the lack of not being promoted to the high posts in the circuit, but preference is given to the outside applicants - the solution was to consider the internal personnel first for promotional posts.

Lack of flexi time in the circuit also forced the personnel to excuse themselves from the workplace without reporting to their supervisors citing that the supervisors are not allowing them to break from work except during official breaks; the solution was to allow the personnel to excuse themselves from work as an employee's formal breaks, and the supervisor must ensure that the particular employee will work during break periods to recover the lost one. The

movement register should also be introduced to record the movement of an employee during the working hours, where the time spent outside the workplace per day be recorded and once it makes 8 hours is equally to a day, and therefore, the vacation leave forms should be filled to allow an employer to deduct a day off. If there is no vacation credits, the rule of unpaid leave will be applied.

Leave of absence is divided into two types, namely: Unavoidable and Voluntary leave of absence. Voluntary leaves of absence include leave of absence which are voluntary and avoidable, such as annual, adoption, family responsibility, special, leave for Office bearers or Shop Stewards and unpaid leave, whereas, Unavoidable leaves include leaves of absence which are not voluntary and unavoidable, such as normal sick, temporary incapacity and maternity leave.

Between the two types of leaves of absence, Unavoidable leave of absence is the one which is difficult to be managed, especially normal sick leave of less than three days. Its loopholes are the following: an employee does not report or fill leave forms when he/she takes leave.

Submission of evidence or written information or medical certificate is not compulsory. Submission of leave form and verbal information is enough for this type of leave of absence.

Megginson in Andrews (1995:222) asserts that absenteeism is a serious problem that is progressively increasing. Absenteeism can in fact be caused by unforeseen circumstances, such as physical or psychological disorders. He suggests that leave must be controlled and disciplinary action to be taken if abused. Expected circumstances are for example, carelessness or a lack of discipline.

Gillies (1994:285) postulates that according to disability theory, employees will absent themselves for physically incapacitate. Employees will absent themselves from even minor health problems such as alcohol and drug abuse, colds, allergies, low back pains as well as for fractures, and serious life threatening illness, absence and the amount of overtime worked, but a correlation has been found between unexcused absence and “double jobbing” which means that someone is employed by more than one employer resulting in exhaustion. This is also the case

with the Seotlong Education Circuit personnel, where employees do moonlighting in private institutions and come back to their original employment exhausted, especially those with special qualifications like technicians (artisans).

According to Booyens (1995:350), control of leave abuse must be done through monitoring of leaves pattern of all employees with particular attention paid to high frequencies of single days off and the use of first or last work days for sick leave as well as days before and after holidays and pay days. It is emphasized that supervisors should use their own discretion in asking for a medical certificate as proof of illness or in paying an unexpected visit to the home of the sick employee when they became suspicious. Employees also should be made to indicate their reasons for absent in a leave form when returning to work. Managers should take disciplinary steps when an employee's number of sick leave incidents (not days) exceeds five per year (Levesqu as quoted in Booyens, 1995:350). Supportive evidence must be produced to ensure that leave is not being abused.

Dalten and Mesch in Spector (2000:237) did a mini survey where subjects were asked to classify their absence into one of the two categories: due to illness or due to other circumstances. It was found that the two types of absences had different correlates. Absence due to illness, but not other circumstances, was related to job satisfaction and gender, (the dissatisfied respondents and women were ill more frequently) whereas absence due to other circumstances was related to job tenure and absence policy. These results suggested that the different types of absences had different causes that might be reduced with different procedures.

According to Spector (2000:264:266), there are employees and organizational factors that have been associated with accidents as causes of illness affecting employee performance, and these include personality characteristics (for example neurotism), experiences (for example recent death in the family), and behavior (for example alcohol consumption, smoking or drug usage). These illnesses can only be addressed through proper selection of employees as well as training of personnel, to the design of the workplace. There is a Human Resources Development Unit at Greater Sekhukhune Education District, of which Seotlong Education Circuit is a component, which specifically addresses recruitment and training issues of teaching and non-teaching

personnel. Moorhead and Griffin (2007:89-90) has mentioned that, when people are dissatisfied with their jobs, they are more likely to call in leave even when they are fine and healthy and may even leave the organization for more attractive jobs elsewhere. There is a tremendous turn-over in the Seotlong Education Circuit of personnel who leave for other provinces and overseas countries.

According to Andrews (1995:221-222), misuse of leaves of absence is considered to be among the overriding problems of absence from work. The reasons why employees find themselves sometimes guilty of this action is due to the following:

- Inability of employers to reconcile the objectives of their employees with those of the institution. The fact of the matter is that every employee who comes to an organization has his/her own objectives, missions, visions, beliefs and goals to attain in the long run, but gets most frustrated when the employer and employee relationship gets broken up and the employer taking a decision to implement the organization's objectives without necessarily considering that of an employee. Consultation seems to have been minimal when a decision was taken over implementation of the regulation of leave.
- If an employee does not display the correct attitude towards his/her work, he/she will not necessarily feel guilty if he/she is absent from work without a good reason. This is why certain employees decide to take sick leave and not vacation leave because vacation leave days are converted into money when one retires.
- Employees, who cannot identify themselves with the institution, lose interest and become guilty of certain offence.
- Personnel values and norms can have an influence on employees' working behavior. If the standards of honesty and incorruptibility are not highly rated by an employee, absenteeism will be considered an acceptable action.

- Certain employees assume that paid sick leave which is granted to employees as a fringe benefit; it should be utilized whether they are ill or not. Due to this reason, sick leave is considered by some workers to be extra free time.
- Official sick leave awarded to employees, is enjoyed by the Public Employees and can often be a contributor to cause of absence from work without a reason because employees assume that they cannot be easily dismissed from their jobs and thus have the right to stay away from work.

Tomey (2004:374) asserts that ineffective management, poor working relationship, boredom, lack of control over decisions affecting one's life and overwork, are also contributory factors to leave of absence. Some workers lack self-discipline to get themselves to work. Others absent themselves to avoid an unpleasant or boring job. Some are poorly motivated, do as little as possible to prevent being fired, and do not see their jobs as a means towards an end. Some personnel are enthusiastic in their job.

Managers should make sure that there are attendance policies available and also that the policies do not reward non-attendance but are enforced consistently. Also it is emphasized that attendance records should be maintained, and grievance procedures be established. Recording the day of absence, the reason and whether excused or unexcused, preceding or following a day off, the employee's job classification, shift, age, sex, marital status, or any other information, is thought to be useful to detect trends and pinpoint problems. Furthermore leave of absence often occurs more frequently in certain job classifications or departments, on specific days or shifts, or among a group working under a specific manager. Problems therefore need to be identified so that managers can develop control measures.

Failure to report at work as expected creates problems of widely varying degrees for managers and the administration (Robbins, 1998:24). It is also regarded as leave of absence which can be defined broadly as "any time spent away from scheduled work" (Gillies, 1989:139). Leave of absence results in drastic reduction in the rendering of quality service with very little output which at times could bring about a complete shutdown of production (Grobler, Warnich, Carrel,

Elbert & Hatfield, 2005:570). It is obviously difficult for organizations to operate smoothly and attain its objectives, goals and mission, if employees for any given reason, absent themselves from work.

On the other hand, Gillies, (1994:255), indicates that ‘according to disability theory, employees absent themselves from work principally due to illness or injury that physically incapacitates them. Employees will absent themselves for even minor health problems such as alcohol and for drug abuse, colds, and allergies, back pains as well as for fractures and serious life threatening illnesses. In his argument, it is also mentioned that Industrial Studies show no relation between a worker’s illness, absence and the amount of overtime worked, but a correlation has been found between unexcused absence and “double jobbing”, which means that someone is employed by more than one employer resulting in exhaustion.

French (1998:1100) indicates that illness or accidents, family responsibilities and transportation problem are major influences on attendance, thus why are associated with job satisfaction/job attendance, and should not interfere with coming to work. Sick leave forms part of absenteeism according to Kossen (1994:185) as he indicated that a certain pattern of absenteeism is of course unavoidable because of sickness, and other valid reasons. Sickness is one of the contributing factors to absenteeism at work and therefore according Gerber, in Nel et al “the human resource practitioner must stay sensitive to the fact that people get sick, and might prevent them from attending work. However, it is indicated that, for various reasons, people do abuse sick leave granted to them by the organization”

Taylor in Flippo (1984:534) conducted a study which indicated that during the period 1977-1979, the overall rate for absenteeism for all occupation was 3-5 percent, with two thirds (2/3) of this being caused by illness. Further on, it is indicated that when sick pay is authorized, the organization costs mount up more rapidly due to upset and delayed work schedules, deterioration on the quality product and overtime required to make up the work. Professor P.J. Taylor of London University (Bittel and Newton, 1990:324) observed that 60 percent of all absentees have serious or chronic illnesses such as flu, and 10 percent feel unwell because of minor illnesses such as colds, and they do or do not report to work according to their attitude about their jobs.

In the Public Sector it is also implemented in that manner, except that there is paid temporary disability, also as an extension. Following the implementation of the combined leave benefit program, there was a 90 percent reduction in employees' unscheduled absences and a 54 percent reduction in the use of overtime hour. Another advantage saving of managerial time because there was less need for last minute schedule changes to cover for employees who called in sick, and less need for close supervision of replacement of workers who were unfamiliar with the tasks they had taken over for an absent co-worker.

