

**The Impact of Competency Assessments on the Placement and Work
Performance of Senior Managers**

By

Obadiah Khwinana

Student Number: 203513470

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Supervisor: Taahir Vajeth

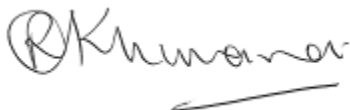
July 2010

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DECLARATION

I, Raofa Obadiah Khwinana, declare that:

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- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
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ABSTRACT

The use of competency assessments for the recruitment of staff has been around for some time. The benefits of conducting competency assessments has been discussed and debated by many Human Resources professional but not so much by managers who require the placement of competent people in vacant positions. With tight costs and operation budgets, companies are starting to question the activities and work practices that do not obviously seem to be adding any value to the bottom line. One of the practices is the competency assessment for staff recruitment and placement.

The purpose of this research is to determine whether competency assessments are beneficial to the placement of staff in critical managerial positions. It is aimed at demonstrating if there is value add in the time and money spent in conducting these assessments. The main aim of the study is to determine the usefulness of competency assessments in the recruitment of Senior Managers within the South African Public Service.

To facilitate the research, a case study design approach was selected. This approach was selected because a single situation was selected to allow an extensive investigation into the problem statement. The case study method also allowed the use of a mixed method approach to help obtain information using multiple data collection methods.

The sample of this study consisted of a total of 160 Senior Managers in the National Treasury. This sample was the total number of Senior Managers who have been appointed and placed with the aid of competency assessment processes. The information for the research was contained through a number of techniques namely, the questionnaire to the Senior Managers and their subordinates, the interview process with the Senior Managers, and secondary

information from the competency assessment service providers and National Treasury employee personnel records.

Data obtained through the above method and techniques was statistically analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

The salient findings of the study indicate strong correlation between competency assessment scores with the current performance of the Senior Managers within the National Treasury. There are also strong signals of job satisfaction amongst the Senior Managers, suggesting that the placement of these managers informed and assisted by the competency assessment process has been a success.

Recruitment experts and Line Managers within the Public Service will derive major benefits in using the competency assessments techniques in recruiting and placing people in critical positions.

It is recommended that further research be conducted to assess and determine the usefulness and value add of competency assessments in the recruitment and placement of managers across the broader Public Service namely at a National, Provincial and Local government level. Once this study has been conducted and the results proves and support what has been found by this study, the Government must then prescribe the use of competency assessments for recruiting and placing people in all Senior Management positions. This will aid in making sure that the Public Service recruits people who can champion excellent service delivery on behalf of government. The Public Service will benefit by employing the right person for the right job. All the elements of effective job placement will be realised.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background to the study

The new political dispensation in South Africa came into effect in 1994. This initiated and started processes to bring about a new democratic government for the South African nation. The democratic government came with a new set of values which were aimed at guiding the broader public service toward a better service delivery and execution of the government's mandate. In this journey, the new government articulated its mission, vision for South Africa and some key strategic deliverables which will inform the road ahead as far as the government agenda is concerned (Department of Public Service & Administration, 2001).

The Public Service needed to be geared toward high levels of performance so as to address the many gaps that existed in the different spheres of government service delivery and provision. There were a number of expectations created to the peoples of South Africa, and hence it was necessary that there is capacity for government to deliver upon its mandate as expected by the electorate.

In order for the government to deliver upon this, there was a need to ensure that there are systems, structures and employees and staff who have the necessary skills and competence to enable delivery of services and goods to the broader public. It became imperative for government to ensure that the champions for service delivery are those employees who will aggressively implement its agenda. It is a well known fact that managerial skills within the broader Public Service is a problem in that there are very few people who have the requisite skills to execute the strategic objectives of government.

The shortage of skills was created as a result of a huge exit from the Public Service of highly experienced and competent personnel who worked for the

previous dispensation. The government responded to this need by introducing a process of Public Service Transformation. This process had a number of sub-initiatives to address specific problems within the broader government. One of these specific areas was the establishment of a category of employees called Senior Management Services (SMS). This category of employees was intended to seriously address leadership and managerial skills within the broader Public Service (Department of Public Service & Administration, 2001).

The introduction of the SMS Competency Framework is key in ensuring that the Public Service achieves its objective of professionalising the Public Service, especially at the Senior Management level. The SMS Competency Framework will assist in ensuring a consistent approach to human performance throughout the Public Service from National to Provincial levels, and thus help to drive and support all human performance initiatives.

In developing the SMS Competency Framework, focus was placed on critical generic competencies, which senior managers would be expected to possess, rather than functional / technical competencies, which are essential to a specific department or a specific job. The SMS Competency Framework consists of a set of eleven generic competencies that communicate what is expected of Senior Managers. In addition, this Framework seeks to establish a shared understanding of the critical success factors for performance in the SMS. This Framework does not describe the functions or responsibilities of particular senior management levels, for example, manager, senior manager or director, chief director, etc. However, they are based on the requirements for the whole of the SMS in both its current and emerging form (Department of Public Service & Administration, 2001).

Government was currently staffed with managers who had no experience in managing people, managing projects and executing tasks effectively. On a more practical level, things were taking long to be implemented and service delivery

issues became a nightmare for Cabinet and government as a whole. Over and above the presence of competent people within the Public Service, it was also difficult to attract and recruit experienced and competent people for the Public Service. The majority of working people preferred to work for the private sector because of the perceived absence of bureaucracy within this sector.

This preference for corporate world left government with skills shortages, challenges especially the critical leadership and managerial skills. Employees that were newly employed with the Public Service did not make significant contribution in helping government to speedily address its political work agenda.

To address the leadership and managerial skills, Cabinet, informed by recommendations from a specialist human resources study, introduced a new process of recruiting Public Sector Managers. The new method prescribed the use of competency assessment tools for the selection and placement of senior managers who would be excellent in executing their managerial responsibilities (Department of Public Service & Administration, 2001).

1.2 Problem statement

The government spends a lot of money in the recruitment of its SMS employees. More specifically, the money is spent on the competency assessment process that all short listed candidates are required to undergo. In addition to this, there is time that needs to be spent whilst going through these assessments. There is loss in man hours which, if the cost is attached to the time, will reveal large sums of money which could be utilised elsewhere for governmental programs.

Observations have been made on the placement and work performance of the managers recruited during the past four years. Some of the observations include comments that the managers are not leading and managing their teams effectively and that they do not stay long enough in their jobs despite

recommendations of the competency assessments reports. It appears that in some instances the competency assessment scores do not predict better placement and excellent work performance. The government departments have not really assessed the value add and benefits of these expensive competency assessments.

The government, in trying to assess the value of its recruitment efforts, introduced a performance management process or system which includes an element of assessing the demonstration of the critical competencies by the senior managers.

To address and look further into these observations, a well-designed study will be required. The study will investigate the following problem statement:

The value adds and usefulness of the competency assessment process in the selection, placement and work performance of senior managers recruited in government departments has not been determined.

1.3 Research questions

The question that this research study wishes to answer: *“What impact has the competency assessment process had on the placement and work performance of senior managers recruited into the Public Service?”*

1.4 Research objectives

Key research objectives include the following:

- To determine the usefulness of competency assessments in recruiting managers;

- To establish if there is a relationship between assessment scores/results and job placement and better work performance;
- To evaluate the value of competency assessment process;
- To investigate the merits of competency assessments; and
- To recommend factors that will ensure value add of competency assessment.

1.5 Thesis statement

In conducting this study, the investigation will cover a number of areas. These will include the identification and interrogation of the benefits and merits of using competency based assessments for the recruitment, selection and placement of employees within the Public Service. This investigation will also assist in identifying and highlighting whether there is a relationship between competency assessment performance, and the placement and work performance of employees.

1.6 Delineation and limitations of the study

1.6.1 Delineation

The study will focus on the recruitment process as well as the tools that are used to ensure effective selection of candidates for critical jobs. In addition to the process of recruitment, the study is aimed at looking at the concept of effective placement of staff in critical jobs.

Over and above this, it is envisaged that an investigation to determine whether there is a relationship between competency assessment performance and future work performance will be explored. The study will also cover sub-elements of

what is meant by effective job placement and excellent and superior work performance.

It is not the objective of this study to address other recruitment and selection tools, like interviews and reference checks. The study will also not investigate the processes of validating the appropriateness of competency assessment tools and tests. In addition, the study will not cover the field of psychometrics.

1.6.2 Limitations

The study is conducted within a smaller fraction of the broader Public Service, and hence, the sample size may not be a true representation of the targeted population. In addition to this, the many governmental departments use various service providers to conduct the competency assessments for their recruitment efforts. This may pose some anomalies due to the fact that service providers use different tools to assess competencies that have been identified.

The fact that the Public Service has three distinct levels, namely national, provincial and local government, a research would need time to completely achieve the said objectives.

It is assumed that the research design is the appropriate method for this investigation. However, there are research methods that could have been explored for even better study outcomes.

On the methodological level, the instruments that are utilised are not error free, due to the fact that the study is not fully quantitative. There are always elements of subjectivity in the gathering of information from the sample questionnaires and interviews. The analysis of the data also involves analysing qualitative information and this again brings in an element of subjectivity in arriving at conclusions. The analysis of the data will involve both quantitative and qualitative

methods, and there are some limitations and challenges in relating the two sets of data.

1.7 Definitions of terms and concepts

The following terms are defined in the study:

1.7.1 Recruitment

According to Pilbeam & Corbridge (2006:143), recruitment is a broad term used to communicate the notion of getting someone into an organisation. It is also a process of acquiring applicants who are available and qualified to fill positions within an organisation.

1.7.2 Selection

Selection is a process undertaken to make a decision as to who to recruit. It is also defined as a process of choosing from a group of applicants the individual best suited for a particular position (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2006:143).

1.7.3 Placement

Gerber *et al* (2001:141) refers to placement as the appointment of a successful candidate into a vacant position within an organisation.

1.7.4 Job competency

This is an underlying characteristic of an employee (that is, motive, trait, skill, aspects of one's self-image, social role, or a body of knowledge) which results in effective and or superior performance in a job (Boyatzis, 1982:21).

1.7.5 Work performance

Work performance, according to Williams RS (1998:95), refers to the successful achievement of identified and required work results and outcomes.

1.7.6. Assessment centre

It is a procedure that uses multiple assessment techniques to evaluate employees for a variety of human resource management purposes and decisions (Roberts, 2005:154).

1.8 Assumptions

In conducting this study, the researcher is making a number of assumptions. Firstly, that the competency assessment report and scores are a true reflection of reality and that the performance management feedback scores are also a true reflection of real work performance. It is also assumed that the prediction by the assessment centre reflect a higher validity and reliability than other recruitment and selection methods and tools. The researcher also assumes that performance definition is the same and will be the same in different work settings within the broader Public Service. The study also makes an assumption that the feedback obtained from participants truly reflects objective observations and input of subordinates and supervisors. It is also assumed that there will be minor subjectivity in the supervisor's self-evaluation.

1.9 Significance of the study

In conducting this study, it is aimed that government departments, the broader Public Service institutions, SMS appointed managers and the citizens of the country will derive some major benefit in that service delivery will happen because of suitably recruited and competent senior managers appointed.

The major benefits of this study will include the following:

- Ensuring effective recruitment and better selection methods;
- Better placement of senior managers;
- Ensuring return on investment (ROI) on the money and time spent on competency assessments;
- Ensuring the appointment of competent champions of service delivery within the Public Service; and
- Continuous excellent work performance by those appointed in critical jobs through the use of competency assessments.

1.10 Brief chapter overview

The outline of the Chapters are summarised below:

Chapter Two: Review of literature

Chapter Two reviews the literature relating to context for work performance, talent sourcing, competency dimensions, leadership and managerial work performance, and effective job placement. It includes definitions of key concepts and dynamics, processes, and tools for effective recruitment leading to effective placement and excellent work performance of those appointed.

Chapter Three: Research design and methodology

This chapter describes the research design, methodology, limitations, and ethical considerations for this study. The chosen research design and methodology will be fully explained; highlighting what its advantages and disadvantages are.

Chapter Four: Results, findings and interpretation

Quantitative and qualitative research techniques are used to analyse the data. The results of statistical analysis are presented in the form of diagrams and tables. The results analysis is also discussed and this analysis is done in the context of the research question and the literature review.

Chapter Five: Conclusions, reflections and recommendations

Chapter five comprises the recommendations and conclusions arising from the research. It highlights key findings of the research and whether the research objectives were met. It also outlines recommendations for recruiting employees for the public service members and suggests possible areas for future research.

1.11 Conclusion

The main focus of the chapter has been to highlight the purpose of the study and to present an overview of what the study will address. The efficacy of doing these assessments has not been determined and it is not clear as to whether these expensive and time-consuming competency assessment tools should be used going forward.

Broad human resources literature indicates that there is some relationship between the performance of candidates at the assessment centre and the person's actual work performance. This relationship has not been determined as to whether it is linear or non-linear.

It is the aim of this study to establish whether there is a direct relationship between competency assessment scores and the work performance of individuals.