6. Perceived reasons and consequences of work absence: a survey of French-Speaking employees in Quebec

The study follows a descriptive approach to the study of absence behavior. A sample of workers representative of the French-speaking population of the Greater Montreal area was interviewed by telephone to gather their perceptions on absence. Respondents reported their absence reasons, the consequences of absence, and the absence policies in force by their employer as well as their own absence levels. The results indicated that employees were more likely to be absent for reasons of non-work constraints than for work-related difficulties, and they remarked that few consequences were attached to absence. Unionization appears to interact with the generosity of company policies towards absence. Gender differences were noted with regard to the perceived reasons for absence and those findings were juxtaposed with recent meta-analytic results. The findings of that survey appear highly consistent with other recently published research, and the greater level of detail provided helped suggest different strategies for dealing with and for understanding absence behavior.

Nicholson and Payne (1987) research were conducted independently both studies did not use the same questions and data collection procedures. Yet, in spite of those differences the overall thrusts of both sets of results were remarkably convergent and both were quite consistent with other sources of research on absence. Leaving aside dramatic absence reasons (serious illness, accidents ,etc.), which will, almost inevitably, lead to absence , and which were not asked of our respondents, both studies indicate that people report being more likely to be absent for reasons of

external constraints than for reasons of problems directly linked to the organization. Those further echo the information collected a decade ago by Morgan and Herman (1976), which presents many similarities, to the survey-based ones. However, there was some disagreement between the data sets: Morgan and Herman (1976) report, for example, that "break from routine" and increased leisure time were relatively important. That was not the case for the survey results. It may be that survey-type data, by cutting across organization, presents a more general picture that may only partially apply to the situations which prevail in specific organizations. Moreover, the Nicholson and Payne study, as well as the present one, interviewed worker in their home, whereas, presumably this is not totally clear from the published information as Morgan and Herman interviewed people at work. It might be the case that the specific physical context in which the data is collected may influence the relative salience of reported absence reasons.

The absent worker in response to the question: "Why are you absent?", provides some important answer which might profitably be integrated in the treatment which organizations give to absence.

First, the number of reasons for which individual worker might absent themselves was, perhaps, not as great as they once might think (about four or five reasons on the average). But, more significantly, the range of reasons for which a substantial proportion of the employee population will become absent was very narrow: most people report that they would be absent because of clearly required tasks which cannot be scheduled outside of normal working hours (meeting with professional and attending social events which cannot be displaced). Absence from work forces some important consequences on organizations: it disrupts work production; it compels managers, especially line managers, to spend otherwise productive energy planning and dealing with absence rather than with the job to be done; and in the final analysis, it is very costly. If these consequences were as serious as the organizations view them, how were they understood by employees?

An examination of the manner in which absence was treated indicates that employers (the employees said), were fairly generous relative to actual absence (Morgan & Herman, 1976, reach a similar conclusion). Most respondents report being paid for their absence whether they produce

medical certificates or not and it was rare for organizations to be perceived to have absence control programmes. About half the respondents, a substantial group by any count, acknowledge they will need to be replaced. Even if that may be generously interpreted to mean that many workers know from personal experience that absence disrupts work arrangements and that it is costly, an equivalent proportion suggest that the work will simply be stock-piled and will wait their return. As the work will be done by them, they may not feel that the matter of absence is all that consequential. In any case, three quarters of these workers report being able to get away with a lot more absence days than they actually take: a clear majority of respondents report not using all the “sick leave” to which they entitled. That was reminiscent of the longitudinal data collected by Hackett, Bycio, and Guion (1989), in which nurses clearly identified many situations and moments in which they thought about being absent and yet still report for work. In a sense they generally held a managerial perception that absence is even may not be shared as fully by the workers.

Could it be that management has not been successful in convincing workers that absence is indeed important? Were that the case, those organizations unsatisfied with the results of their absence control strategies might consider, as an initial step, coming to grips with that issue. Those data provide some tentative suggestions as to the manner in which that can be done. It must be understood that those organizational messages which deny the reality which organizational members’ lives, were less likely to be “heard”. One of those realities must be that most employees will be absent for compelling non-work life reasons. Organizations, perhaps by instituting a programme of scheduled days-off, and publicizing its *raison d’être* could go a long way towards explicitly acknowledging that need. It would also be important for organization to contact a survey among their own members in order to ascertain the perception and knowledge which their own employees hold about the rules pertaining to absence. Armed with such diagnostic information, relative information packages might be easily assembled.

Those organizations which can, might consider the institution of flex-time. Flex-time is a demonstrably effective mechanism for reducing absence (see the matter-analysis of absence control programmes presented by Haccoun & Lemieux, 1988), as it allows workers to tend to non-work constraints without being absent. Those organizations which are unable to institute

work-time flexibility may opt for Frayne and Latham's (1987) approach which consist in teaching workers how to resist non-work pressures towards absence.

Among the other results of that study it should also be noted that workers who were unionized appear to show some differences to their non-unionized counterparts: although the differences were statistically small, unionized employees do report greater absence frequencies, and somewhat fewer consequences for absence. However, that may not necessarily be taken as an indication that unionization acts to shelter individuals from organizational retributions for absence, as the unionization effect becomes important essentially for those organizations that have less service policies. It might be the case that unionization may not provide additional protection because it was not required, but it may enshrine the policies.

Those data also help address an outstanding issue about the relationship between gender and absence. It is almost a dictum in absence research that women have higher levels of absence than men (see Steers & Rhodes, 1984, for a review). Differential sex roles (particularly vis-à-vis child-care re-possibilities), have often been invoked to justify that position. Indeed, Haccoun and Dupont (1987) have shown that women have higher levels of family-related activities during absences than man, and a recent meta-analysis of the published literature (Côté & Haccoun, 1991), showed that gender is a modest, though significant, co-variety of employee absence levels. The gender differences between absent reasons detected in this study help us interpret the meta-analytic result. Those data indicate that women report being more likely to be absent for certain reasons (e.g. child care) whereas men are more likely to be absent for reasons relating to the playing-out of traditional male roles such as dealing with accountants. This confirms independently that absence does indeed appear to be moderately controlled by non-work, as opposed to work, pressures.

The methodology used in that study was survey-based. Whereas the telephone survey procedure had the advantage of providing, at a reasonable cost, a database composed of many people working for a large diversity of organizations, it does entail some limitations. As the questionnaire was oral-directed, containing no visual components, it was essential that both the questions and the response scales be highly simplified. It was further important, to reduce the

risks of subject attrition (as was the case in the Hackett, Bycio & Guion, 1989, and Emerson, 1988, studies), that the administration time be very short. Consequently in the context of telephone surveys one was often compelled, as was the case in that study, to limit response scales to simple dichotomous choices. Moreover, the procedure limits the number of questions that can be asked. Hence, it was not possible to include all of the possible reasons or consequences for absence.

Although respondents were asked to nominate their own responses to these questions, few did. Yet it was possible that some potentially important items were excluded from the list. As it was non-traditional to ask workers directly that they speak about their absence, questions might be legitimately asked as to the validity of the questionnaire answers. Indeed, it was impossible to obtain corroborative statements to ensure validity and it was possible that the respondents would be under the influence of social desirability effects. However, those data do support information obtained independently from other research. Among those supportive studies one might mention the work of: Chadwick-Jones, Nicholson, and Brown (1982); Hammer, Landau, and Stern (1981); Morgan and Herman (1976), as well as the results reported by Haccoun and Dupont (1987); and Nicholson and Payne (1987).

The interest comes from the fact that the employees had managed to purchase their own organization such that all employees were now owners. A comparison of absence before and after the employee takeover showed that whereas absolute absence levels remained similar, the reasons reported by the employees changed. The post-takeover set of reported absence reasons closely resembled those which that study's respondents proposed. Whereas it may be tempting to refuse to believe the respondents, that would conflict with the available evidence.

7. Interaction of working conditions, job satisfaction, and sickness absences: evidence from a representative sample of employees

A study by the predictors of sickness absences among 2 800 finish workers were responding to the cross-sectional Quality of work Life Survey in 1997 The data contain detailed information on

the prevalence of adverse working conditions at the workplace from a representative sample of wage and salary earners. They show by using recursive multivariate models that the prevalence of harms at the workplace was associated with job dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with sickness absences. The policy lesson was that the improvement of working conditions should be an integral part of any scheme aimed at decreasing sickness absence.

They have examined the predictors of sickness absence and especially the effect of adverse working conditions. Their paper contributes to the literature, because they use a data set that makes it possible to model the relationship between adverse working conditions, job satisfaction, and sickness absences. Furthermore, most of the existing literature uses data from one company or a very small sample of firms. The QWLS data constitutes a representative sample of wage and salary earners, instead.

That paper shows by using recursive multivariate models that the prevalence of harms at the workplace was associated with job dissatisfaction and dissatisfaction with sickness absences. The policy lesson was that the improvement of working conditions must be an integral part of any scheme that was aimed at decreasing sickness absences. Firm-level investments in a better working environment and job satisfaction become increasingly lay important in the coming era of labour shortage in the industrialized countries, because a reduction in sickness absences would provide a considerable increase in the effective labour supply. However, when consider the government policy to improve working conditions, it was important to stress that management has strong incentives to keep absenteeism down itself, because it involves a loss of labour. One obvious problem with the improvements of working conditions was that it was not always possible, because some jobs and tasks were simply unpleasant, no matter what management did.

The potential limitations of the QWLS data were important to take into account when one interpreted the results. First there could be some tendency for employees to overstate adverse working conditions to justify their absence, because both working conditions sickness absence were self-reported. However, employees' identities were not revealed to their employers after the survey, which should reduce that particular source of bias in the answer. Second, the number

of days absent or the duration of sickness spells could sometimes be more relevant nor contain information about the duration of sickness absences captures the number of spells absence during the past 6 months, a substantial part of them were likely to be long-lasting health-related absences.

The focus on that type of absenteeism was justified, because they model the effects of job satisfaction. However, there was another strand of literature that stresses the differences between long-duration absence (e.g. Kivimaki et al., 1997, 2003; Marmont, Feeney, Shipley North, & Syme, 1995). Third, workers were not “densely” sampled from workplaces in the QWLS data. Therefore, it is possible to argue that our findings could be attributable to individual workers who were not dissatisfied with their employment, rather than adverse working conditions in some workplaces that affect all workers equivalently. The literature has stressed the impact of stable personality dispositions and transient mood state on a variety of job-related outcomes (e.g. Thoresen, Kaplan, Barsky, de Chermont, & Warren, 2003). That being said, a major strength of our data set was that it was a representative random sample of employees.

8. Leave arrangements for parents: overview and future outlook

The articles provided an overview of statutory leave arrangements in the European Union (EU), Central European countries, and Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA. It concluded with a brief review of recent parental leave research, and by considering future directions for policy and research. Paid maternity leave and paid or unpaid parental leave were then available throughout Europe-Western, Central and Eastern. Paternity leave had an increasing presence, but so far existed in only a minority of European countries. Except for Canada, leave policy in the four non – European countries lagged behind Europe. Recent policy developments in the EU have been mainly in paternity and parental leave, with an emphasis on fathers. Nearly all countries remain far behind Sweden, which has the most effective leave policy for parents. Looking ahead, there was a need to adopt a holistic approach both in research and policy, for example understanding decision-making as a complex process involving many influences and relationships and locating leave arrangement within a ‘total policy package’. Future policy

needed to move beyond a narrow focus on early parenthood to adopt a broader, life-course approach to increasing management of the use of time.

That brief review of current policies and recent developments showed a picture of complete coverage across Europe-Western, Central and Eastern of paid maternity leave and paid or unpaid parental leave. Paternity leave has an increasing presence, but so far is found only in a minority of European countries. Leave policy in non-European English-language countries lags behind Europe, with the exception of Canada. The world's largest economy, the USA had (Australia) the least developed leave policies. Regarding Europe, parental leave policies remained rather ungenerous in terms of payment exists; it was either at a low flat rate or a low proportion of normal earnings. The notable exceptions were Denmark and particularly Norway and Sweden. Flexibility was widespread and growing; in particular, options for part-time working and taking leave during a longer period of time. Recent developments, which have been mainly in paternity and parental leave and especially focused on fathers, were best seen as incremental. With the possible exception of the rather idiosyncratic UK developments, actual and proposed, no country had made major changes since 1998. Nearly all countries remained far behind Sweden, which continued to be, as the Brussels seminar concluded, the country with 'the most effective parental leave policy'. The agenda set out in our earlier book of issues to which EU member states (or other countries) needed to give consideration remains, in our view, valid: the objectives of parental leave and ensuring coherency between objectives and leave schemes; whether and how leave took account of diversity; the degree of flexibility in how leave could have be taken; and take-up by fathers (Cohen, 1999).

The research agenda put forward in the Brussels seminar and subsequent book had also been only partially realized. We were not aware of any major improvements, at national or EU levels, in statistical information, meeting the criteria then put forward that statistical information needed to be precise, up to date, large scale (to ensure the visibility of sub-groups in analysis) and comprehensive. Little attention had also been paid to information or research on parental and family diversity in attitudes to, or uses leave. We pleaded guilty on that count in that the information in our appendix did not systematically examine the extent to which leave policy recognized and accommodated various dimensions of diversity apart from gender – for example,

ethnicity, (disability of parent or child), household composition (e.g. whether one or two parents were resident, numbers and ages of children), education, or employment status. A systematic analysis of those (and other detailed aspects of the working of leave policy) would be useful. The differences emerging from Chronholm's work (that issue) between Swedish-born and other fathers' use of leave point to a whole field which research had hardly begun to explore.

One of the research agenda items – 'the use of the total "policy package" aimed at supporting different parental combinations of employment and child care' raised an important issue: the need for a holistic approach in both research and policy making, relating leave to other benefits and services. Others had emphasized the need to view leave arrangements as just one measure to cope with the challenge of combining work, care and various other activities - a necessary but by no means sufficient condition. Tijdens (2002) viewed parental leave as part of one pillar for supporting the reconciliation of employment and family life, alongside three other pillars of equality plans in legislation, in collective bargaining and in enterprises. The Council of Ministers Recommendation on Child Care (Council of Ministers, 1992), adopted by all EU member states, identified leave as one of four areas needed to enable women and men to reconcile employment and family responsibilities, alongside 'child care services', 'the environment, structure and organization of work' and greater 'sharing of responsibilities' for children between men and women.

Once again, Sweden provided a good example of 'total policy packages' in action. Paid leave lasts 16 months, including inducements to fathers to care for their children during that period, while parents were entitled to a place in a publicly funded child care service once their child was 12 months of age. The assumption, largely born out in practice, was that parents (both mothers and fathers) would be between them take 12-18 months of leave, then resume employment using their entitlement to a nursery or family day care. A holistic approach was also called for in understanding how and why men and women decided whether or not to use parental leave. That was demonstrated by Haas, Allard and Hwang (that issue) in their research on the relationship between organizational culture and fathers' use of parental leave in Sweden. While the workplace was shown to have an impact, its contribution to determining use of leave was

‘surprisingly low’ and needed to be seen as one of a number of influences which contributed to the process of decision taking:

- Future research on determinants of fathers’ use of parental leave should simultaneously focus on the relations between mothers and fathers in the family and the relations between each employed parent, their employers, and work groups.
- Ideally, such as study would follow couples longitudinally to yield a better understanding of how negotiations in families and in the workplace can affect fathers’ chances of spending more time at home caring for young children on parental leave.

National variation in policies, especially parental leave, reflected varying purposes, from encouraging mothers to stay at home through to promoting gender equity by supporting mothers’ employment. They were also inscribed with different constructions of motherhood and fatherhood, another strand that needs to be woven into a more holistic approach to researching and understanding leave policies and their use. There was an increasing appreciation of the significance of social constructions of childhood in the development of national policies: the final report of the recent OECD Thematic Review of Early Childhood Education and Care policies and provisions in 12 countries argued that ‘were embedded in cultural and social beliefs about young children... [and concluded that] key elements of successful policy needed to be discussed in light of social constructions of childhood’ (OECD, 2001, pp. 38, 135). The same could be said of leave policies: the social construction of childhood, but also fatherhood and motherhood had an important bearing on our understanding both of leave policies themselves and how and why leave policies were used. From that perspective, it was interesting and significant to see two contributions to that issue (see Haas et al.; Rostgaard) which explicitly worked with social constructionist perspectives.

There were other ways in which it might be productive for research and policy analysis to locate leave arrangements within a larger framework. One concerned the movement underway in many welfare states towards so-called ‘cash-for-care’ policies (for a fuller discussion of that policy turn, see Daly & Lewis, 1999; Van Ewijk, Hens, Lammersen & Moss, 2002; Ungerson, 1995, 1997). So far, that trend had received more attention with respect to adults, where many

countries were introducing policies that provided cash benefits to care receivers, with which they might purchase their own care rather than rely on the direct provision of care services supplied by public or private agencies. One use to which 'cash for care' was put in some countries was to enable care receivers to pay relatives to provide care that would previously have been supplied free or not supplied at all. Various arguments were used to support that policy turn, but one theme was the possibility of promoting 'informal care' (by relatives, neighbours or friends) as a means of reducing overall costs (a paid relative may cost less than a paid professional care) and to restore an 'informal care' sector which some fear was being undermined by increased employment among women of all ages.

We could see parental leave, or at least some schemes, especially those offering long periods of leave, within that wider policy context- as an attempt to resist or reverse the increasing use of formal and costly care services by supporting informal carers (i.e. mothers). Like the wider cash-for-care policy areas, there were conflicting arguments: hence the note of uncertainty in the title of our previous book- parental leaves: progress or pitfall? On the other side, it was claimed to be empowering, giving care receivers/parents more choice and subjecting them to less professional control. On the other side, there were concerns about the consequences for the carers in that situation- whether female relatives persuaded to care for elderly relatives or mothers persuaded to care for their young children over a protracted period. In both cases the concerns were the same: in practice, carers usually received poor remuneration and their long-term employment and earnings were adversely affected by prolonged withdrawal from the labour market. Overall, too, hanged the question of how viable the policy was as women's educational qualifications and employment opportunities improve. Maternal employment was strongly linked to education (see Moss & Deven, 1999, Appendix 1): the use of cash-for-care policy to pay relatives or parents might end up the preserve of a shrinking group of women with low educational attainment and precariously linked to the labour market.