The main aim of the project will be to determine whether the use of competency assessments has enhanced or benefited the placement and work performance of those appointed in senior managerial positions within the Public Service. In addition to this, the study will assist in ensuring that the competency assessments add value to the selection of better senior managers and other employees within government.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of literature

2.1 Introduction

Organisations develop their missions, visions and a set of values to achieve a given set of business results. These results may be in the form of profit, skills advancement, client satisfaction and efficiency in its production and service processes. In pursuing the achievement of their results efficiently, the Public Service as an organisation, also strives to be effective and efficient in the way it delivers services to the citizens of its country.

The question of how to help their organisations succeed is one that senior executives ponder over daily. Every organisation has characteristics and features that drive managers crazy and keep them awake at night. Managers allow themselves to complain out loud about work performance, systems and processes within the organisation. It is the job of leadership to analyse the current state of the organisation and its environment, envision the ideal state, and define a set of pathways to move the organisation toward the ideal (Zwell, 2000:12).

Few organisations come close to maximising success and productivity in their operations. First, most managers are weak strategic thinkers. They tend to be strong at performing tasks and solving problems. They probably wouldn't have become managers if they weren't good in these areas. However, the ability to step back, see the big picture, put together a strategy, and turn it into a workable plan is something that eludes many managers. They tend to be much better at "putting out fires" than analysing the fundamental causes for the "fires" starting in the first place (Zwell, 2000:13).

Obtaining better performance has been a persistent theme in the business environment for many years. Over time, according to Hofrichter & McGovern (2001:35), the focus was first on strategic planning. Unfortunately, many of the strategies often failed in the implementation phase. The next issue to address was quality alternating with productivity. Although important issues, these were seen to be too one-dimensional. The focus, thereafter, shifted to culture. However, it was soon found that making cultural changes cost a fortune and did not yield the results required.

In the 1990's the approach shifted to the endorsement of people and their competencies within the organisation, as well as the role the Human Resource department can play in this regard. Hofrichter & McGovern (2001:37) caution that 'no best solution may exist, but the search for it' (i.e. organisational performance) does teach some important lessons about the nature of organisational performance. According to the authors, it is clear that:

- Performance is driven from the top down, not from the bottom up. Where high performance is seen, one will find the presence of strong, focused leadership;
- Performance is the product of winning behaviour. When leaders and employees consistently do the things that enable an organisation to 'win' – to compete successfully, high performance is the outcome;
- Winning behaviour can be modelled effectively by competencies;
- Performance is always about achieving specific measurable goals that help the organisation to win;
- Performance is defined by measurement; and

- Performance is shaped by the promise of rewards (and the fear of punishment).

Thus, it is clear that organisation performance is too complex an issue to be subjected to one formula only, that the individual parts of the system, i.e. values, purpose, goals, rewards, competencies and leadership development, all make an important contribution to the health of the organisation. Organisation performance depends on all its components working together.

2.1.1 Organisational performance

Robbins (1990:53) states that organisational performance comprises the actual output or results of an organisation as measured against its intended outputs.

An Organisational performance includes multiple activities that help in establishing the goals of the organisation, and monitor the progress towards the target. It is used to make adjustments to accomplish goals more efficiently and effectively (Management Performance, 2010, p.2).

Organisational performance is what business executives and owners are usually frustrated about. This is so because, even though the employees of the company are hard-working, and are busy doing their tasks, their companies are unable to achieve the planned results. Results are achieved more due to unexpected events and good fortune rather than the efforts made by the employees (Management Performance, 2010, p.4).

However, for any business to be successful, functions must be defined and accomplished. It is important for an organisation to develop strategies that should be designed around the skills that would enhance the performance of the organisation

This could be done by introducing organisational performance management systems. These are a number of major movements and methods that could increase the performance of an organisation. Each one of these methods includes regular recurring activities that are used to establish the goals of the organisation. These activities are also required to monitor the progress of the organisation towards the goals. They are used to make adjustments to achieve the desired targets more effectively and efficiently.

Some of the approaches that can be used to achieve these desired targets, and a planned comprehensive strategy towards increasing the Organisational Performance are:

Benchmarking: This is a method of using standard measurements in an industry or a service for comparing the growth of the organisation with others, in order to gain a perspective on the performance of the organisation. The results that are acquired by the comparisons can be used to improve the overall performance and processes of the organisation. Benchmarking can be defined as a quality initiative. It is a process of understanding. Identifying and adapting the prominent practices that are being used by organisation's around the globe. This would assist the organisation in improving its performance (Management Performance, 2010, p.6).

- *Balanced Scorecard*: This method focuses on four indicators that include: Internal Business Processes, Customer Perspectives, financing, growth and learning. These indicators are used to monitor the progress of the organisation towards the strategic goals, planned by them.

The Balanced Scorecard is an approach for the performance management that focuses on different performance indicators that help in the monitoring of progress of the organisation's desired targets (Kaplan & Norton, 1996:19).

Organisational performance can be achieved by using some of these approaches that if used with a strong focus, comprehensively, on achieving the results of the organisation, could increase the performance of the organisation (Robbins, 1990:54). Best practices, quality circles and process control can also be used to achieve similar goals.

2.1.1.1 High performance organisation

The term high performance, according to Miller (1999:1), work system and high performance team are necessarily linked to the concept of a high-performance organisation. High performance work system refers to the design of jobs, how work is organised and assigned to individuals or teams. The high performance team is generally considered to be the fundamental work unit, the building block of the high-performance organisation. High performance teams know their customers, have defined processes that they continuously improve, measure their performance and are skilled in techniques of problem solving.

The key ingredients of a high performance organisation, according to Miller (1999:2) include the following:

- First, the process comes first. The organisation of the people, particularly at the first level, is designed around the work into small work groups, teams, with a high degree of self-management;
- The structure is highly flexible, with frequent changes in structure to respond to changes in customer requirements, technology or work flow;
- In this organisation there exists little hierarchy due to high self-management at lower job levels;

- There exist highly autonomous units networked across organisational boundaries; and
- The organisation displays high knowledge of performance and targets which are categorised under financial, quality and customer satisfaction measures.

The high performance organisation is organised into teams in which individuals work toward the common good of their customer, their team and their organisation. It is a huge leap forward from workers who focused on their assigned tasks. It is an organisation in which information is shared in a trusting manner. It is an organisation in which the manager's job is defined as 'helping' the teams to do the best possible job, rather than controlling and 'catching' mistakes. These changes are simple to state, but profoundly difficult to establish (Miller, 1999:8).

The high performance-based organisations call on new personal competencies and the need to assess them. It is not possible to lift managers and employees from a traditional organisation and simply place them into a high performance organisation and expect high performance. A high performance organisation is a learning organisation (Miller, 1999:16).

2.1.1.2 Peak performance

Organisations require and often demand peak performance from its employees. They strive to get the best out of the employees in order to be ahead of competition. For this to happen, these organisations, according to Katzenbach (2000), need to cultivate and sustain energy generated by their employees' emotional commitment to work. Employees must be motivated to deliver consistently higher levels of performance than its competition. This is a demonstration of peak performance. Peak performance is about leadership energising their employees for superior performance (Katzenbach, 2000:41).

For this performance to happen, employees and their managers must be competent enough to meet the challenges set for them by the organisation.

How to lead organisations to peak performance is a question that every business leader should address. In particular, a number of key questions need to be asked. The critical questions being:

- Is there anything that predicts superior and peak performance?
- What competencies are critical to peak performance?
- What must Leaders do to sustain such performance?

As an answer, the above questions require a serious look at how the organisation defines the required competencies as well as how it finds them. This is where the process of assessing competencies becomes critical. Over and above the set of questions that the organisation and leadership must answer and address to achieve employee peak performance, Katzenbach (2000) identifies five paths that are required for high performance work situations. These are:

- Communicating the Mission, Vision and Values of the organisation;
- Identifying the work and process performance measures and standards to be achieved;
- Encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit across the organisation;
- Rewarding Individual achievement; and
- Ensuring ongoing recognition and celebration for achievements.

To travel these paths once again highlight the need for competent employees who fit with the culture of the organisation and deliver consistently the required performance results. It is thus important to assess employees' competence levels at organisational entry stage, as well as during their stay with the organisation.

2.1.2 Organisational effectiveness

Organisational Effectiveness is a concept of how effective an organisation is in achieving the outcomes the organisation intends to produce (Robbins, 1990:49).

It is also the ability of the organisation to fulfil its mission by achieving its objectives through a combination of sound management, strong governance and a continuous rededication to achieving results. This is an abstract concept and is basically impossible to measure. Instead of measuring organisational effectiveness, an organisation determines measures which will be used, to use effectiveness. Some of the measures used may include such things as a number of customers acquired, amount of profit made, and more importantly, the competencies and skills that the organisation and its employees possess (Robbins, 1990:49).

An organisational effectiveness is dependent on its staff competence, the equipment and tools it owns. The commitment and competence of leadership and management in any organisation is a good indication of organisational effectiveness. Commitment is a component to measure the degree of attachment to the organisation whereas leadership competence is defined as a degree of skill required to enable the organisation to achieve its intended results (Defining organisational effectiveness, 2001).

Effectiveness is defined as the achievement of results correctly, whereas effectiveness relates to the achievement of the right results. The translation of these concepts into reality leads to an effective organisation (Robbins, 1990:50).

There are diverse approaches to the study of organisational effectiveness. Robbins (1990:53) presents four different approaches to the concept of organisational effectiveness. These are:

- The goal attainment approach whereby an organisation is effective to the extent that it accomplishes its strategic goals;
- The systems approach relates to the organisation focusing on criteria that ensures its long-term survival, which includes the acquisition of resources, maintenance of itself and an effective interaction with the environment;
- The strategic constituency's approach which defines an organisation as effective where all strategic constituencies are at least minimally satisfied; and
- The competing values approach where the criteria is used in assessing organisational effectiveness in terms of Return On Investment (ROI), Market Share, new product innovation and job security. This criterion is also dependant on who the organisation is and the interests it represents in society.

It can be seen that organisational effectiveness cannot be achieved unless the organisation has proper systems, processes and competent employees to carry out the work required.

2.1.3 Organisational success

Organisations continuously strive to improve its management competence. The objective to do so is to enable the organisation to demonstrate a culture of competence. Competence in any organisation gives it a competitive edge and allows it to continue doing business in the market where its competitors may to

be successful. The culture of competence allows any organisation to increase its efficiency of its leaders and employees. The leaders who are competent help the organisation drive and implement its mission and vision. It also allows employees to be committed in supporting and achieving the organisation's results (Zwell, 2000:15).

Changing an organisation's culture requires all the skills and abilities of leadership and management. These skills need to be demonstrated and applied so as to allow the organisation to move forward and achieve its intended results.

Culture defines a way of life in an organisation. It explains what, why and how things are done.

According to Zwell (2000:17), leaders of corporate culture transformation need a full range of leadership competence. Ideally, these leaders will be visionaries and be able to articulate a vision of the ideal culture, a culture that inspires others to want to move forward and commit themselves to its achievement.

Zwell (2000:18) states that competencies provide the foundation for any cultural transformation. The competencies allow managers to demonstrate the critical behaviours that would allow all to move and be aligned to the organisation's mission and vision.

There are three cornerstones that form the foundation for organisational success:

- The competence of its leadership;
- The competence of its employees; and
- The degree to which the culture fosters and maximises competence.

According to Zwell (2000:9) by strengthening these cornerstones, organisations can improve almost every aspect of their functioning and come closer to achieving the vision described.

2.1.4 High performance culture and it's role on competence and performance

Organisational culture is defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration that has worked well enough to be considered valid and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems (Schein, 1992:9).

Research conducted by Kotter & Heskett (1992:18) found that over a twelve-year period, companies with high performance cultures outperformed their more average peers by:

- Four times in revenue growth;
- Eight times in employment growth;
- Eleven times in stock price growth; and
- Seven hundred and fifty times in net income growth.

Kotter & Heskett (1992:20) studied the relationship between culture and long-term economic performance across more than two hundred organisations. In addition to being one of the largest and most rigorous research efforts to date on this subject, the study has made three important contributions. First, the relationship between culture and performance demonstrated in their studies is compelling. Second, the authors provide an important synthesis of theoretical

viewpoints about the nature of culture. Third, they draw strong connections between management practices, culture and performance.

The studies cited uniformly conclude that an indispensable ingredient for sustained competitive advantage is a management system that creates and maintains a high-involvement, employee-centred environment (Alexander, 1999:3). The central proposition which emerges from all of these studies is that conscious interventions to move an organisation toward emphasising high levels of employee involvement and enhance emphasis on meeting employee needs can produce higher motivation and commitment which lead to improved organisational performance.

Lawler (1992:22) contends that the keys to organisational effectiveness lies in completely changing the way organisations are managed. In order to be competitive, organisations will require high skilled, knowledgeable workers and a relatively stable workforce. Traditional hierarchies must be transformed into organisations in which individuals know more, do more, and contribute more. This high-involvement or employee-centred management model is based on the belief that people can be trusted to make important decisions about the management of their work.

This approach puts knowledge, power, rewards and a communications network in place at every level in an organisation. It encourages employees to care about the work they do, to know how to do it, and to do it as well as it can possibly be done. It is important to note, according to Lawler (1992:31), that the real basis for competitive advantage lies in the management systems that create and sustain this environment.

High performance cultures are not created by magic, though it may seem so without an understanding of how they are created (Kotter & Heskett, 1992:22). Organisations create high performance cultures by focusing on enabling their

employees to acquire critical competencies. The competencies acquired allow the organisation to become better at what it is expected to do.

There is probably no domain in which the role of leadership is more important than that of cultural transformation. The leaders of corporate cultural transformation need a full range of leadership skills (Kotter & Haskett, 1992:24). Ideally they will be visionaries. They will be able to articulate a vision of the ideal culture, one that inspires others not only to want the new culture, but to commit themselves to its achievement. They will model the behaviour that exemplifies the vision, and show people by example what they want to create. They will be excellent communicators, conveying the mission, vision, values and plans throughout the organisation. They will need mentors and coaches who help people see their potential, identify barriers to improvement, and create plans to change their behaviour. They will provide ongoing encouragement and support as the culture change processes. Finally, to do all of the above, leadership competencies add their measurements are a great necessity. They will see that progress is measured, monitored, and maintained.

A strategic plan is only as good as its components. One of the most critical elements in the plan to change corporate culture is the conceptual framework that contextualises the change. The concept of behavioural competencies provides such a framework, and can serve as the core of a system and practice that can help one create the culture it wants.

Competency frameworks can provide the foundation for an assessment process for use in selection, appraisal, and development that orientates the entire organisation to the behaviours most essential to the culture of competence. To the extent that an organisation can accurately measure proficiency in a competency, it will be possible to bring people into the organisation that will manifest the behaviours needed in the desired culture. By using competencies as the basis for appraisal, management can communicate to the entire

organisation the kinds of behaviours one needed in the organisation. By using competencies in the development process, management can create concrete pathways that enable employees to change their behaviour in ways that are consistent with the vision of your desired culture. An organisation with a competence culture has more regard for individual contribution than group success (Alexander, 1999:4).

2.2 Competency-based human resources management

Organisations recognise the link between high performing employees, and organisational culture that supports mission, vision, accomplishment and high performing organisation (Grobler *et al*, 2006:490). Competencies provide the foundation through which the employees can contribute to the success of their companies. It is clear, according to Grobler *et al* (2006:490) that competencies are based not only based on technical skills which can be classified as human capital, but consist also of internal and external relationships as well as exchanges between employees.

Competency-based human resource management cover and include, according to Grobler *et al* (2006:492), the following areas of people management:

- Competency-based human resource planning;
- Competency-based employee recruitment and selection;
- Competency-based training and development;
- Competency-based performance and appraisal; and
- Competency-based employee rewards.

It is common for organisations to use competencies to address the need for internal alignment by creating a competency-based structure. Milkovich & Newman (2008:157) illustrate the competency-based pay application process, as follows:

- Identification of key work relationships within the organisation;
- Abstracting the broadly applicable knowledge, skills and behaviour (core competencies) that form the foundation of success at any level or job in the organisation;
- Translation of core competency sets into actions;
- Define the behavioural descriptors that define the level of competencies within each set; and
- Development of a competency-based pay structure for the organisation.

People receive financial rewards in the form of increases to their base pay by reference to the level of competency they demonstrate in carrying out their roles. Armstrong (2007:343) states that this is the method of paying people for their ability to performance now and in the future.

The emergence of contemporary human resource management, with its emphasis on strategic human resource approaches and recognition of people as the organisation's most important resource, paved the way for the development of competency management (Grobler *et al*, 2006:482). Competency management reflects a change from a job-based to a person-based approach to people. Resourcing and grew, in the 1980s, out of an economic context of greater globalisation and increasing competitiveness in world markets, the mergence of a knowledge-based service economy, flatter organisational

structures and greater decentralisation, more emphasis on team working, and the need for both functional and personal flexibility within organisations. Organisations in both the private and public sectors are adopting competency frameworks which are designed to reflect the missions and goals of the organisation and to integrate organisational and human resource strategies both horizontally and vertically. Competency management is not without its difficulties, although its benefits are widely acclaimed.

A competency framework is both a list of competencies but also a tool by which competencies are expressed, assessed and measured (Strebler *et al*, 1997). Competency frameworks are generally based either on the 'behavioural' model, where competencies are expressed as the behaviours that individuals need to demonstrate their competency, and the 'minimum standards' model which relates to 'the ability to perform activities within an occupation to a prescribed standard' (Fletcher, 1997:15).

Competency management allows the organisation to systematically measure and monitor the knowledge base of the work force (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2006:62).

2.2.1 Competencies

There are many definitions of competencies. The Public Service Regulations, 2001, defines 'competence' as *"...the blend of knowledge, skills, behaviour and aptitude that a person can apply in the work environment, which indicates a person's ability to meet the requirements of a specific post."*

Competencies are those factors that distinguish the best from the rest in a given role. They are not the tasks of the job; they are what enable people to do the tasks. Boyatzis (1982:21) defines a competency as an underlining characteristic of a person. It may be a motive, trait, skill aspect of one's self image or social role, or body of knowledge which he/she uses. In addition, competencies are

characteristics that are causally related to effective and or superior performance in a job (Boyatzis, 1982:2).

According to Spencer & Spencer (1993:9), a competency is an underlying characteristic of an individual that is casually related to criterion-referenced effective and / or superior performance in a job or situation.

This definition highlights three key point of a competency, namely:

- Underlying characteristic which means that the competency is a deep and enduring part of a person's personality and can predict behaviour in a variety of job tasks;
- Casually related, which means that a competency causes or predicts behaviour and performance; and
- Criterion-referenced, which means that the competency actually predicts good performance from poor performance, as measured on a given standard.

Spencer & Spencer (1993:9) explain the concept of competencies by stating the parts of competencies. The parts are as follows;

- *Motives*: The things that drive or direct behaviour towards certain actions and away from others;
- *Traits*: The physical characteristics and consistent responses to situations or information;
- *Self-concept*: An individual's attitudes, values or self-image;
- *Knowledge*: The information an individual has in specific content areas; and

- *Skills*: The ability to perform a particular physical or mental task.

Spencer & Spencer (1993:9) further illustrate the concept of competencies by using the analogy of an iceberg.

The Iceberg Model, Spencer & Spencer (1992:11) is diagrammatically illustrated below:

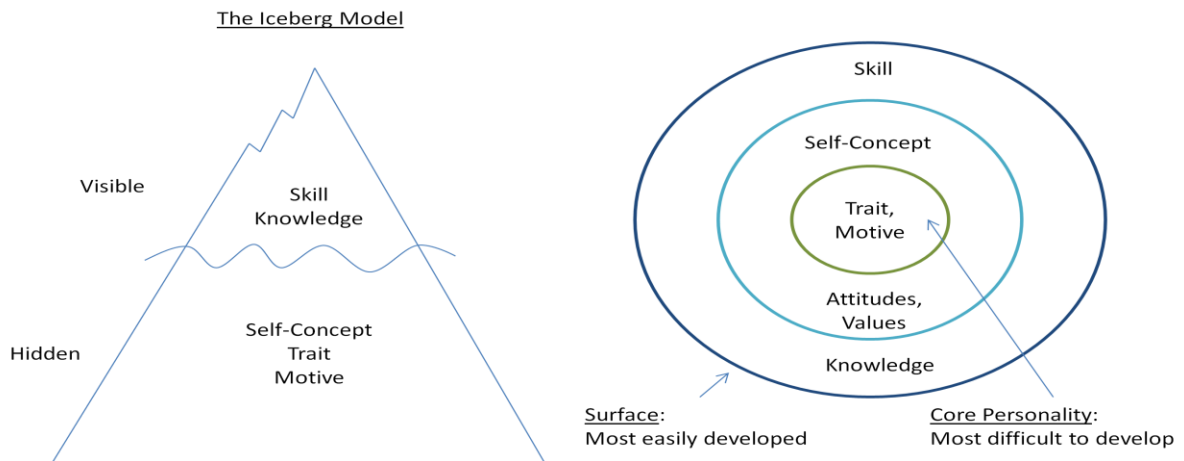


Figure 2.1 Central and Surface Competency (Spencer & Spencer, 1993)

Brewster (2008:31) indicates that competencies refer to an individual's demonstration of knowledge, skills and abilities.

Competencies are identified behaviours, knowledge, skills and abilities that directly and positively impact the success of employees and organisation. They can be objectively measured, enhanced, and improved through coaching and learning opportunities.

Competencies can be defined as the enduring traits and characteristics that determine performance. Examples of competencies are initiative, influence, teamwork, innovation, and strategic thinking. The power of the competency

concept, according, to Zwell (2000:18) derives from how easily it translates organisational mission, vision, and values into concrete behaviours and actions that employees can understand and perform.

According to Anderson & Herriot (1994:5), competencies, should be viewed as behavioural repertoires which are demonstrated more effectively than other. They involve an implicit performance criterion and are expressed in terms of performance outputs.

Competencies are seen as the skills enabling the 'what', the 'why' and 'how' of performance (Mintzberg, 2005:257). They are critical to the practice of managing. Competencies exercised in the managerial job turn thoughts into actions.

Pilbeam & Corbridge (2006:63) differentiate between the term 'competency' and 'core competence'. In this context, the authors describe core competence as an accumulation of learning, comprising tacit and explicit knowledge, skills and technologies, which give an organisation a competitive advantage. Core competencies of an organisation make a significant contribution to 'customer'-perceived value and 'customer' benefits. It is the core competency which makes the organisation competitively unique and creates gateways to new markets.

“Another view of core competencies is that they are the collective learning in the organisation especially how to co-ordinate diverse production skills and integrate multiple streams of technologies” – (Prahalad and Hamel, 1990:82).

In today's global and fiercely competitive business world, state of the art technology, superior products and a steady source of capital are tickets of entry into the marketplace (Zwell, 2000:1). Many organisations find that the key to gaining a competitive edge is the ability of their workforce to demonstrate a certain level of competence. The companies' technological tools are only as

useful as their employees' ability to use them. An organisation may find, however, that determining whether its people possess the abilities critical for its success, is difficult. The behaviours necessary for effective performance vary from one business to another and within organisations from one role to another. Many companies have begun using competencies to help them identify their essential skills, knowledge and personal characteristics needed for a successful performance in a job. The role and benefits of competencies lie in the ability for an organisation to hire people who have high potential to succeed. The use of competencies is critical to the recruitment and selection of leadership for any organisation. It allows these leaders to perform critical leadership functions that would enable the organisation to be successful.

Organisations can use competencies to help improve the individual performance, by modelling the behaviours that make high performing employees successful in their jobs. In this way, one can use competencies to further your professional development. These competencies help lay out a road map to superior performance, but they do not ensure it. Only personal commitment to excellence, motivation, and actual consistent performance determines performance levels.

Pilbeam & Corbridge (2006:68) indicate that a number of surveys were carried out to establish why employers adopt a competency-based approach to management. The reasons highlighted include the following:

- Competencies help improve individual performance;
- Competencies help support corporate values and objectives; and
- Competencies help facilitate cultural change.

Many employers cite the need to develop the future skills required by business as the main reason for using competency-based approach, while others believe competencies will provide a common language and facilitate cultural change.

Ideally, competencies can help fix attention on key business goals and values, such as improved customer service. Competencies can help one be more flexible in meeting various work requirements. Applying the competencies at work will help the organisation become more creating in meeting job demands and allow it to quickly adapt to the changing environment.

Competencies provide an opportunity to see what it takes for an organisation to be fully successful. It is generally believed that the competence route offers an organisation greater flexibility in recruitment. This is because statements of competence are commonly developed for a particular occupation rather than specific job. This gives more flexibility because specific jobs may change rapidly but this is less likely to happen with families of jobs.

At the selection, competencies also provide a framework against which people can provide evidence of competence, in whatever setting – rather than a checklist of ‘can and can’t do’. It could be argued it is a fairer way for people to show potential for the future, as well as their capacity to undertake a particular job.

According to Lucia & Lepsinger (1999:10), competencies are seen as a highly useful tool to make sure those human resources systems facilitate and support a company’s strategic objectives. Competencies help clarify what specific behaviours and practices make employees effective. They increase the likelihood of reducing recruitment costs and contribute to placing the right people into the right jobs.

There are some authors who have identified some drawbacks of the development and use of competencies. They highlight the lack of coherent definition and a theoretical framework for this piece of work. They also highlight the fact that competencies may not necessarily be the predictors of workplace behaviours (the criteria) or the criteria themselves (the workplace behaviour to be predicted) (Pilbema & Corbridge, 2006:69).

Vorster & Roodt (2003:38) states that competencies have wide application and serve as a foundation for various human resource processes, such as recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and career and succession planning.

2.2.2 Competency frameworks and models

A competency framework is both a list of competencies but also a tool by which competencies are expressed, assessed and measured (Strebler *et al*, 1997:40). Competency frameworks are generally based either on the 'behavioural' model, where competencies are expressed as the behaviours that individuals need to demonstrate their competency, and the 'minimum standards' model which relates to the 'ability to perform activities within an occupation to a prescribed standard' (Fletcher, 1997).

The competency profile drives the assessment process as well as the control of results. It is the benchmark for the position. It also defines the standards of performance and business results required from the person in that position. Thus, the development of the competency profile is crucial to the control of results. If we define what we want to achieve incorrectly in the profile, then we will not achieve the results, i.e. we will be measuring the wrong things.