Finally, maternity, paternity and parental leave merged again as one relatively small, if important, part of a larger policy issue: the use of time over the life course. Statutory leave entitlements, with a few exceptions, were focused on just one short period of the life course: the early years of parenthood. In addition to protecting mother and infant health, they were intended

to give women and men more control over their use of time during that period. There was no standardized equation for when and how men and women might experience conflict between 'employment' and family responsibilities' or indeed other 'non-work' time demands: those will be affected by individual differences in identity and values, as well as differing structural conditions in employment and family life (Thompson & Bunderson, 2001). Recognition of such individual circumstances and desire should act as an incentive, rather than an obstacle, to the development of a broader policy to empower people in their use of time across their lives and which recognized the many uses of time which made for a good life- not only care (giving and receiving), and employment, but also education, culture, recreation, relationships and so on.

In that respect, the Belgian 'time credit' system which replaced the previous 'career break' system in 2002 might be considered an innovative policy development in Europe. Compared to the past, it had a broader scope and bear the potential to open up the possibility to reduce working hours or to interrupt their employment altogether for some period of time, linked to job security and some form of benefit or social wage. Available throughout working life, it was no longer designed as a policy measure to tackle rising unemployment (e.g. the former obligation in the career break system for employers to accept a previously unemployed worker as replacement) or limited to specific reasons. It was made available alongside more specific leave arrangements such as parental leave sense structure. Such a system could provide the basis for a flexible labour market that worked in the interests not only of employers but also of individuals, families and communities.

9. Newly delivered women's evaluation of personal health status and attitudes towards sickness absence and social benefits

Unexpectedly high rates of sickness absence have been observed among pregnant women. No clear medical causes for illnesses reported as the basic for sick leave have yet been identified with certainty. An explanation proposed was the pregnant women's own attitudes towards their own states of well being during pregnancy. The aim of that study was to investigate the validity of that hypothesis. All of the 384 women who were delivered at the University Hospital during a 2 months period were asked to answer a questionnaire anonymously. Information was sought

concerning sickness absence and the use of parental benefits. In addition, questions were asked about working conditions and about each mother's own estimate of her level of 'well being'.

The women's attitudes towards work absence due to illness and towards social benefit programs were registered. Forty-three per cent of the women stated that they had been on sick leave during pregnancy. The main reason for sick leave was reported back pain. Seventy-four per cent of the women who were on sick leave stated, nevertheless, that they had been in 'good' or 'excellent' health during pregnancy. Of the 149 women who did not take sick leaves, 10 reported being in 'bad' or 'very bad' health during pregnancy. 4.3% of the women stated that they had considered themselves to be ill due to an obstetric condition. In addition to actual disease and severe discomfort, certain social conditions and attitudes as well, were likely to explain the increase of pregnant women on sick leave.

10. Motivation Theories

From the discussions in this study, it is important that employees in every organization/institution need to be somehow motivated. The author therefore saw the necessity of studying and linking certain motivation theories to the information gathered.

10.1 Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The most well known theory of motivation is Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This theory was developed as early as the 1950's. He hypothesized that in every human being there is a hierarchy of five needs: namely:-

- **Physiology:** indicates need for food, water, shelter, sex and elimination.
- **Safety:** in order for one to survive, he / she need security and protection from physical and emotional harm.

- **Social:** in every given situation, one needs to belong to a certain group and be accepted. Under normal circumstances, a person needs friendship and affection to satisfy his/ her inner most. Lack of these needs, will leave a person incomplete and disillusioned.
- **Esteem:** self-respect, autonomy and achievement, leaves one's internal esteem boosted. Therefore it becomes automatic for the external esteem factors to take cognizance and results in one's status, recognition and attention noticed.
- **Self- actualization:** every one has the drive to become what he / she is capable of becoming: and these include growth, achievement of one's potential and self- fulfillment. According to Maslow, if one needs to motivate another person, he/ she need to know and understand what level of the hierarchy that person is currently on and concentrating on the need that is lacking. Managers therefore need to know about this theory so that they can be able to motivate their subordinates especially those who have the tendency of absenting themselves from work.

10.2 Douglas McGregor's Theory X

Another theory, which is relevant in this research study, is the theory of Douglas McGregor. He had two different views on human beings, that is: Theory X (negative individual) and Y (positive one). From the discussion in this study, McGregor has certain assumptions viewed by managers namely:

- That there are employees who dislike work, and create an opportunity to avoid it by all means.
- Also that those employees must be controlled and threatened with punishment to achieve organizational goals.
- McGregor viewed those employees as irresponsible.
- That most workers would place security above all other things associated with work and display very little interest and ambition.

All the above items confirm discussions in this study, and are the reason why the research study was conducted.

10.3 Frederick Herzberg's Hygiene Theory

Frederick Herzberg in his arguments believed that an individual's relation to his / her work is a basic one: and that his/ her attitude toward this work can determine motivation, are at opposite ends of the scale, and therefore if managers need to motivate employees, one must not only introduce job satisfaction factors alone, but also eliminate the hygienic factors. This is also indirectly to leave especially as a result of sick. The researcher in the study, therefore agrees with Herzberg that most factors related to job dissatisfaction contribute to improper use of sick leave in a way.

11 Conclusion

Leave administration benefits and their practices are discussed fully in this chapter. Leave management, employee attendance monitoring and compliance with leave policy are also discussed. Various sources of opinions are discussed where some authors like Megginson suggests that sick leave must be controlled and disciplinary action be taken if abused. The reasons why sick leave problems are common in the workplace give a pictured of how other authors discussed the problem. Also the reasons why personnel sometimes find themselves guilty of being absent from work due to minor excuses was summarily indicate. It has been found that some personnel regard sick leave as an extra time off or free time to attend personal needs. Some authors like Booyens, found that the regular absentee would use maximum sick leave days and still complain of aches and pains. Some may even result in burnout.

The chapter also shortly touched on the causes of absenteeism as personnel, organization, attitudinal and social factors. Reasons of absenteeism were also discussed. Leave is an aspect of management which is not easy to control. Personnel do not comply with the requirement laid down by law, and this is why all personnel must be informed about this during an induction program in an institution. Three theories are also studied to link certain motivation to the

information gathered. Proper records must be kept to make sure that certain numbers of leave days are not lost along the way for future references. The next chapter examines the methods used for collection of data.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1. Introduction

For the purpose of this study, quantitative method has been used to map out the main issues in the field of study under discussion. The context in which and the purpose for which collection of data took place, would be clearly spelled out in this chapter. This would be done to ensure that all relevant information is gathered comprehensively and objectively. A questionnaires and interviews will also be used as the methods of collecting data.

Both questionnaire and structure interview were designed and used to gather facts about leave absenteeism by personnel in the Seotlong Education Circuit.

2. Research Design

Mouton (1996: 108) mentions that research design is basically a set of guidelines and instructions on how to reach the goal that the researcher has set for himself. These guidelines and instructions should be followed in addressing the research problem. According to Babbie and Mouton (2005: 104), a research design is different from research methodology in the sense that “research methodology refers to methods, techniques, and procedures that are employed in the process of implementing the research design or research plan”.

A research design consists of a plan that allows the researcher to test the validity of his/her hypothesis or answers to his or her questions, taking into account the factors that he or she believes might affect the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. It is simply the way that the researcher proposes to go about testing the hypotheses or answering the research question. Singleton and straits (2004).

The research designs constitute the blue-print for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Cooper and Schindler (1998: 130). For this study, the quantitative – descriptive design was

used. Fouche and De Vos (2001: 67) stated that quantitative – descriptive designs are often of a more quantitative nature, requiring questionnaires as a data collection method.

The research procedure or design may be described as the general form or system according to which the study is executed (Colliers, 1965:57). It refers not only to the manner in which data is obtained in conjunction with operational decisions about the preferred sources of data, but also to the manner in which the research procedure or design may be described as the general form or system according to which the study is executed (Colliers, 1965:57). It also refers to the manner in which data is arranged in order to yield findings, in conjunction with strategic decisions about a mode of explanation. Simon (1969:8) supports this by stating that the design of a piece of research must depend upon the particular purpose that the research is intended to serve. The researcher must know what he/she wants to find and why? At the level of the design and methodology, indeed what was intended is described in chapter one in the form of aims and objectives of the study and such assisted in the design of the study following Simon's articulation as denoted above.

Another continuum along which research designs are categorized is time-orientation of a project. If data collection is focused at a single point in time, a study is cross-sectional in nature, if the same respondents or subjects are observed at several points in time then design is said to be longitudinal (Bruce, Bahr & Albrecht, 1984:33). The cross sectional elements apply to the study in that the design was time-bound and it was not longitudinal. As with many of the design continuation, there is a composite or compromise type of design, the retrospective, in which respondents questioned at a single point in time attempt to reconstruct their actions at various earlier times. This study has a retrospective design, the respondents will be questioned, at single point and their actions/answers/views will be compared later.

3. Research Method

Babbie and Mouton (2005: 104) mentioned that a research methodology refers to methods, techniques, and procedures that are employed in the process of implementing the research design or research plan.

Hence the research methodology that will be applied is a descriptive research. White (2004: 62) describes the descriptive research as non-experimental quantitative research method and is concerning with conditions or relationships that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs, points of view, or attitudes that are held, processes that are going on, effects that are being felt, or trends that are developing. This study is relevant to descriptive research since it focuses on the beliefs and attitudes of employees, practices that prevail and the trends that are developing on leave and absence administration of the Human Resource Unit of the Seotlong Education Circuit.

In the view of Van As and Van Schalkwyk (2001: 59), quantitative research deals with things that can be counted. It often uses statistical manipulations of numbers to process data and summaries results. According to Brynard & Hanekom, (1997: 28), research methodology or method of collecting data, necessitates a reflection on the planning, structure and execution research in order to comply with the demands of truth, objectivity and validity.

Babbie and Mouton (2005: 104) are of view of research methodology refers to the methods, techniques and procedures that are employed in the process of implementing a research design or research plan. An exploratory method is applied in the design of the study. An exploratory study according to Babbie & Mouton (2005: 80), the study sometimes called a pilot study, is undertaken when a researcher wants to satisfy his / her curiosity or desire for better understanding, or when she/ he wants to test the feasibility of undertaking a more careful study, or to develop the methods to be employed in a more careful study. According to Babbie, (1992: 90-91), and Babbie & Mouton,(2005: 80), the main shortcoming of exploratory studies is that they seldom provide satisfactory answers to research questions. However, they hint at possible answers and provide insight into appropriate research methods that could provide answers.

4. Population

The word population or universe is used in the marketing research in its statistical sense, and refers to all people who contain variables in which research has an interest (Webb, 1992: 27).

Any group of individuals or objects that share common characteristics and represent the whole or sum total of cases involved in a study is called the population (Van As and Van Chalky, 2000: 137).

According to Bless and Smith (1995: 85), population is further defined as the entire set of objects and events or group of people which are objects of researcher about what researcher wants to determine some characteristics.

The population of this study is all the employees of Seotlong Education Circuit, including teaching and non-teaching personnel.

4.1. Target Population

The target population is the population to which the researcher would like to generalize his or her results to define the target population; one must keep in mind the scope of the planned generalization; and the practical requirements of drawing a sample (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 179). There are two defining characteristics that are always implicitly or explicitly part of the target population: geographic and time referents. Geographic referent refers to clear geographic boundaries of the study (e.g. Southern Africa, South Africa, Western Cape Province, and City of Johannesburg). Time refers to the distinctive time frame of the study (e.g. apartheid era, post-apartheid era, fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2005, 2004 academic year).

The second step is to construct a sampling frame. The sampling frame denotes the set of all cases from which the sample is actually selected. A sampling frame can also be defined as a list or quasi list elements from which a probability sample is selected (Babbie and Mouton, 2001: 184).

The target population of this research project consists of (268) of all non-teaching and teaching personnel of Seotlong Education Circuit. These personnel are expected to deliver quality service in terms of leave administration in their circuit. All of these personnel are included in the study.

5. Sample Size and Design

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001: 202) the main purpose of sampling is to make generalizations to people and events that have not been observed. They define as a “specific subset of a population observed in order to make inferences about the nature of the total population itself”.

Strydom (2005: 194) mentioned that the most important reason for sampling is feasibility. It is often too costly and impractical to study an entire population and researchers make use of sampling to save time and resources.

Out of 268 personnel of Seotlong Circuit, including teaching and non-teaching, 216 were issued with questionnaires. Interviews were conducted and only school principals and administrative clerks were asked questions pertaining to the problems through simple random sampling method (A total of 10, 5 from 18 school principals, representing teaching personnel, and 5 from 30 administrative clerks, representing non-teaching personnel).

The quality of a sample must be judged in terms of the procedure that produced it; that is, in terms of its sampling design. According to Burger and Silima (2006: 658), sampling design refers to the part of the research plan that indicates how cases are to be selected for observation. Sampling design is generally divided into two broad classes, namely, probability and non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling design has been used for the study. According to Babbie and Mouton, a basic principle of probability sampling is that a sample will be representative of the population from which it is selected if all members of the population have an equal chance of being selected in the sample (2001: 173). It has several advantages including the following:

- It removes the possibility that bias on the part of the researcher will enter into the selection of cases.

- By virtue of random selection, the laws of mathematical probability may be applied to estimate the accuracy of the sample.
- With probability sampling, one knows to which population the sample may be generalized, as well as the limits of generalisability.

Probability sampling designs are commonly associated with quantitative research, where the emphasis is on the quantification of constructs. There are several probability sampling designs that are available to the researcher, namely, simple random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling, and cluster sampling.

The defining property of a simple random sample is that every possible combination of cases has an equal chance of being included in the sample. For example, in a population of four cases, numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, there are six possible samples of sizes two: (1,2); (1,3); (1,4); (2,3); (2,4); and (3,4).

A simple random sampling method was used to ensure validity and reliability of results. The identified categories of personnel (school principals and administrative clerks, were selected randomly by means of using small pieces of papers with all the names of principals and clerks in the circuit.

The small pieces of principal names were mixed together in their own tin and select five names randomly to represent teaching personnel and the same process was done for clerks to select five names randomly to represent non-teaching personnel.

The sampling unit is the individual element or person that, when combined with other elements or persons makes up a total population to be studied (Mendehall, Ott & Sheaffer, and 1971:89). The sampling units may be groups of individuals, families, clubs, schools, classes, census, areas, organizations, companies, base ball teams, city, governments, books, media programs, cars on a free way, minutes in a hour and so on. According to Zikmud, (1994; 62), sampling is the method in which the researcher determines who to participate in the research within the parameters of the acceptable statistical significances. Kerlinger (1986:110) further defines sampling as taking any

portion of a population or universe as representatives of that population or universe. It involves any procedure that uses a part of the population to make a conclusion regarding the whole population.

Sampling method was utilized for interview where ten respondents were selected randomly (5 principals plus 5 clerks).

6 Data Collection Method

6.1 Questionnaire Method

A questionnaire with both closed and open-ended questions was used as the main method of collecting data. Questionnaires were distributed and collected within three days to avoid loss of information. They were designed and used to gather facts about leave of absence by personnel in the Circuit. The method was used to get to the roots of the problems with minimal bias.

Structured and unstructured questionnaires were used to advance the quantitative nature of the study. Baxter et al (2001:15) see a questionnaire as one of the widely used social research techniques because they seem to be such obvious strategy for finding answers to the issues that interest the researcher.

In essence, questionnaire can be regarded as a way of getting data from people by asking questions in written form, rather than watching them behave in a manner that will only impress a researcher. The questionnaire compiled included a cover letter, brief instruction on how to complete the questionnaire, a clearly defined space for the respondent to register answers and for the respondent to comment freely (expand on his/her answer) respectively (Baxter, 1988:178). The questionnaire is attached in appendix.

The questionnaires were distributed to (216) non-teaching and teaching personnel in the Seotlong Education Circuit of Greater Sekhukhune Education District. The questionnaire was self-administered as it was not administered through the post. The advantages of self-administered

questionnaire ranged from the fact that the interviewer benefited from defined advantages associated with self-administered questionnaire. Misunderstandings and misinterpretations of words or questions were clarified where they prevailed. All questions had to be completed in a way that the researcher was able to safe-guard against uncompleted questions of the questionnaire. The rights of the human subjects were not physically or psychologically abused. The respondents had the right to privacy and that it was not required of the respondents to indicate their personal information.

As mentioned earlier there are two types of questionnaires, structured and unstructured questionnaire, the structured questionnaires consist of clear-cut response option and the unstructured questionnaires are questions that offer the respondents an opportunity to expand on their answers, to express their feelings, motives or behavior (Rosenthal & Ronsow, 1984:130). According to Van as et. al (2001:95) when open questions are used, respondents are encouraged to comment freely on the topic that has been put to them. Open questions (unstructured questions) are used in particular to find reasons for specific respondents opinions, whereas, structured questionnaires or closed-ended questionnaires were designed to elicit information from the respondent. Closed questions (Structured as multiple-choice questions) are questions containing specific, mutually exclusive response categories from which the respondent must select a category from which best fits his/ her response/ answer.

In the other words, the questions are phrased in such a way that the respondents are guided by or requested to choose an answer from among two or more specifically stated answer alternatives.

6.1.1. Reasons for Questionnaire for employment

Granted that questionnaires are difficult to construct and administer, and coupled with the logistics experienced with the respondents in completing a reliable and timeout return, questionnaires have the following:

- They are probably the most convenient method of collecting information.
- Their administration is viable.

- They are accessible to the target.
- They can be analyzed; the analytical advantage is presupposed by expertise design.
- The confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents promote frank and reliable responses.
- Equivocal responses from the respondents to the questionnaire items illuminate problems. The employee is then able to rephrase the questions in order to evince correct and unambiguous information supply towards the solution of the problem.