Ployhart *et al* (2006:128) define competency models as a method that describe the core set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are judged to be important for

an organisation. The competency models and frameworks tend not to be specific to a particular job or level, but rather focus on what is common across job levels. In addition to this, competency model and frameworks appeal to managers because they are presented in a language and style in which organisational decision-makers are familiar with.

Competency model is described as a list of relevant competences for a role with definitions and behavioural statements of what each competency looks like in action. A competency model describes the particular combination of knowledge, skills and characteristics needed to effectively perform a role in an organisation. It is used as human resource management tool for selection, training and development, appraisal and succession planning (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999:2).

Developing a competency framework underpins recruitment, induction and the appraisal system. Performance management systems should measure the effectiveness of staff in terms of their output – the competency framework enables the manager to assess the way in which staff members work.

A competency model describes the particular combination of knowledge, skills, and characteristics needed to effectively perform a role in an organisation and is used as a human resource tool for selection, training and development, appraisal, and succession planning (Lucia & Lepsinger, 1999:5).

Competency models provide a tool for determining exactly what skills are required to meet the different needs of today and the probable needs of the future.

Competency models are increasingly being used as the foundation of human resource management systems. They can play a vital role in every process of human resource systems. By identifying the competencies necessary to be effective in a job, an organisation can focus its selection, training and

development, performance, performance appraisal, and succession planning systems on the behaviours that have the most relevance to successful performance.

Many organisations have had different language to describe their recruitment standards, training requirements or promotion criteria. Using a common competency model, they can create a common language through which all of these important organisational initiatives can converge (Berger, 2004:63).

A Competency Framework is the foundation for, and a key driver of effective Human Resource Management. It describes the terms and scales, thus creating a common language across human resource processes. Having the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes describes in one place in a competency model is a helpful tool that allows both the individual and the organisation to know what knowledge and skills are needed to be effective in a given role (Senior Management Service Handbook, 2001).

Taylor (2005:156) regards competency framework as an alternative to job analysis. Competency frameworks provide the necessary information to develop relevant job performance criteria or standards for effective job performance.

2.2.3 Competency-based recruitment and selection

The competency-based recruitment and selection is one of the tools that have higher accuracy compared to conventional method to identify the suitability of the employee to be with the competency demanded by the organisation. This recruitment method focuses on how to attract the employee to apply and also how to select competent employees for vacant positions (Manajemen Forum, 2009).

Competency-based recruiting looks at the attitudes and behaviours of potential staff, rather than reliance on number of years of experience to fulfil a specific role.

Selection and recruitment are used interchangeably. Recruitment is a broad term used to communicate the notion of getting someone into an organisation. As such, it covers everything from advertising to induction (Wood & Payne, 1998:2).

Pilbeam & Corbridge (2006:143) also distinguish between recruitment and selection. They define recruitment as a process which aims to attract appropriately qualified candidates for a particular position from which it is possible and practical to select and appoint a competent person or person. Selection is a process which involves the application of appropriate techniques and methods with the aim of selecting, appointing and inducting a competent person or persons.

In addition to the above definition, Taylor (2008:214) defines recruitment as a process that involves actively soliciting applications from potential employees, selection techniques are used to decide which of the applicants is best suited to fill the vacancy. He further characterises recruitment as a positive activity that requires employers to sell themselves in the relevant labour market so as to maximise the pool of well qualified candidates from which future employees can be chosen. By contrast, selection can be seen as a negative activity insofar as it involves picking out the best of the group and turning down the rest.

A competency-based approach can also help the individual to determine whether they match the competencies required to undertake the job, including the values of the organisation.

Every organisation, regardless of its size, product or services, must recruit applicants to fill positions. Organisations depend on the recruitment and selection of competent people to enable it to achieve its strategic objectives and results. The recruitment process is a critical step that allows an inflow of good talent into any organisation. Talent consists of individuals who possess the required competencies for a specific job in an organisation.

Recruitment is the process of surveying all sources of personnel, inside and outside the organisation, to locate and attract the best possible candidates for new or vacated positions.

Recruitment, according to Grobler, *et al* (2002:136), is the process of acquiring applicants who are available and qualified to fill positions within the organisation. The process consists of a sequence of steps that should be followed to ensure the best possible applicant with the competencies to be an above-average employee. Recruiting good applicants has always been challenging, however, the emergence of competency-based recruitment and selection methods have greatly improved the processes.

Armstrong (2001:385) defines the overall aim of the recruitment and selection process to obtain, at a minimum cost, a number and quality of employees, to satisfy the human resource needs of any organisation. He identifies three stages of recruitment and selection as follows:

- *Defining requirements*: Includes job descriptions and job specifications;
- *Attracting candidates*: Includes reviewing and evaluating alternative sources of applicants; and
- *Selecting candidates*: Sifting applicants, interviewing and assessing them.

In recruiting candidates, a competency-based approach means that the competencies defined for a role are used as framework for the selection process. The benefits of using competencies for selection purposes is that key characteristics can be identified and isolated and utilised for identifying the most suitable candidate.

Experience with a range of organisations shows they improve the accuracy in assessing people suitability or potential for different jobs by utilising competency-based approaches to selection. According to Wood and Payne (1998:23), the benefits for using competency-based approaches include the following:

- They facilitate a closer match between a person's skills and interests and the demands of the job;
- They help prevent interviews and assessors from making 'snap' judgements about people or from judging them on characteristics that are irrelevant to the job in question;
- They can be used to underpin and structure the full range of assessment and development techniques – application forms, interviews, tests, assessment centres and appraisal ratings; and
- By disaggregating an individual's profile into specific skills and characteristics, development plans can more accurately be targeted to areas of true development needs.

According to Joubert (2007:19), winning companies and institutions, recruit employees based on behavioural competencies. This ensures that employees recruited would be able to demonstrate their knowledge, skill and attitude immediately upon appointment.

The main selection methods are interviews, assessment centres, and the tests. Interviews consist of individual interviews where there is a face-to-face discussion between the interviewer and candidate. The interview is still a popular method to select applicants for the job.

A more comprehensive approach to selection is provided by the use of assessment centres. These incorporate a range of assessment techniques and typically focus on identified competencies for a given job. Assessment centres provide good opportunities for indicating the extent of which candidates match the culture of the organisation (Armstrong, 2001:404).

Psychometric testing is generally used as a term which encompasses all types of psychometric assessments (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2006:183). These tests do not measure competencies but are used to measure individual differences like personality, aptitude, ability and intelligence. There is a choice between the main selection methods. The following diagram illustrates the accuracy of some methods of selection.

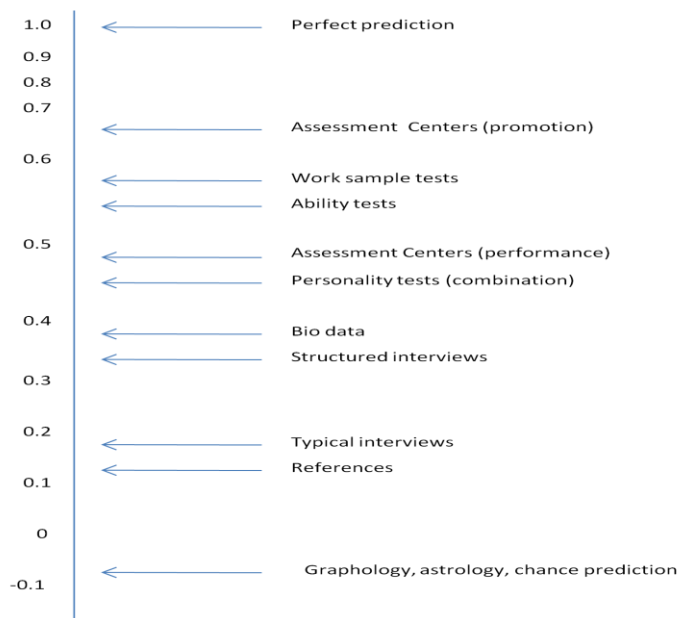


Figure 2.2 : Accuracy of some methods of selection (Taylor, 2008)

The accuracy and validity of each method in predicting success in a job is important when recruitment and selection activities are undertaken. It can be seen that the assessment centre method has got high accuracy levels as a selection method.

2.3 Competency measurement and assessment

Competency assessment has long demonstrated value to human resource departments in areas such as recruitment and selection, performance management, employee development, succession planning, and organisational change. As a consequence, the majority of leaders in organisations focus on organisational gains rather than the individual benefits of competency assessment. But competency assessment is more than just an organisational tool. It has benefits for individual employee development as well.

Assessments collect data from candidates that can be used to predict their future job performance. This is done by measuring three basic kinds of information:

- What candidates *have done* in the past based on their previous work experience, job-relevant activities, accomplishments, and education;
- What candidates *could do* based on their underlying potential and aptitude for different tasks and activities; and
- What candidates *want to do* in the future base on their work and non-work goals, preferences, and interests?

Companies that use staffing assessments are assuming that information collected from candidates during the application process can be used to accurately predict what these candidates will do weeks, month, or years after they are hired (Hunt, 2007:25). The main reason assessments work is because

the behaviour of people is remarkably consistent over time. This is true regardless of the jobs they hold and the environments they work in. The accuracy of staffing assessments does not mean that people are unable to change their behaviours at all.

Various methods can be used for identifying and assessing competencies. According to Dubois (1993:26), a competency model is the starting point for any competence measurement. Typically, organisations use one of the five methods of variations listed below:

- Job competence assessment method;
- Modified job competence assessment method;
- Generic model overlay method;
- Customised generic model method; and
- Flexible job competency model method (Dubois, 1993:71).

Competency Assessments are intended to align the objectives of an individual with that of an organisation to optimise the level of performance of the individual and heighten the person's self esteem. The aim of competency assessment is ultimately to maximise and maintain performance right through organisations by maintaining controls to produce the functioning of a productive unit (Van Wyk, Boshoff & Bester, 2003: 45).

The five areas outlined below represent the most valuable benefits individuals can derive from using competency assessment. Career practitioners can help employees make the most of the competency assessment process by coaching them in each of these areas.

- *Identifying individual strengths and weaknesses:* Perhaps the most simple, and yet the most powerful benefit individuals can derive from competency assessment is a realistic appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses. Many professionals are overscheduled; and, as a result, opportunities to reflect one's work responsibilities and performance are rare. Competency assessment allows individuals to formally take stock of their areas of strength and areas for development. What's more, if used regularly, assessments help individuals to measure their progress and skill growth over time.
- *Providing evidence for needed development activities:* With many companies cutting professional development budgets, employees can feel they have to justify their own desire for growth and continued development. Developmental activities such as training, seminar and conferences, coaching, mentoring, job rotation, and international assignments can vary in cost and require time away from the office. Focusing one's professional development activities is therefore quite important. Competency assessment results allow individuals to pinpoint exactly where they need further development.
- *Increasing ongoing dialogue with the manager:* A major benefit of participating in competency assessment activities is that dialogue with one's manager is likely to increase. Rather than addressing development only during performance appraisals, competency assessment encourages ongoing conversation regarding performance levels. Increasing communication with one's boss is almost always to an employee's benefit. Doing so helps employees' development stay at the forefront of their boss' mind, and gives employees a chance to ask for further feedback or clarification. More formalised managers' mind, and gives employees a chance to ask for further feedback or clarification. More formalised discussions with one's manager also provide an ongoing 'reality check' on the status of progress made.

- *Fostering continuous improvement:* Competency models, and subsequently competency assessment, are built based on the behaviours of high performance employees. The very foundation of these assessments, therefore, is aspirational in nature. Competency assessment provides a guide for continuous improvement and can help answer questions like, “How have I progressed? Am I where I want to be? What kind of support or resources do I need to move forward?”
- *Informing short- and long-term career decisions:* The value of participating in competency assessment can benefit an individual even after he or she leaves an employer. Self-assessment can provide insights that lead to identifying one’s preferred industry, job role, or, at the very least, information about one’s dominant strengths, traits or work style. Competency assessment can also augment workers’ confidence by reinforcing what they may have long suspected was a skill, but for which they have long suspected was a skill, but for which they had no validation or evidence. Competency tools can also serve people in concrete situations like job interviews.

The advantages of using competency assessments are numerous. These tools provide a ‘reality check’ and baseline of individual performance. Beyond a simple recognition of skill levels, however, strengths that emerge from competency assessment can be used to determine readiness for a promotion or justification for new, more challenging learning opportunities.

Selection assessment determines whether the organisation is appointing a competent person. In a selection context the organisation is measuring competency and we do so, unless we have internal candidates, without any direct exposure to the individual’s prior performance and experience. We rely on the honesty and subjective reports of others, to tell us about the candidate’s past (Swanepoel *et al*, 2008:281).

Developmental assessments allows an organisation to compare the set of competencies of an individual with those required by a certain role, position or job and then to bridge the gap between the two through the application of training and developmental opportunities, where these re appropriate.

Performance Management is different from competency assessments in that it assesses the results of human endeavour. In this sense it controls the achievement of strategic objectives. That is of course, if these strategic initiatives and roles have been embedded into the competency profiles in the first place. The methodology most often used in assessing performance outcomes is (Williams, 1998:95):

- Daily monitoring of achievement of targets on a daily / weekly basis. This is an integral element of daily operational management;
- 360-degree evaluation;
- Structured interviews;
- Quarterly performance evaluation against strategic objectives; and
- Client Surveys – in customer / client focused environments.

Performance management is a control mechanism in the business sense. It is also a powerful developmental tool when applied in a structured and consistent manner.

2.3.1 Measurement and assessment of competencies

Assessment is about the collection of evidence for performance. According to Fletcher (1997:19), the purpose of assessment is to collect sufficient evidence to demonstrate that individuals can perform or behave to the specified standards in

a specific role. It can be added to this purpose by clarifying that in competence-based assessment reference is made to work roles and therefore to standards of occupational competence. Occupational competence reflects performance of work. The definition of the purpose of competence-based assessment, according to Fletcher (1997:46), will therefore be:

- To collect sufficient evidence of workplace performance to demonstrate that individuals can perform or behave to the specific standards required within a specified occupational role.

Assessment is the structured process of identifying, gathering and interpreting information about a learner's achievement, and making judgments about an individual's performance in relation to registered national standards and qualifications for a particular phase of learning (Opperman & Meyer, 2008:91).

The purpose of assessment includes the following options:

- Assessment of competence for the purpose of personal development on the path of continuous development and lifelong learning
- Progression onto a learning programme;
- Promotion in the workplace; and
- A career or job change.

Evaluation is the collection, analysis, and interpretation of information about any aspect of a programme of education or training as part of a recognised process of judging its effectiveness, its efficiency, and any other outcomes it may have (Opperman & Meyer, 2008:188).

The purpose of assessment is therefore to gain an understanding of what learners know and can do, and to compare such knowledge and skills with specific performance standards and qualification requirements.

2.3.1.1 Common competence assessment tools

Competency assessment methods include observation and the evaluation of performance through exercises and questioning. In addition to the assessment methods, several assessment instruments are used during assessment. Assessment instruments relate to the nature of the assessment task or activity that the learner must perform. Examples of the common assessment instruments being used by organisations include:

- Assignments;
- Case studies;
- Examinations / tests;
- Practical exercises / demonstrations;
- Simulations; and
- Questions and answers.

Different types of assessment can be applied to assess the candidate's competence against set criteria. The type of assessment will depend on the purpose of assessment and on the environment in which the assessment will take place.

Recent literature reviews list the following assessment methods in descending order of criterion validity correlations with job performance:

Assessment Method	r
Assessment Centers	.65
Interviews (behavioural)	.48 to .61
Work-sample tests	.54
Ability tests	.52
'Modern' personality tests	.39
Biodata	.39
References	.23
Interviews (non-behavioural)	0.05 to .19

**Table 1: Competency assessment methods
(Spencer & Spencer, 1993:242)**

The competencies that appear in the Senior Management Service (SMS) Competency Framework are in no order of importance to the role of senior managers in the Public Service. The following competencies are viewed as being critical for high performance in the senior manager role:

- Strategic capability and leadership;
- Programme and project management;
- Financial management;
- Change management;
- Knowledge management;

- Service delivery innovation (SDI);
- Problem solving and analysis;
- People management and empowerment;
- Client orientation and customer focus;
- Communication; and
- Honesty and integrity.

The SMS Competency Framework has four proficiency levels that consist of specific behavioural indicators that noticeably reflect different expected levels of performance / expertise. The proficiency levels are as follows:

- Basic;
- Competent;
- Advanced;
- Expert.

When assessing competencies at the recruitment stage, there needs to be an indication of what proficiency levels are required for a specific job.

2.3.2 Competency measurement methods for staffing

All staffing assessments are designed to collect information from candidates to predict future job-related behaviours. But there are tremendous differences in

how they accomplish this goal. The development of different methods for assessing candidates is a reflection of the complexity of both people and job performance. It is not possible to obtain a complete picture of a candidate's job potential by using a single type of assessment instrument (Pilbeam & Corbridge, 2006:173).

Most staffing assessments can be placed into one of seven categories based on how information from candidates is collected. Some of the common staffing assessment methods include the following (Hunt, 2007:40):

- Physical examinations;
- Investigations;
- Interviews;
- Résumé screens;
- Self-report measures;
- Competency tests; and
- Situational measures.

2.3.3 Measurement process

In order to distinguish between effective and ineffective assessments, it is important to first have clear understanding of how staffing assessments work. The entire notion of staffing selection is based on the belief that candidates with certain attributes are more likely to be effective for some jobs. In other words, all candidates are not equally qualified for all jobs. The role of assessments is to

determine which candidates are better for a given job (Swanepoel *et al*, 2008:279).

Assessments do not classify candidates into categories of 'good' and 'bad' in a general sense. They classify candidates as 'good' or 'competent' with regard to a certain job or position. They do this by indicating which candidates are most likely to display behaviours that are associated with successful job performance. The measurement process is informed by a measurement tool that helps predict success or failure in a given job (Hunt, 2007:78).

Predictors are a selection instrument or tool that is used to assist managers in making selection decisions (Taylor, 2005:158). A predictor is thus any method that can be used to forecast a performance standard or a criterion (Swanepoel *et al*, 2008:80). Commonly past behaviour is used to predict future performance. In addition, observations are made to predict performance on observable competencies like communication skills.

Hunt (2007:81) illustrates how assessments predict job performance by identifying the following phases for predicting job performance.

- Assessment of the candidates utilising various assessment methods and obtaining scores from the measurement;
- Once the results have been obtained, the evaluations of those candidates take place;
- Actual work performance is compared with the results obtained from their assessments; and
- Participants that perform and obtain the assessment results that closely match the given performance standard are then considered for appointment.

The final decision is based on considering all information obtained from the measurement tool.

2.4 The selection interview

Selection is essentially the process of determining which individuals will most likely make the best employees to match particular job requirements of the organisation. The basis for selection is a competency framework which defines the critical competencies required for the job and which must then be assessed.

Nzama, de Beer & Visser (2008:39) indicates that the recruitment and selection of employees is central to the human resource strategy of most organisations. He further states that organisations use different methods to assess employees in various area of human resources management.

It is also referred to as personnel selection, probably because in essence it helps to decide about making someone part of the organisation's employees (Swanepoel *et al*, 2008:279).

The purpose of selection is to match people to work. It is the most important element in any organisation's management of people, simply because it is not possible to optimise the effectiveness of human resources by whatever method, if the quantity or quality of people is less than the organisation needs.

A number of selection tools are utilised during the process of selecting the best employee for the job. According to Roberts (2005:13) these tools include, among others:

- *Psychometric testing*: These tests can either be ability or personality whereby ability tests measure specific aptitudes such as vocabulary, numeracy, spatial awareness, typing speed and accuracy. They are used mostly in selection for

clerical positions. Personality tests, on the other hand, are used to measure the range of personal characteristics, values and attitudes that shape an individual's belief and behaviours. In addition to these, there is ability tests which measure the degree of aptitude required for a specific job.

- *Organisations used exercises to assess whether a job applicant can do a job:* These exercises involve a process where candidates are given a preview of the job and the role. This is followed by a provision of some work simulations on which to base a judgment of their performance. Exercises used in test work simulations must, according to Roberts (2005:14), have the following elements. They must be realistic, capable of being observed and evaluated, encourage true rather artificial behaviours from candidates, and be cost effective. Developing realistic exercises means measuring those aspects that are causally related to job performance.
- *Assessment Centres:* According to Roberts (2005:14) it involves the application of a number of techniques over a prolonged period in order to build a comprehensive picture of the candidate. Assessment centres have the highest predictive validity of all the selection techniques, but are an amalgam of techniques rather than a technique in their own right.

According to Nel *et al* (2001:243,244), the selection process is a series of steps through which applicants pass. These steps represent the 'tools', or methods of selection. The steps are essentially a number of eliminators; as certain applicants drop out of the process at each step, so the applicant pool becomes smaller. A typical set of steps include:

- Initial screening;
- Application blank;

- Interview(s);
- Employment tests and competency assessment exercises;
- Reference checks;
- Medical check; and
- Appointment.

Although the sequence of steps may vary from organisation to organisation, with some steps even taking place simultaneously, the process is designed to determine those candidates who are likely to be successful and eliminate those likely to fail.

Grobler *et al* (2006:192) states that managers realise that the selection process is critical to their organisation, yet they often dread the process, particularly the interview. Throughout literature, it has constantly been shown that the selection interview is low in both reliability and validity. Reliability is a particular concern with interviews because the interview technique does not have the consistency of form that the written test or the reference check may have. Thus, the interview is not as consistent or reliable in a selection technique as other methods.

To assess factual and measurable hard-side skills, the information can be obtained from interviews, references, résumés and 360-degree assessments. For soft-side skills, the use of psychological assessments, subordinate and customer feedback, and 360-degree feedback geared towards the specific soft-skills to be assessed are the most appropriate competency assessment tools.

An interview can be described as a conversation with a purpose, Armstrong (2001:413). The aim of the interview includes to meet and interact with the top

rated applicants from the pool of received applications, and to assess competence for future work performance. Interviews usually range from structured to unstructured.

Top-level executives rely primarily on interviews, résumés, and reference when collecting information about the candidates in the pool. They do not, according to Sessa & Taylor (2000:28), often use the more sophisticated selection tools available such as individual assessments, assessment centres, or tests. However, what seems to be more important than the type of selection tools used is the type of information used to make the selection decision.

The advantages and disadvantages for interviews are as follows:

- Interviews allow the selection panel to probe questions that would give them enough information to assess the suitability of the candidates;
- They also provide an opportunity for the panel to describe the job content to the prospective employee;
- Interviews afford the applicant to ask questions and to assess the organisation; and
- They also help to determine both job fit and organisational fit of the applicant.

On the other hand, the disadvantages of interviews include the following:

- Interviews possess a low validity in helping the panel make sound judgment of the applicant;
- They rely primarily on the skill of the interviewer, and if the interviewer has poor interviewing skills, then the information collected is inaccurate; and

- Interviews do not necessarily assess the candidate's competence.
- In selection interviews, selection panels maybe biased and end up making subjective judgments on the applicant

In order to deal with the short comings of interviews, a structured or patterned interview is utilised. A structured or patterned interview requires the interviewer to ask a serious of predetermined, job-related questions. This method is also called Competency-Based Behavioural Interviewing (CBBI). According to Hoevermeyer (2006:xvii), the essence of CBBI is to ensure that a candidate posses the skills, knowledge and abilities to be successful in an organisation. CBBI accomplishes this by amplifying those job-related competencies that are mission critical and unique to the organisation's success.

Structured interviews, according to Nzama, *et al* (2008:40), furthermore generally have higher face and content validity than unstructured interviews and are less open to bias.

Competency-based interviewing is the only defensible method of interviewing in the current South African context, Saunders (2002:116). It makes interviewing a fair and objective process and improves the ability to select the most competent person for the job.

2.5 The assessment centre method

An organisation's competitive advantage is dependent on the quality of its employees. Anyone involved in selecting staff needs to have an overall picture of applicants, how they work in practice, how they relate to others and their motivation. The competence of an individual for any particular role is determined by their knowledge, skills and preferred behaviours.

Assessment centres are one of the best methods available for assessing candidates for the personal qualities needed in particular job. Organisations use assessment centres to predict candidates' future work performance, including their fit with the organisational culture (Assessment Centres, 2009).

A well designed and managed Assessment Centre will ensure that you pick the best quality recruits who have the potential to drive your company forward. Staff turnover will be reduced and productivity increased by selecting the right people for the job. The costs of recruiting the wrong people are much greater than the cost of an Assessment (Centre Perception Business Psychologist, 2009).

Assessment centres are widely recognised as a powerful means of assessing candidates in competencies vital to organisational success. They are a reliable and objective means of allowing you to assess whether the candidate can demonstrate the skills they have included in a curriculum vitae or application form, and give an accurate profile of an individual's skills, abilities and style of working.

Moses & Byham (1997:133) highlight the reasons why Assessment Centre assessments are considered powerful. The reasons include the following:

- Predicting behaviour from behaviours;
- Safety in numbers;
- Advantage of working in groups;
- Practice makes perfect;
- Use of behaviour data; and

- Behavioural dimensions or competencies.

2.5.1 Defining the assessment centre method

The term 'assessment centre' refers to an interview type, or approach, in which groups of candidates participate in team-based, exercises simulating workplace situations over a period of several hours.

An assessment centre is an evaluation process that can be used to identify the future potential of employees and job candidates (Jansen & de Jongh, 1997:3). However, it should not be seen as a replacement for other techniques that are used in selection procedures such as interviews, psychological tests and job evaluations, but as a supplement to these other methods.

Thornton & Byham (1982:1) states that an assessment centre is a comprehensive, standardised procedure in which multiple assessment techniques such as situational exercises and job simulations are used to evaluate individual employees for various purposes.

Despite its name, the 'assessment centre' is not a place but a method or process designed to assess skills or potential in as comprehensive and rigorous way as possible. A properly designed 'assessment centre' involves the assessment of groups of participants by a team of trained observers. Candidates take part in a series of specially designed exercises or activities (Dale & Illes, 1992:123).

2.5.2 Goals, objectives and purposes of the assessment centre

The most common objective of assessment centres in operation today is to select personnel to fill immediately and specific position openings. Candidates for these opening are drawn from the organisation's normal sources, including new applicants as well as present employees in lower level jobs. Other purposes

for assessment centres, according to Moses & Byham (1997:47), include individual development and appraisal of management potential.