6.1.2. Questionnaire Format

The questionnaire consists of three sections, namely, A.B. and C

Section A: Question 1-5 is about demographic information.

Section B. Question 1-5 offers statements evaluating the responses and used the 5-point scale as follow:

SD = Strong disagree and be allocated 1 and it is for NO

D = Disagree and be allocated 2 and is for NO

N = Neutral and be allocated 3 and is for NON of NO or YES

A = Agree and be allocated 4 and is for YES

SA= Strong agree and be allocated 5 and is for YES

Questions 16 and 17 state the most important types of problems and obstacles encountered with leave administration, and suggestions and recommendations to improve the administration of leave respectively”

Section C consists of YES OR NO question types, and furnishing the reasons or causes of absence from work, and also giving suggestions to solve the absenteeism problem.

6.1.3. Procedure

The researcher visited the institutions /schools forming the Seotlong Education Circuit. He had handed over the questionnaires to institutions/ schools managers who distributed them to the personnel. This opportunity helped the researcher to provide any assistance necessary.

The institution/school managers collected questionnaires from personnel and delivered them to circuit office where the researcher had to collect them after three days to avoid the loss of information.

Two hundred-and-sixteen questionnaires were distributed to personnel. Hundred and one questionnaires returned. Only ninety one questionnaires were completed. Therefore, the researcher was working out of a total of ninety one questionnaires.

6.2 Interview Method

A structured interview was used as a data collection technique. A structured interview is an interview where the respondent is visited by an interviewer that reads the questions from a questionnaire to him or her and reads the questions used (Jarbandhan & Schutte 2006: 676). The interviewer is usually instructed to ask the question as exactly as it is formulated. This is how the researcher takes maximum control (structures) over the respondent's frame of reference when responses to questions, or responses to open-ended questions where respondents are allowed to think within specific parameters when they respond. i.e. how would you describe your work environment?

According to Wardwick & Lininger (1995: 182), an interview is a form of verbal interaction designed to obtain information satisfying the objectives of a particular study. They further state that the purpose of the interview is to collect data from the respondents through contact

communication between the interviewer and respondents. In the context of this research, the structured interviews were conducted during January and February 2010. Respondents were introduced to the research problem and different meanings of the words were explained to them. Interview activities were recorded progressively.

The respondents were interviewed face to face because this interview was conducted in a relaxed atmosphere and was chosen as one of data collection method because of its advantage.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher himself. Interview letters were distributed among the respondents. The respondents were being explained about the purpose of being interviewed and given chance to ask questions if misunderstanding occurs. The respondents were informed that their responses were anonymous and their names would not be disclosed in public. Furthermore, it was clarified that the information they provide is confidential. It is only between the researcher and the respondents concerned.

The interviews took almost twenty minutes with each respondents and maximum cooperation was obtained from the respondents.

7. Data analysis method

Data analysis entails the researcher breaks down data into consistent parts to obtain answers to the research questions (De Vos & Fouche, 2001:203). As a result of the quantitative approach followed, the analysis and interpretation of the data was done by way of deductive reasoning, beginning with the research questions and moving towards finding answers to it.

As mentioned the pre-structured questionnaire consisted of both open-and-close ended questions (numeric data), while the data was entered in the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS Version 17). The scores were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics.

8. Conclusion

The research project was conducted at the Seotlong Circuit of Greater Sekhukhune Education District. The study informed us on how, where and when data was collected, and how research design and methodology were conducted. An exploratory research design was employed quantitatively. The elements to form a representative sample of N= 100 out of the total population of N= 268 personnel. The area of study was indicated, population and target group and sampling method, size and procedure were identified. Both structured and unstructured questionnaires were distributed. The questionnaires were collected from respondents after three days. Hundred and one questionnaires were returned but only ninety one were completed. Structured interviews were conducted and responses were noted.

CHAPTER FOUR : DATA ANALYSIS

1 Introduction

In this chapter the findings on the data collected from the Seotlong Education Circuit, including teaching and non-teaching personnel were discussed at length. As a results of the quantitative approach followed, the analysis and interpretation of the data was done by way of deductive reasoning, beginning with the research questions and moving towards finding answers to it.

2 Findings from Collected Data

This data has been collected by using questionnaire and interview methods from teaching and non-teaching personnel of the Seotlong Education Circuit as follows:

2.1 Questionnaire Method

2.1.1 Section A: Demographic Information

2.1.1.1 Gender

GENDER	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Male	35	38.46%
Female	56	61.54%

The above results showed that thirty five (38.46 %) of the respondents were male and fifty six (50.96%) female. This implies that the majority, 61.54%, of personnel in the Seotlong Circuit were female.

2.1.1.2 Age distribution in years:

AGES	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
18 – 25	0	0 %

26 – 35	4	4.39 %
36 - 45	23	25.27 %
46 – 55	50	54.94 %
56 – 60	12	13.18 %
60 - Older	2	2.19 %

The above results showed that four (4.39%) of the respondents were between 26 – 35 of age, twenty three (25.27%) were between 36 – 45, fifty (54.94%) were between 46 – 55, twelve (13.18%) were between 56 – 60, two (2.19%) were 60 and above. This implies that the majority, 54.94% of personnel were between 46-55 of age.

2.1.1.3 Marital Status:

MARITAL STATUS	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Single	5	5.49 %
Married	71	78.02 %
Widow	9	9.89 %
Divorce	3	3.29 %
Blank	3	3.29 %

The above results showed that five (5.49%) of the respondents were single, seventy one (78.02 %) married, nine (9.89%) widowers, three (3.29%) divorcees. This implies that the majority, 78.02%, of personnel were married.

2.1.1.4 Academic qualification:

ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION	NUMER	PERCENTAGE
Less than matric	2	2.19 %
Matric	4	4.39 %
Diploma	38	41.75 %

First degree	33	36.26 %
Honours degree	11	12.08 %
Master degree	1	1.09 %
Doctorate	0	0.00 %
Others (Unattended)	2	2.19%

The above results showed that two (2.19 %) of the respondents had not passed matric, four (4.39%) matric thirty eight (41.75 %) diploma, thirty three (36.26 %) first degree, eleven (12.08%) honours degree. This implies that the majority, 41.75%, of personnel had diploma qualifications.

2.1.1.5 Current position held.

CURRENT POSITION	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Manager	9	9.90 %
Deputy Manager	2	2.20 %
Teacher	71	78.02 %
Admin Clerk	4	4.38 %
HOD	2	2.20 %
Cleaner	1	1.10 %
Spoof Assistance	1	1.10 %
Other ECD	1	1.10%

The above results showed that nine (9.90%) of the respondents were managers, two (2.20%) deputy managers , seventy one (78.02%) teachers, four (4.38 %) admin clerks, two (2.20%) HODs, one (1.10%) Sports assistant and one (1.10%) EDC. This implies that the majority, 78.02%, were teachers.

2.1.2 Section B: The satisfaction levels and perceptions of employees at work.

This section, from question 1 to 15 offers statements evaluating responses, scaled as:

SD = Strong disagree

D= Disagree

N=Neutral

A=Agree

SA=Strong agree

The s-point scale shall read as follows:

Strong disagree and disagree be allocated 1 and 2 respectively and they are NO. Neutral shall be allocated 3 and it is for those who cannot rate for one of the other four points (items) and it is for NEUTRAL and agree and strongly agree shall be allocated 4 and 5 respectively, and they are for YES.

2.1.2.1” The Human Resource Management Unit in the Seotlong Circuit is always accessible”

SCALE	NO.	PERCENTAGE
SD	7	7.70 %
D	15	16.48 %
N	33	36.26 %
A	28	30.76 %
SA	6	6.60 %
Unattended	2	2.20 %

The above results indicated that 7.70% were strongly disagreed, 16.48% were disagreed, 36.26% were neutral, 30.76% were agreed, 6.60% were strongly agreed and 2.20% were unattended. This implies that the majority, 36.26% were neutral which means they were either disagreed or agreed with statement said the HRM Unit in Seotlong Circuit is always accessible.

2.1.2.2” The personnel of the Human Resource Management Unit always treat people in a Courteous and respectful manner”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	7	7.70 %
D	11	12.08 %
N	26	28.57 %
A	36	39.56 %
SA	10	10.99 %
Unattended	1	1.10 %

The above results indicated that 7.70% were strongly disagreed, 12.08% were disagreed, 28.57% were neutral, 39.56% were agreed, 10.99% were strongly agreed and 1.10% were unattended. This implies that the majority, 39.56 were agreed with the statement said the personnel of the HRM Unit always treat people in a courteous and respectful.

2.1.2.3 The personnel of the Human Resource Management are knowledgeable, effective and competent.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	5	5.50 %
D	14	15.38 %
N	29	31.86 %
A	36	39.56 %
SA	6	6.60 %
Unattended	1	1.10 %

The above results indicated that 5.50% were strongly disagreed, 15.38% were disagreed, 31.86% were neutral, 39.56 were agreed, 6.60% were strongly agreed and 1.10% were unattended. This implies that the majority, 39.56% agreed that the personnel of the HRM were knowledgeable, effective and competent.