Edenborough (2005:21) states that assessment centres provide a means for a fairly direct production behaviour that is seen as evidence or otherwise of a competency.

According to Greyling (2003:10), assessment centres in particular measure a set of performance related traits such as flexibility, problem-solving or interpersonal sensitivity. The performance-related traits are usually referred to as dimensions and the assessment centre objective is to use several exercises and several assessors in order to achieve the most comprehensive and clearest indication of a dimension.

2.5.3 Characteristics of assessment centres

Assessment centres are a reliable and objective means of allowing you to assess whether the candidate can demonstrate the skills they have included in a curriculum vitae or application form, and give an accurate profile of an individual's skills, abilities and style of working.

The assessment centres have been shown to be the most comprehensive and predictive assessment device. And so they are – when they conform to certain principles (Fletcher & Anderson, 1998).

Assessment centres are a hugely successful way to recruit for the simple reason that over the course of the selection process you see how a candidate will actually perform in your role rather than the façade of their interview model.

According to Taylor (2008:306), the assessment centre has been referred to as 'the Rolls Royce' of selection methods, and is the approach that has received the

best all-round publicity. Validity studies have consistently found assessment centre techniques to have good predictive ability, and they appear to be liked by candidates too.

According to Roberts (2005:15), assessment centres have the highest predictive validity of all the selection techniques, but they are an amalgam of techniques rather than a technique in their own right.

2.5.4 Benefits of assessment centres

The assessment centre methods have been proven to increase both 'on the job' performance and reduced staff attrition.

Assessment tools such as assessment centres also offer candidates and employees the opportunity to prove their capabilities, develop their strengths and identify areas of comparative weakness.

2.5.5 Differences and similarities

Assessment centres are designed primarily for selection whereas development centres identify potential and training need (Taylor, 2007:9).

Ballantyne & Povah (2004:142) highlights the main differences between an assessment centre and a development centre. The differences are the following:

- Development centres main focus is on development whereby the process involves identification of high-potential individuals and also diagnosing job-related strengths and weaknesses. This is the start of a process; and

- Assessment centres are mainly used for selection, whereby external recruitment and internal promotions are being considered. This is the end of a process.

Ballantyne & Povah (2004:145) further view the assessment centre and the development centre as operating along a continuum which involves the following process:

- Selection;
- Identification of potential;
- Diagnostic process; and
- Coaching and Development.

2.5.6 Assessment centre process

Assessment centres provide a broader behaviourally based assessment using a number of carefully designed exercises. Assessors use objective measures to assess candidates' performance in exercises that are specifically designed to critically examine the criteria for selection.

The assessment centre process involves a number of techniques and a number of assessors, breaking down the assessment of candidates into a number of components and then reassembling for a complete picture on which a decision is based. There are two main applications for assessment centres process:

- Development; and
- Selection.

The Assessment Centre exercises comprise of the following exercises:

- *Group Discussions:* Involves a joint planning or review activity with some degree of advocacy. This could include working through plans to enable organisations to implement a certain key action;
- *Interview Simulation:* Candidates are required to role play with a trained facilitator. This tests the candidate's ability to establish rapport, use time effectively, gather information and put together recommendations;
- *In-basket Exercises:* Candidates are required to handle and process simulated correspondence. They are then expected to draw overall strategic lessons and set directions in addition to handling matters of urgency that may be depicted; and
- *Analysis Exercise:* Assesses the ability to produce a report following the analysis of complex information. They are required to review various forms of information some of which may be irrelevant or contradictory and come to a recommendation.

The essential feature of an assessment centre is the use of situational tests to observe specific behaviours demonstrated by a participant. Assessment centre has guidelines, which specify the elements of an assessment centre as follows (Spangenberg, 2003:29):

- Use of competencies based on job profiling and relevant organisational analysis; and
- Exercises or simulations are designed to provide information for the competencies being assessed.

2.5.7 Other assessment centre considerations

It is important to realise that Assessment Centre results are based on candidate's performance at a certain time. Although they can provide a good indication of a candidate's future potential, they can never guarantee absolute certainty (Jansen & De Jongh, 1997:7).

More and more companies are becoming interested in Assessment Centres, but what makes them so appealing? According to Jansen & de Jongh (1997:8) this has a lot to do with the way in which the assignments are designed. The assignments are very true to life and involve practical, relevant tasks that elicit concrete behaviour. This behaviour is the one used to assess competence or not yet competent status of an employee (Jansen & De Jongh, 1997:10).

2.6 Competency assessment and work performance

In competency-based human resource management systems, selection and placement decisions are based on the 'fit' or 'match' between job competency requirements and person competencies. The underlying premise 'the better the fit between the requirements of a job and competencies of a person, the higher the person's job performance and job satisfaction will be.' High job performance and satisfaction in turn predict employee retention:

- Because good performers need not be fired; and
- Because satisfied employees are less likely to quit.

At present, many organisations are becoming interested in management and appraisal of competence – the 'how' of performance. They are seeking more qualitative assessment, oriented to the future and focused on development.

Competency-based Performance Management System (PMS) shifts the emphasis of appraisal from organisation results achieved to employee behaviours and competencies demonstrated.

A PMS that combines planning, management, and appraisal of both performance results and competency behaviours is called a 'mixed model' of Performance Management or a 'total Performance Management' approach. Mixed models assess and reward both performance and competence, both what employees actually 'delivered to the bottom line' in the past year and how they did it: the characteristics they showed that predict superior performance in their present job, or in future jobs.

In most mixed models, achievement of performance results is quantified, tied to unit goals, and used to make compensation decisions.

According to de Lange *et al* (2003:40), the competency-based approach to defining the desired performance criteria in organisations stems from the organisational need to define and develop skills reflecting the current and projected human resource needs and performance of the organisation. It is a critical responsibility of senior management to identify the core competencies of the enterprise, and to ensure that the competencies required by managers, specialists, and the workforce in general, are adequate, appropriate and in line with the mission of the organisation. The development of a comprehensive competency framework and a complementary PMS is believed to provide an opportunity for enterprise and individual growth, and in the longer term, increased shareholder value.

Objective and subjective performance indicators are frequently used to measure managerial effectiveness. Conceptually, effective management can be defined in terms of organisational outcomes (Cascio, 1998:224). The primary emphasis in

this definition is on managerial actions or behaviours judged relevant and important for optimising resources.

The measures of 'leadership ability' and 'competence' are known to be more predictive of managerial success, since such measures should be directly relevant to managerial job requirements (Cascio, 1998:228).

A competency-based approach to performance assessments, point to the underlying rationale that a competency can be viewed as a cluster of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours that may be related directly to desired performance on a particular job.

Thornton & Byham (1982:61) identifies and compares five approaches to predicting managerial effectiveness. These are:

- Supervisor ratings of potential;
- Psychometric testing and other paper and pencil measurements;
- Clinical evaluation by psychologists and related professionals;
- Background interviews; and
- Assessment Centres.

It has been known for a long time that assessment centre ratings predict the criterion of promotability. Assessment Centre ratings more strongly predict advancement than performance (Perception Business Psychologist, 2009).

According to Muchinsky *et al* (2002:80), a predictor is any variable used to forecast a criterion or a standard of performance. In competency-based

applications, predictors of job performance criteria are informed by productivity, absenteeism, turnover and other factors. All predictors, like other measuring devices, can be assessed in terms of their quality. Competency assessment, through a performance score, assists in predicting job success or failure.

Muchinsky, *et al* (2002:115) identified four major standards that are useful in organising information obtained about predictors. The identified standards are:

- *Validity* defined as the ability of the predictor to forecast criterion performance accurately;
- *Fairness* defined as the ability of the predictor to render unbiased predictions of job success across applicants in various subgroups;
- *Applicability* defined as whether the selection method can be applied across the full range of job and applicant types; and
- *Cost* defined as the cost of implementing the selection method.

Assessment centers as predictors of success or failure in the job, do meet the above standards (Taylor 2005:160).

2.6.1 Work performance

Performance reflects behaviour, while effectiveness implies the assessment of actual organisational outcomes. Outcomes may be subject to outside factors beyond the control of the leader, making it difficult to determine exactly what is driving the particular outcome of interest. Demonstrated competence is classified as performance (Williams 1998:101).

According to Langdon (2000:12), all performance, first of all, produces and output, tangible work in the form of some product, service or knowledge. Outputs are the 'deliverables' we see from work groups, jobs, core processes, and business units. The outputs the business decides to produce at its business unit level must be capable of being traced throughout the business from that level through processes, individuals and work groups. He further identifies key dimensions of performance as involving the following:

- *Behaviour* – the act of doing things, demonstrating competence in a given task;
- *Standards* – which relates to the expectations that the product or the service delivered must conform to certain levels of customer requirements;
- *Support* – this relates to processes that would enable individuals to be motivated to do work and processes that must be adequate to enable work to be done; and
- *Human relations* – whereby managers and co-workers affect performance behaviours by their attitudes, temperaments and prejudices.

Behaviour, standards, support and human relations are the four critical layers of performance and all being found to influence performance on a business unit, core process, individual jobs, and work groups levels. Each of these levels and layers of performance must be aligned to enable performance.

Work performance is guided throughout the organisation by performance management. Williams (1998:94) states that performance is what the person or system does, whereas performance management is the quantification of what was done, and performance evaluation is the attachment of a judgment of the value or quality of the quantified performance measurement. All three are

needed in performance management. This is the process of ensuring that employees at all levels in the organisation:

- Produce the results expected from them that are necessary for the continuing success of the business; and
- Are motivated and utilised to their full potential.

According to Hartle (1997:12), performance management is defined as a process for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved, and how it is to be achieved, and an approach to managing people which increases the probability of achieving job-related success.

It involves planning, reviewing, evaluating, recognising and rewarding above average performance while at the same recommending performance improvement interventions, where the work performance of an employee does not meet the acceptable minimum standards.

2.6.2 Leadership and management performance

Good management is about achieving objectives in the most cost-effective manner. A good manager is one whose employees work with him rather than for him. To lead, motivate and to develop the team to achieve the agreed objectives, is the key responsibility and duty for every successful manager. In order for a manager to be successful in getting the job done, Humphreys (1995:15) identifies a number of qualities that the manager must possess. Key qualities or competencies identified involve actions where managers provide clear directions by establishing clear goals and standards as well as involving people in setting those targets. In addition to this, successful managers constantly encourage two-way communication by establishing a climate of openness and trust. To enable employees to achieve their set objectives,

successful managers constantly coach and support these employees and offer both constructive and corrective action where necessary. All these actions are a demonstration of competence that is required for successful leadership within the organisation.

Successful management and leadership are often expressed by means of skills and competencies that must be demonstrated by managers. These skills, according to Whetton & Cameron (2002:17), fall into four categories, namely:

- Personal skills;
- Interpersonal skills;
- Group skills; and
- Communication skills.

Most organisations have identified leadership competencies that they believe to be critical for the success of their business. Although these leadership competency models vary from organisation to organisation, they generally have four large competency clusters:

- Cognitive skills;
- Execution skills;
- Relationship skills; and
- Self-management skills.

The actual behaviours that are appropriate for each of these basic skills vary considerably, depending on the scope and level of responsibility of the position.

On the performance and work of leaders and managers, it has been said that leaders focus on setting the direction, articulating a vision, transforming individuals and organisations, as well as creating something new. The managers, on the other hand, focus on monitoring, directing and refining current performance (Whetten & Cameron, 2002:15).

Boyatzis (1982:40) described a programme of research to discover competencies related to managerial effectiveness. These competencies included personality traits, motives, skills knowledge, self-image and some specific behaviour. The competencies related to managerial effectiveness included personality traits, motives, cognitive skills and interpersonal skills. Several personality traits differentiated between effective and ineffective managers. It was found that effective managers had a strong efficiency orientation, strong socialised power orientation, as well as high self-confidence.

Interpersonal skills also differentiated between effective and ineffective managers. Effective managers had strong oral presentation skills, including the ability to use symbolic, verbal, and nonverbal communication to make clear and convincing presentations to others.

Effective managers have strong conceptual skills. One conceptual skill, sometimes called 'inductive reasoning' is the ability to identify patterns or relationships in information and events; the ability to convey the meaning by developing a concept model or theme.

The research found that four types of leadership behaviours differentiated between effective and ineffective managers, namely:

- Task-orientated behaviour;
- Change-oriented behaviours;
- Relations-oriented behaviour; and
- Participative leadership.

Some authors express leadership and management performance in terms of practices employed by these leaders to be deemed successful and effective in their jobs. Kouzes & Posner (2002:13) state that leadership is not about personality rather about practice. They further state that leaders and managers get extra-ordinary things done in organisations when they engage in these identified practices. The practices deemed to enhance leader performance are the following:

- Model the way;
- Inspire a shared vision;
- Challenge the process;
- Enable others to act; and
- Encourage the heart.

The above practices and competencies, according to Kouzes & Posner (2002:13), are available to anyone in any organisation or situation who accepts the leadership challenge.

Leadership and management is also expressed as what leaders need to be, know and do (Ulrich *et al*, 1996:6). The behaviours to be demonstrated, according to these authors, cover the following key actions:

- Setting the direction which involves developing a vision, mission and strategy to achieve the organisational strategic objectives;
- They mobilise individual commitment by turning vision into accomplishments whilst engaging others. They translate future aspirations into the day-to-day behaviours and actions required of each employee; and
- They engender organisational capability whereby the focus is on individual commitment for the organisation to succeed.

The above actions reflect critical competencies that need to be demonstrated for superior work performance.

Leaders and managers need to be competent to deliver on the organisational strategic results and objectives. Their performance is enabled by the competencies they demonstrate in the work situation. Byham & Moses (1977:93) states that competencies are well defined and reliable; they can be a valuable leadership descriptor for an organisation. They become enablers to the achievement of superior work performance.

In discussing and presenting their competing values framework leadership performance model, Quinn (2003:19) identified and expressed key roles that are responsible for management behaviour needed for success in the job. These roles represent general managerial behaviours that are not necessarily tied to a particular level of organisational hierarchy. To increase the effectiveness, leaders and managers must meet a number of challenges which involve the acquisition and demonstration of competencies required for effective work performance as well as the integration of these competencies with managerial

situations that they encounter. Meeting these challenges, according to Quinn, leads to an increase in behavioural complexities, which reflects the capacity of a leader to draw on and use competencies and behaviours from the different leadership models.

According to the research, Quinn (2003:19) found that there is a link between behavioural complexity and effective performance. It was also found that leaders with high behavioural complexities focused on the board organisation vision as well as emphasising the accomplishment of tasks. The eight roles identified by Quinn (2003:16) are:

- Mentor;
- Facilitator;
- Monitor;
- Co-ordinator;
- Director;
- Producer;
- Broker; and
- Innovator.

In their research for management and leadership work, Pedler & Burgoyne (2001:21) identified eleven qualities of successful managers and leaders. These qualities relate to key competencies that the managers need to demonstrate in order to be successful in their jobs. The eleven qualities fall into three categories

which involve competencies at a foundational level, competencies that affect behaviour and work performance, and lastly, competencies that help people to develop the situation-specific skills for particular context. The qualities identified are also used as the basis for leader and management self-development.

Successful leaders and managers, according to Maxwell (2004:9) are required to master competencies in various areas. These areas are:

- Relationship management, which emphasises the significance of positive relationships in every aspect of life;
- Equipping employees through training and development;
- Having a positive attitude that inspires and motivates others to perform better;
and
- Leading teams to enhance work performance.

The SMS Competencies that are deemed to be the key for the performance of senior managers in the Public Service include the following:

- Strategic capability and leadership;
- Programme and project management;
- Financial management;
- Change management;
- Knowledge management;

- Service delivery innovation (SDI);
- Problem solving and analysis;
- People management and empowerment;
- Client orientation and customer focus;
- Communication; and
- Honesty and integrity.

These competencies are to be demonstrated and recruited for in order to predict future work performance of senior managers in the Public Service.

Leader effectiveness is occasionally measured in terms of the leader's contribution to the quality of group processes, as perceived by followers or by outside observers.

According to Robbins & Decenzo (2004:66), effective leaders and managers are required to carry out a number of key actions if they want to create a more customer-responsive culture. These actions are designed to create employees with competence, ability and willingness to solve customer-problems as they arrive. Of the actions they found critical, selecting competent employees training and developing employees, empowering employees to achieve their objectives and finally rewarding good performance, were found to be directly related to improved employee performance.

Yukl (2002:8) defines leadership effectiveness as the extent to which the leader's organisational unit performs its tasks successfully and attains its goals. The attitude of followers towards the leader is another common indicator of leader effectiveness. Most researchers evaluate leadership effectiveness in terms of

the consequences of the leader's actions for followers and other organisational stakeholders.

Leadership effectiveness refers to the ability to influence others and achieve collective goals. It is important to distinguish between performance and effectiveness. Performance refers to the expected contributions of behaviour to organisational goal accomplishment, whereas job effectiveness refers to the evaluation of the results of such performance. When assessing performance, it is more appropriate to examine elements within the leader's control, such as specific behaviours that facilitate collective action and goal achievement.

Leadership effectiveness is a dynamic process, just as leadership itself is dynamic. Sustained leadership effectiveness is achieved over time. It starts with people committed to growth and development and the capability to meaningfully engage themselves with the mission, vision and values of their organisation.

Leadership is about competencies that are demonstrated by those in charge of organisational activities.

2.6.3 Job satisfaction

Many organisations recognise the importance of the potential link between job satisfaction and a number of desirable organisational outcomes.

Cranny, Smit & Stone (1992:2) stated that job satisfaction can be viewed as a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experience.

According to Mullins (1996:520), job satisfaction does not necessarily lead to improved work performance. Vroom found no simple relationship, and only a low median correlation between job satisfaction and job performance.

Organisations measure job satisfaction primarily because of its presumed direct relationship to the short-term goals of cost reductions through increased individual productivity and reduced absences, errors and turnover.

Job satisfaction is defined as the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs. A person with a high level of job satisfaction holds positive attitudes toward the job, while a person who is dissatisfied with his or her job holds negative attitudes about the job. Job satisfaction is more of an attitude, an internal state. It is associated with personal feelings of achievements, either quantitative or qualitative (Mullins, 1996:520).

General Job satisfaction involves components not caused by the immediate job situation. One is temperamental, and the other is trust in management.

Job satisfaction is an attitude people have about their job. It results from their perception of their job and the degree to which there is a good fit between the individual and the organisation. Ivancevich & Materson (1999:123) identified a number of factors that have been associated with job satisfaction and job fit. Among the more important ones are:

- Pay – the amount of pay received and the perceived fairness of that pay.
- Work job tasks – the extent to which job tasks are considered interesting and provide opportunities for learning and accepting responsibility;
- Promotion opportunities – the availability of opportunities for advancement;
- Recognition and reward – acknowledging employees who are performing well;
- Supervision – the technical competence and the interpersonal skills of one's immediate boss;

- Co-workers – the extent to which co-workers are friendly, competent and supportive;
- Working conditions – the extent to which the physical work environment is comfortable and supportive of productivity; and
- Job security – the belief that one’s position is relatively secure and continued employment with the organisation is a reasonable expectation.

2.6.4 Organisational commitment and job satisfaction

Organisational commitment is defined as an attitude whereby a strong desire to remain a member of a particular organisation, a willingness to exert high levels of effort on behalf of the organisation, and a definite belief in and acceptance the values and goals of the organisation exists (Luthans, 1995:130).

Outcomes of organisational commitment include outcomes such as performance, turnover and absenteeism. There is evidence that commitment results relate to the perception of a warm supportive organisational climate and culture.

Organisational commitment relates to an individual’s orientation toward the organisation in terms of loyalty, identification and involvement, Robbins & Decenzo (2004:164). Robbins indicates that organisation commitment is probably a better predictor because it is a more global and enduring response to the organisation as a whole than job satisfaction.

According to Luthans (1995:129), recent research gives some support that commitment causes job satisfaction.

2.6.5 Job and organisational fit

Person-job fit looks at if the person and the job in question are suited to one another and how well the individual will fit in the overall organisational environment. In determining the job-person fit, the organisational competencies are defined in order to look at the requirements of the company which an individual is applying to.

The competencies are assessed using various tools mostly commonly psychological tests, competency-based interviews and situational analysis exercises.

Person-job fit is different from organisational fit in that organisational fit looks at the many practices within an organisation that help to keep the culture alive and then measure the cultural fit between the organisation and its employees.

Employees who understand and share the organisation's values have a better basis for making choices that match the organisation's goals. The employees are part of and contribute to something larger than them. Organisational culture fit between employees and the organisation contributes to employee retention and organisational success, and this is the reason competency assessments processes measure the potential job and organisational fit at the recruitment stage.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter started by presenting and discussing the context for managerial performance. The concept of organisational culture was discussed and its strong link to performance demonstrated. Organisational performance and its elements were discussed and an attempt to highlight the need for competencies and their assessment toward instilling a culture of high performance was also presented.

In addition to the context for managerial performance, the platform for competency assessments practices was discussed. This platform relates to the field of Competency Based Human Resources management. In discussing this, a number of definitions for competencies were presented as well as attempting to give reasons for and benefits for competency assessments.

In discussing the importance of CBHRM, the process of Competency based Recruitment and selection was illustrated. The detailed discussion of the need and purpose for competencies and their assessment suggest that there is value add in competency assessments.

The chapter went into detail in presenting the competency assessment process and the various tools and techniques that are used in the assessment process. A detailed discussion at the assessment centre method as an appropriate method to assess competencies was undertaken. In discussing the assessment centre method, an attempt to demonstrate the value of competency assessments was shown.

In concluding the chapter, the link of competencies, competency assessments and the dimensions of managerial performance were discussed. These dimensions included behaviours and skills when, demonstrated by managers reflect aspects of effective managerial work performance. In presenting and discussing the links once again the attempt was done to justify the merits of competency assessments in predicting success in the recruitment, placement and work performance of people in managerial positions.

The next chapter will discuss and present the research design and methodology aimed at collecting and information to determine whether competency assessments do offer benefits for employers.

CHAPTER THREE

Research, design and methodology

3.1 Introduction

The empirical study is conducted in order to achieve a specific of objectives. The overall purpose of this study is to determine the usefulness and value-add of competency assessments on the placement and work performance of senior managers within the Public Service. It is aimed at establishing if there is a relationship between the competency assessment scores or results or the subsequent work performance of those appointed. The study will also investigate the merits of these competency assessments. It is envisaged that the study will have a significant impact on the broader utilisation of competency assessments for persons employed by the Public Service.

In going through this study, it is envisaged that the results to be provided will show some correlation between the competency assessment scores and results with the information that is utilised to assess effective placement and work performance. The results should also demonstrate if the competency assessment scores are a possible predictor of employees' job satisfaction as well as better work performance.

This chapter will focus on the research design that has been selected to conduct the study and it will also elaborate on the methodology that has been utilised to obtain information from the participants. The areas to be covered will include the following:

- The research instruments that have been used;
- The data collection and data analysis that has been employed; and

- Over and above this, limitations and ethical considerations will also be addressed.

The method used is hoped to assist with the collection and the analysis of the information that has been obtained, as well as provide insights into the dynamics of this relationship between competency assessments and work performance.

The research design chosen has been proven to yield results that can be utilised to arrive at a conclusion about the thesis statement.

3.2 Research design

The Research Design is concerned with turning research questions into projects. This is an important part of any study but it is often slid over quickly without any real consideration of the issues and possibilities. There is a strong tendency for both those carrying out research studies and those who want results out of them to assume that there is no alternative to the preferred and favoured research design and approach. The choice of a research design and strategy is similar to a choice between swimming, walking, flying or sailing across.

A research design, according to Yin (2003:19) is the logic that links the data to be collected (and the conclusions to be drawn) to the initial questions of this study.

Traditionally there are, according to Robson (1993:40), three research strategies and these are: experimental strategies which are aimed at measuring the effects of manipulating one variable on another variable; secondly a survey strategy which is concerned with the collection of information in standardised form from groups of people; and lastly, a case study research strategy which involves the development of detailed intensive knowledge about a single case or of a small number of related cases.

Robson (1993:41) distinguishes between exploratory, descriptive and explanatory study objectives and or purposes. The following brief description of the above purposes of study is presented:

- *Exploratory*
 - To find out what is happening;
 - To seek new insights;
 - To ask questions;
 - To assess phenomena in a new light; and
 - Usually, but not necessarily, qualitative.

- *Descriptive*
 - To portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations;
 - Requires extensive previous knowledge of the situation, etc., to be researched or described, so that you know appropriate aspects on which to gather information; and
 - May be qualitative and/or quantitative.

- *Explanatory*
 - Seeks an explanation of a situation or problem, usually in the form of casual relationships; and
 - May be qualitative and/or quantitative.

Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2005:190) state that case study is suitable for explanatory, descriptive and explorative research. The authors also state that case studies offer a useful approach in theory development, and they are especially appropriate explaining the 'how' and 'why' questions.

A case study research design is being utilised to conduct this study. The research design followed in this study is both quantitative and qualitative. It

follows a mixed method approach whereby both quantitative and qualitative analysis of results is performed.

A characteristic feature of case studies is that they employ a variety of different techniques. These include questionnaires, interviews, observation and diaries using a number of methods allow the researcher to triangulate the research. The main advantage of employing multiple methods is commonly cited as permitting triangulation. Triangulation relates to the use of evidence from different sources, of different methods of collecting data and of different investigators where feasible, are all triangulation techniques which enhance credibility (Robson, 1993:404). Triangulation entails using more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena (Bryman, 2001:274). Triangulation also refers to the use of quantitative research to corroborate qualitative research findings or vice versa. Research designs that allow triangulation find it particularly valuable in the analysis of qualitative data where trustworthiness of data is a concern. According to Robson (1993:383), triangulation provides a means of testing one's source of information against other sources of information. In this study, a number of research techniques will be utilised. There is an opportunity for a questionnaire as well as an interview data collection method for the gathering of the required information. The use of a number of techniques implies the concept of triangulation.

The case study design chosen for this study subscribes to what Yin (2003:43) defines as a revelatory case. The basis for this study is when an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyse a phenomenon previously inaccessible to scientific investigation.

A case study is defined as a development of detailed intensive knowledge about a single case or a small number of related cases (Saunders *et al*, 2000:94).