2.1.2.4 “My leave application is always processed timely and accurately”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	9	9.89 %
D	12	13.18 %
N	32	35.16 %
A	32	35.16 %
SA	6	6.59 %

The above results indicated that 9.89% were strongly disagreed, 13.18% were disagreed, 35.16% were neutral, 35.16% were agreed, 6.59% were strongly agreed. This implies that the majority, 35.16% + 6.59% were supporting the statement said leave applications are always processed timely and accurately.

2.1.2.5 “The personnel of the Human Resource Management is always willing to provide me with advice and counseling services”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	11	12.08 %
D	17	18.68 %
N	28	30.76 %
S	32	35.16 %
SA	3	3.29 %

The above results indicated that 12.08% were strongly agreed, 18.68% were disagreed, 30.76% were neutral, 30.76% were agreed and 3.29% were strongly agree. This implies that the majority 35.16% were agreed that the personnel of the HRM is always willing to provide with advice and counseling services.

2.1.2.6” My leave administration record is always updated and correct”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	4	4.39 %
D	18	19.78 %
N	29	31.86 %
A	28	30.76 %
SA	12	13.18 %

The above results indicated that 4.39% were strongly disagreed, 19.78% were disagreed, 31.86% were neutral, 30.76% were agreed and 13.18% were strongly agreed. This implies that the majority 30.76% + 13.18%, was supporting the statement said leave administration records are always updated and correct.

2.1.2.7 “The personnel of the Human Resource Management respond quickly to complaints about leave application problems.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	8	8.79 %
D	17	18.68 %
N	39	42.85 %
A	23	25.27 %
SA	4	4.39 %

The above results indicated that 8.79% were strongly disagreed, 18.68% were disagreed, 42.85% were neutral, 25.27% were agreed and 4.39% were strongly agreed. This result indicated that it is doubtful weather the personnel of HRM respond quickly to complaints about leave application problems.

2.1.2.8 “The personnel of the Human Resource Management does a good job of following through and fixing leave related problems”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	5	5.49 %
D	16	17.58 %
N	40	43.95 %
A	24	26.37 %
SA	6	6.59 %

The above results indicated that 5.49% were strongly disagreed, 17.58% were disagreed, 43.95% were neutral, 26.37% were agreed and 6.59% were strongly agreed. This implies that the majority 26.37% + 6.59% were supporting the statement said the personnel of the HRM does a good job of following through and fixing leave related problems.

2.1.2.9 “I always complete a leave form before I go on leave”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	3	3.29 %
D	15	16.48 %
N	24	26.37 %
A	26	28.57 %
SA	22	24.17 %
Spoiled	1	1.09 %

The above results indicated that 3.29% were strongly disagreed, 16.48% disagreed, 26.37% were neutral, 28.57% were agreed, 24.17% were strongly agreed and 1,09% were spoiled. This implies that the majority, 28.57% were always completed leave forms before they went on leave.

2.1.2.10” I always ensure that my leave application is recommended and approved by my supervisor”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	1	1.09 %
D	3	3.29 %
N	8	8.79 %
A	49	53.84 %
SA	30	32.96 %

The above results indicated that 1.09% were strongly disagreed, 3.29% were disagreed, 8.79% were neutral, 53.84% were agree and 32.96 were strongly agreed. This implies that the majority, 53.84% were agreeing to ensure that always their leave applications were recommended and approved by their supervisors.

2.1.2.11 “I always ensure that relevant evidence is attached to my leave application where it is needed”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	1	1.09 %
D	1	1.09 %
N	2	2.19 %
A	46	50.54 %
SA	41	45.05 %

The above results indicated that 1.09% were strongly disagreed, 1.09% were disagreed, 2.19% were neutral, 50.54% were agreed and 45.05% were strongly agreed. This implies that the

majority, 50.54% were agreed to ensure that relevant evidence was always attached to their leave applications where it was needed.

2.1.2.12 “Overall, I am very satisfied with the leave administration service provided by the Human Resource Management Unit”.

SCALE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
SD	10	10.98%
D	12	13.18%
N	26	28.57%
A	30	32.96%
SA	13	14.28%

The above results indicated that 10.98% were strongly disagreed, 13.18% were disagreed, 28.57% were neutral, 32.96% were agreed and 14.28% were strongly agreed. This implies that the majority, 32.96% were satisfied with the leave administration service provided by the HRM Unit.

2.1.2.13” State in your own words what were the most important types of problems and obstacles you encountered with leave administration in Seotlong Circuit”

- Delay of leaves to reach the district office where they are captured.
- Delay of leaves to be captured at the district office.
- Incompleted leave forms are submitted to district office.
- Irrelevant attachments are attached to leave forms.
- Leave record is sometimes not updated on the salary advice.
- Sometimes no responses to leave applications.
- Recommendations for leave are sometimes bias.
- Sometimes some admin-clerks buy favours from applicants when leave without pay is to be executed and nothing occurs.
- Some of admin-clerks need to be workshopped/ trained about leave related matters.
- Some institutions/schools do not submit leave forms.

- Some personnel misuse leave of less than three days.

2.1.2.14 Responses towards the question “What suggestions and recommendations can you provide to improve the administration of leave in Seotlong Circuit”?

- Through record keeping.
- Encouraging personnel not to misuse leave credit, in particular sick leave of less than three days from profile.
- Have print-out record of leave for all personnel you supervise.
- Well completed leave forms and attachments where they are needed must be submitted by employees when they go on leave.
- Check sick note authenticity when employees go on sick leave.
- Workshop personnel about leave matters.
- Absenteeism and leave forms must be submitted every Friday.
- Effective supervisor and management are the solution or remedy.

2.1.3 Section C: The most important reasons/causes for the absence from work.

2.1.3.1 “I am aware of new leave legislation on leave of absence in the Public Service”

YES	NO	UNATTENDED
58 (63.73%)	26 (28.57%)	7 (7.69%)

The above results indicated that the majority of respondents, namely fifty eight (63.73%) were aware of new leave legislation on leave of absence in the Public Service.

2.1.3.2 “Response to the question “In your opinion, is 36 days of normal sick leave in a three-year cycle sufficient”?”

YES	NO	UNATTENDED

38 (41.75 %)	46 (50.54 %)	7(7.69 %)
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The majority of the respondents, namely, forty six (50.54%) indicated that 36 days was not sufficient in three-year cycle.

**2.1.3.3” Response to the question “If ever there was possibility of increasing or reducing the number of sick leave days in a cycle, what would you suggest”?
(Please give reasons).**

The above mentioned question was not answered as the researcher had expected. The aim was to indicate if ever there were possibilities in increasing or reducing the days of sick leave in a cycle of three-years. It should be followed by the number of days that had suggested to increasing or reducing sick leave in a three-year cycle.

The majority (80%) of the respondents indicated that 36 days of normal sick leave in a three – year cycle could be increased to 45,60,72,90,108 and 120.

The following reasons were given:-

- Sick leave days are not enough in case a person is involved in an accident.
- In terms of serious illnesses caused by HIV/AIDS.
- People who are chronically ill need more time to rest and thus they find themselves heaving used all days including capped credits.
- 36 days are too little especially if one undergoes a major operation. He/she needs time to recover fully before coming to work.

2.1.3.4 Response to the question “Up to the end of last week how many weeks have you been continuously absent from work?”

RESPONDENT	WEEKS	PERCENTAGE
68	Nil	74.72%
6	1	6.59%

3	2	3.29%
1	3	1.09%
13	Unattended	14.28%

The majority of the respondents, namely, sixty eight (74.72%) had not been continuously absent from work one week, three (3.29%) for two weeks, one (1.09%) for three weeks and thirteen (14.28%) were unattended.

2.1.3.5” For the past twelve months, indicate if you were absent from work for any of the following reasons or causes”

The following were the reasons or causes for absent from work for the past twelve months:-

- Minor illnesses such as colds, flu, stomach upsets headaches and migraines
- Stress
- Home/family responsibilities
- Back pain
- Recurring medical conditions such as asthma, angina and allergies
- Injuries / accidents not related to work
- Work-related injuries/ accidents
- Mental health such as depression and anxiety
- Maternity leave
- Off-the job training
- Bad weather
- Labour dispute / Lock out
- Transport problems
- Tiredness.
- Work overload.
- To engage in sports
- To attend a sporting event

- Poor supervision and management

2.1.3.6 Response to the question “In your view, what are the main causes of absenteeism among personnel in Seotlong Circuit”.

- Transport problem caused by travelling long distance to workplace
- Home/family responsibilities
- Drunkenness or Alcohol Abuse
- Poverty caused by financial problem
- Overwork/Overload caused by under staff
- Poor supervision and management
- Laziness and lack of commitment to work
- Pay-day sickness, especially on Friday
- Personal (Employee) Studies

2.1.3.7 “Response to the question “what are your suggestions on what could be done to solve absenteeism problems in Seotlong Circuit”?”

The suggestions on what could be done to solve absenteeism problems in Seotlong Circuit are as follows:

- Encourage cross-transfer for personnel to work near home
- Implement Employee Assistance Programme at workplace
- Appoint more staff to relieve exhaustion and stress
- Motivation for staff
- Personnel need information to avoid abuse of leave, especially sick leave
- Unused sick leave credits to be carried forward or be paid as bonus
- Effective supervision and management

2.2 Interview Method

2.2.1 Section A

2.2.1.1 Response to the question “How best do you think leave could be managed?”

- Through record keeping.
- Through encouraging personnel not to misuse days.
- Have leave form profile.
- Check sick note authenticity for sick leave.
- Have print-out record of leave for all personnel you supervised.
- Correctly completed leave forms.

2.2.1.2 Reasons given for the question “Why should one keep a record of leave?”

- For control purposes
- For purpose of supervision
- To give counseling for sick leave
- For monitoring absenteeism
- For reference into correct control
- Able to manage absenteeism
- For prevention of leave absence, especially sick leave
- Determining leave patterns

2.2.1.3 Response to the question “Which leave type is taken frequently by personnel?”

- Many (60%) respondents said sick leave, especially of less than three days
- Few (40%) respondents said family responsibility

2.2.1.4 Response to the question “What are the main causes of leave of absence in Seotlong Circuit?”

- Flu
- Social problems
- Workload or Exhaustion
- Backaches
- Chronic illnesses

2.2.1.5 Suggestions on what one thinks could be done to solve leave problems were: -

- Appointment of more staff
- Increase salary to prevent stress and other related illnesses
- People need information to avoid abuse of leave
- Unused days to be carried forward.
- Personnel need to be motivated
- Consultation of personnel before any legislation could be implemented

2.2.1.6 Response to the question “Are you and other staff members aware of “Determination on Leave of Absence in the Public Service of 2005” with regard to leave administration?”

Many (65%) respondents indicated that they do not know of “Determination” whereas Few (35%) indicated that they know of “Determination” although they failed to give supportive reasons for that.

2.2.1.7 Response to the question “In your opinion is 36 days of normal sick leave in a three years-cycle sufficient?”

70% respondents’ indicated that 36 days is not enough for the following reasons:

- 36 days is too little especially if one undergoes a major operation, he/she needs time to recover fully before coming back to work
- People that are chronically ill need more rest and thus they find themselves having used all days including capped vacation credits
- Considering the high rate of hospitalization due to diseases caused by HIV/AIDS

30% respondents' indicated that 36 days was not enough for the following reasons:

- Those who exceed 36 days, a motivation letter is written for one to utilize capped days
- For control over utilization of sick leave is assured, and if not enough, application for temporary incapacity is done and more days would be added

2.2.1.8 Response to the question “If ever there were a possibility of increasing or reducing the number of sick leave days in a cycle, would you suggest 20, 36, 60, 90 or 120, and give reasons for your suggestion?”

All (100%) respondents said days should be increased, 60 to 120 and the reasons were the following:

- To cover officers who suffer from chronic illnesses and also those who did major surgery, to have enough time to recuperate and be fit to perform their duties
- For those who complicated from motor vehicle accidents

2.2.1.9. Response to the question “In which way did the practicability of this 36 days of normal sick leave in a three-year cycle affects one in his or her institution?”

The general response was that people come back to work without having recovered completely from their illnesses. According to their responses, their co-workers simply come back to work just to satisfy the sick leave requirements, that is for fear of being

sent home for early retirement due to ill-health.

2.2.1.10. Suggestions as to what could be done to solve sick leave problems were as follows:-

- Sick leave days to be increased in a three-year cycle
- A refund of unused days to be converted into money and be reversed for the next cycle
- Employees, who had not utilized some of their days, should be compensated as a way of appreciation by giving them cash bonuses
- In-service training should be conducted to inform personnel about leave days

3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings were interpreted in relation to the research questions. “What are the satisfaction levels and perceptions of employees regarding employee leave administration and what are the most important reasons for absence from work?” The data was analyzed quantitatively through numerical figures and percentages for each self-administered questions.

There is a general feeling that the personnel need to be trained about leave related matters in order to reduce misuse of leave days. The respondents also support the feeling that the number of sick leave days be increased as the pattern observed in this regard was that some officers would come to work before they had completely recovered, and thus become inefficient and non-productive.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMEDATIONS

1. Introduction

This is the last chapter of the study. In this chapter, recommendations was provided. The conclusion provided in this chapter differs from other conclusions provided in other chapters.

The issues arising from the practical study have been fully discussed in chapter four. In this chapter major areas of concern from the findings will be heightened and suitable recommendations made. They are derived mainly from the findings of the research project.

2. Recommendations

In order to render a quality service at the Seotlong Education Circuit of Greater Sekhukhune District, the following recommendations are made with regard to leave and absence administration:-

- Proper record keeping by supervisors and managers at various levels. Records that need to keep various leave forms with copies keep by supervisors, and another separate record kept in the note book with total leave days allocated and already taken.
- Proper supervision and management of leave and absence of every personnel. A pattern of leave and absence must be established with those who absent themselves regularly from work.
- Information sharing to all personnel with regard to leave requirements. Personnel need in-service training on leave resulting from different or all kinds of leaves as well as the implications thereof.

- Independent exit interviews must be done with questions formulated around leave matters as a cause of dissatisfaction among personnel at all levels of operations.
- All personnel at Seotlong Circuit are to be allowed to give inputs towards the leave policy so that absenteeism is reduced.
- The researcher feels that the unused sick leave days after completion of cycle or period be carried towards or accumulated to the next cycle, rather than being forfeited. Alternatively, personnel whose sick leave days have not been utilized rewarded as a sign of appreciation. 50% pay bonus for personnel who never utilized their sick leave days for a period of three years, and 25% for those who used half of their days, then a disincentive for those who unutilized all their days (no reward).
- Increase of sick leave days as per data collected, 36 days, are not sufficient to address individual and group problems, for example, personnel who had gone surgical operation, need at least six weeks (42 days) to recover and get back to work where he/she is expected to be productive.
- All personnel who were absent from work due to illness must produce medical certificates on request by the employer where a pattern has been discovered, and all medical certificates must via office of the circuit or district senior manager as head of institution to check their authenticity before they can be forwarded to human resource unit.
- Although leave is basically an employee right to have, this should specifically be utilized for its purpose. It is unfortunate that amongst honest personnel, there are also leave abusers.
- Managers and supervisors must be exemplary to subordinates and colleagues be regular at work, at all times.

- Awareness campaigns should be established so that personnel are informed about the impotency of reporting at work regularly.
- Appointments of more personnel to relieve exhaustion and stress on individuals, especially teaching personnel to allow them to do subject teaching, not class teaching or appointing personnel using teacher-pupil-ratio measurement.
- Personnel at circuits must be trained for persal for capturing their leaves at their circuits to cut process of delivery of them to district office.
- At least school managers must submit their personnel leave forms once per week on Friday at their circuit offices.
- Clocking machines are recommended than time registers for reporting in and out in order to prevent forgery of reporting.
- Movement registers are recommended for movement of personnel during working hours.
- Flexi time should be practiced where is needed for service delivery.
- Chapter 10 (a) of the Constitution of Republic of South Africa requires a high standard of professional ethical behavior and code of good conduct that must be promoted and maintained by all Public Employees. Therefore the incentive part of the recommendations will serve as motivation for leave abusers and also indicate a high sense of responsibility and accountability among personnel.
- Relevant Theory: Douglas McGregor's Theory X and Y

Description of McGregor's Theory X and Y.

McGregor's theory is based on the following self-fulfilling prophecy: A manager's assumptions about the nature of human beings impact on the manager's behavior towards employees. The manager's behavior, which again serves to reconfirm the manager's assumption.

Two sets of assumptions managers have about employees are identified by McGregor, and he calls them theory x and theory y. Theory x assumptions are negative, and include the perception that people are lazy, dislike work, require close supervision, do not want responsibility and have little ambition. And because the people act according to what they believe, a manager with these outdated beliefs will give detailed instructions, supervise employees closely and use threats of punishment to control behavior.

Employees treated in such a way tend to do just what is required of them to stay out of trouble, abuse sick leave and stay uncommitted to the organization or its goals. The x manager will observe the behavior of employees and allow them to reconfirm his original beliefs about employees.

Theory y is a modern and positive set of assumptions about employees. Theory y manager believes that employees are hard-working, want to make a positive contribution, seek responsibility, and can control their own performance. They view employees as self-energized, committed, responsible and creative.

Managers with y beliefs provide employees with opportunities, positive guidance and recognition. Employees working under such a manager feel respected and hard working. The subsequent performance of the employees reconfirms the original beliefs of the manager.

3. Conclusion

From the analysis of the responses from teaching and no-teaching personnel of the Seotlong circuit, the researcher reached the following conclusions:

- The majority are unaware of “Determination on Leave of Absence in the Public Service of 2005” pertaining to leave and absence administration in the Public Service.
- There is basically a consensus that, 36 days sick leave is not sufficient to cover personnel who are chronically ill, those who have undergone major surgery operation and those who are sickly.

This is evident from the findings of the study that, “People who are sick come back to work without fully recovering from their illnesses”. Also according to their co-workers they simply come back to work just to satisfy the sick leave requirements that is for fear of being send home for early retirement due to ill-health.

The practicability of the implementation of the sick leave requirement by the “Determination” was considered not to be possible by most respondents and reasons given were that most personnel are found to have applied for temporary incapacity or having used capped days.

Some respondents felt that there was no consultation by the employer when implementing “Determination”.

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