The essence of a case study, the central tendency among all types of case studies is that it tries to illuminate a decision or set of decisions why they were taken, how they were implemented, and with what results (Yin, 2003:12).

According to Yin (2003:12) a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

A basic case study entails the detailed and intensive analysis of a single case Bryman (2001:47) observes case study research is concerned with the complexity and particular nature of the case in question.

Case studies are generally strong precisely where statistical methods and formal models are weak (George & Bennett, 2005:19). The authors identify four strong advantages of case methods that make them valuable in testing hypotheses and particularly useful for theory development:

- Their potential for achieving high conceptual validity;
- Their strong procedures for fostering new hypotheses;
- Their value as a useful means to closely examine the hypothesised role of casual mechanisms in the context of individual cases; and
- Their capacity for addressing casual complexity.

According to White (2000:39), a case study may be defined as an extensive study of a single situation such as an individual, family or an organisation. It uses multiple sources of evidence to arrive at a conclusion. In addition to this case study, it investigates a contemporary phenomenon within it's really life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly

evident. White (2000:40) mentions different types of case studies and these are described as follows:

- *Typical*: Here the organisation studied is as typical as possible, for example, a large supermarket or general manufacturing company;
- *Atypical*: Here the example is unusual and out of the ordinary. It is a 'one-off'. Case studies like this add to knowledge and many initiate in the development of new theories and ideas about a subject;
- *Precursor studies*: With large research projects case studies are sometimes used at the start and act as precursors to identify the issues involved before the research is planned in detail; and
- *Multiple case studies*: If time is available it is a good idea to study two or more similar examples. This allows for a comparative treatment and, as a result, helps build and confirm accepted theory.

In addition to the above classification of case studies, Robson (2003:147) presents a similar classification of case studies and discusses five types of research case studies.

- Individual case study;
- Community case studies;
- Social group case studies;
- Case studies of organisations and institutions; and
- Case studies of events, roles and relationships.

White (2000:42) further states that a case study is an excellent vehicle for a dissertation. It is an approach that is suited to a small scale research and may well appeal to a placement student out in industry. Some advantages are the following:

- It can be carried out by a single researcher;
- It is relatively cheap and not dependent on expensive technology;
- A case study will always generate empirical data and information; you will not be solely dependent on already published work. The data may not be present in vast amounts, but it will always be interesting and specific to the example under scrutiny; and
- It takes place in a natural setting within an actual organisation. This gives the work a 'reality' which is often absent from surveys and similar types of investigation. A case study looks at the whole situation and the researcher sees the interrelations as they happen. This background is useful when you come to write up the work.

In addition to the above advantages for case study approach, White (2000:42) lists the following disadvantages and limitations:

- With a single atypical case study it is often difficult to separate out what is unique to the organisation involved and what is common to similar organisations;
- The whole issue of generalisation needs to be handled with caution. The degree to which you can relate to the general position is often limited. At the writing up stage, this caution needs to be stated quite clearly. It is essential that the generalisations arise from the research carried out, rather than what

you think might be the case. Case study research tends to be subjective, but it is a good idea to keep the word 'objective' in mind when writing up; and

- Case studies can generate a lot of information, since each different method used produces its own findings. The analysis and interpretation need to be handled carefully and in a very logical, systematic way. Again, when done effectively, this strengthens the academic argument you are presenting.

The study being conducted used both the questionnaire and the interview to collect information from the participants. The use of two research instruments to gather data subscribes to a mixed method approach to research.

Creswell (2003:217) defines a mixed method approach through the use of concurrent triangulation. The model where when a researcher uses two different methods in an attempt to confirm, cross-validates, or corroborates findings within a single study. This model uses separate quantitative and qualitative methods as a means to offset the weaknesses inherent within one method with the strengths of the other method.

The strategies that are associated with mixed method studies include concurrent procedures which converges quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Cresswell, 2003:16). In this design, the investigator collects both forms of data at the same time during the study and then integrates the information in the interpretation of the overall results. Also in this design, the researcher nests one form of data within another, larger data collection procedure in order to analyse different questions or levels of units in an organisation.

The benefits of multiple methods, according to Robson (2002:371), are that they can be used in complementary fashion to enhance interpretability of results.

The mixed method strategy is advantageous because it is familiar to most researchers and can result in well validated and substantiated findings (Creswell, 2003:217).

3.3 Research methodology

The research design is defined as the naming and the discussion of the overall approach that the researcher will use to test the thesis statement (Hofstee, 2006:113). In addition to the design, the methodology looks as the details of the process utilised to conduct the research study. It explains how the research design was applied. It also describes how the sampling was done, the manner in which the data was collected, and the tools and techniques that were used to analyse the data that was collected. In the research methodology section, the researcher elaborates on the process of collecting and using the data to arrive at a conclusion.

The case study research design was used mainly because it is the intention of the study to explore and explain the possible relationship between the competency assessment scores and the placement and work performance of the senior managers that have been appointed over a period of time.

3.3.1 Population and sampling

The research study requires the collection of information so as to conduct an analysis on the data obtained. The information is obtained from a sample which needs to be drawn from a population. The population refers to the universe of units from which a sample is to be selected, Bryman (2001:85). The population also refers to all the potential subjects who possess the attributes relevant for this research study. In the case of this study, the research population comprised all senior managers in the National Treasury. In order to conduct this study as efficiently as possible and within given timeframes, it was not possible to obtain

all the information from the population, and hence a representative sample of the population was chosen. A sample is the segment of a population that is selected for investigation. It is a sub-set of a population. Bryman (2001:85) defines a representative sample as a sample that reflects the population accurately so that it is a microcosm of the population.

The preferable sample was considered to more than one hundred respondents. The size of the sample was chosen so as to minimise a sampling error. Sampling error is defined as a situation where there are a number of difficulties in obtaining research information from all the selected participants. Bryman & Bell (2007:184) states that the higher the sample the smaller the sampling error. The sample consisted of senior managers (Directors, Chief Directors, and Deputy Directors-General) in the National Treasury. These candidates have been employed at the National Treasury and broader Public Service for at least five years. The majority of these employees are graduates in the field of economics and finance. They have been with the National Treasury for at least three years. A random sampling process was utilised in that these participants were selected across the eight divisions of the National Treasury.

In this research, the process of choosing and selecting the sample involved the following steps:

- Defining population of interest;
- Selection of the data collection method;
- Specifying sample frame in terms of units and elements;
- Selecting a sampling method, either probability or non-probability sampling;
- Determining the sample size;

- Developing operations sampling plan; and
- Executing operational sampling plan.

3.3.2 Research instruments

Having made some initial decisions about what needs to be known and why, a set of research questions and similar decisions about where and from who the research is going to get information, the remaining question is how to obtain the information.

According to Robson (1993:159), a researcher can use a number of techniques to collect data for the purposes of this study. The following commonly used techniques are mentioned and described below:

- *Observation:*
 - *Participant observation* – The investigator takes on a role other than that of passive observer and participates in the events being studied;
 - *Systematic observation* – Use of standardised observation instrument; and
 - *Simple observation* – Passive unobtrusive observation, e.g. of facial expression and language use).
- *Interview:*
 - *Open-ended interview* – No pre-specified set or order of questions; little or no direction from interviewer; goal typically to gain insight into a person's perceptions in a situation;
 - *Focused interview* – Use of interview guide specifying key topics; order of questions not fixed; and
 - *Structured interview* – Standardised set of questions.

- *Use of documents and records* – includes a wide range of written or recorded materials, e.g. minutes of meetings, pupil and patient records, and diaries.

The purpose of this research is to determine whether there is a relationship between the competency assessments and the job placement and work performance of senior managers within the Public Service. The information required for this research included primary data which consisted of information gathered through questionnaires, as well as through the interview guides. The secondary information obtained included competency assessment scores from the service provider as well as individual performance management rating scores obtained from documentation at the National Treasury.

For the purpose of this study, questionnaires are regarded as a series of questions, each one providing a number of alternative choices from which the respondents can select. Questionnaires are widely used in business and enable research to be conducted as efficiently as possible. Questionnaires generate data in a very systematic and orderly fashion. The responses to the questions are quantified, categorised and are subjected to statistical analysis. In this study, the questionnaires constructed were required to comply with the following principles:

- Quality of the questionnaire to ensure quality of the questions;
- Good and easy questions to enable the respondents to answer accurately;
- Keeping questions as simple as possible where each question dealt with one issue;
- A good and attractive layout of the questionnaire to encourage responses to the questions; and

- Designing straightforward and unambiguous questions.

The design of self-completed questionnaires for surveys and other purposes has tended to be an art form, depending on information, knowledge and personal experience. However, there is a reasonable body of experimental evidence which has implication for this task. Robson (1993:247) presents the following suggestions on the design of self-completed questionnaires:

- Specific questions are better than general ones;
- Closed questions are usually preferable to open questions;
- Offer a 'no-opinion' option;
- Omitting the middle alternative and measure of intensity;
- Use of forced choice rather than 'agreed / disagreed' statements;
- Question order; and
- Wording effects.

Further to the designing of questionnaires, Robson (1993:248) highlights the following factors to secure a good response rate to questionnaires.

- Design and layout of questionnaire;
- Covering letter;
- Follow-up and reminders;
- Further follow-ups; and

- The use of incentives for responding.

White (2000:52) highlights a number of advantages of using questionnaires:

- They are cheap and do not incur expense travels;
- They allow for light samples;
- They are relatively quick in receiving a response; and
- They avoid interview bias.

However, the following disadvantages are noted:

- Spontaneous answers may not easily be obtained;
- The researcher cannot be sure that the named respondent has completed the questionnaire; and
- Simple and straightforward questions may limit the provision of sufficient information that is sometimes collected by other methods.

In this study, a questionnaire was designed on the basis of the eleven critical competencies defined for the senior management job levels within the Public Service. The questionnaire consisted of two sections, firstly, biographical information, and secondly, the questions on the twelve critical competence areas for senior managers. The use of structured questions ensured both the use and comparability of the participants' responses.

The process followed with the questionnaires included the following:

- Designing of the questionnaire;
- Checking the validity and reliability of the questions;
- Pilot-testing the questionnaire with a small sample;
- Dispatching the questionnaires electronically to the selected participants;
- Receipt of the questionnaires to the researcher electronically; and
- Analysing and subjecting the questionnaire responses to the statistical analysis.

The study also utilised interview methods to collect data from the senior managers. White (2000:29) states that an interview is a popular form of data collection and can provide, when properly conducted, a rich source of material. The interview is a kind of conversation with a purpose (Robson, 1993:228).

Interviews carried out for research purposes, are a commonly used approach because the interview appears to be quite straight forward and a non-problematic way of finding things out.

The following advantages make interviews popular for collecting information for research purposes. They can be used in a variety of contexts and situations and in conjunction with other research methods. For example, preliminary interviews mainly identify problems which can either be incorporated into a questionnaire or form the basis of a later and more searching interview. The type of interview will depend on the nature of information you want to collect, and it may range from a highly structured predesigned list of questions to a free-ranging conversation.

The real benefit of an interview is that you are face-to-face with the interviewee, so you can clear up any misunderstandings immediately. Either side can question what they do not understand. Also, during the interview the research can reword or reorder the questions if something unexpected happens.

Over and above the listed advantages, Robson (1993:229) highlights some of the advantages of using interviews. Firstly an interview is a flexible and adaptable way of finding things out; face to face interviews offer the possibility of modifying ones line of enquiry, following up interesting responses and investigating underlying motive.

Apart from the advantages, White (2000:29) presented the disadvantages of interviews. They are very time-consuming. The researcher needs to take into account the length of the interview, travelling to and from interview, transcription of tapes and notes. As a result, the researcher may only interview a small sample which may not be representative of the population. The researcher needs to be sure the interview is the best way to get the information required for this study.

Robson (1993:230) discusses common types and styles of interviews that are based on the degree of structure or standardisation of the interview. These include, firstly, a fully structured interview where a set of questions and are asked and responses recorded on a standardised schedule, secondly, a semi-structured interview where the interviewer has worked out a set of questions in advance but is free to modify the order on the basis of what appears most appropriate in the context of the discussion, and finally the unstructured interviews where the conversation develops and the discussions are completely informal.

In using interviews for research purposes, careful preparation which takes time, is required. This preparation includes making arrangements for visits, securing

the necessary entry permission, confirming arrangement, and rescheduling appointments to cover absences and crises.

Moreover, with all interviews there are problems of bias, reliability and validity which must be addressed throughout the whole interview process. Be aware, for instance, of the interviewee who wants to please the interviewer and, as a result, may not tell the truth. The interviewer must ensure that their personal views and, as a result, bias do not creep in when the interview information is being evaluated and interpreted. The interviewer-interviewee relationship is very important and it is essential that the whole process is carefully planned. Finally, remember a friendly spontaneous chat with either a friend or group of people does not constitute an interview.

3.3.3 Data collection and approach

In this study, as already mentioned, a mixed method approach was utilised whereby a questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data and the interview guides used to collect the qualitative data.

A number of meetings were conducted with the National Treasury's acting Deputy Director-General: Corporate Services in order to obtain permission to conduct this study. The questionnaires, with a covering letter, were emailed to the identified respondents by the office of the Deputy Director-General: Corporate Services. The questionnaires were self-administered and returned to the researcher's private email address where information was stored on a computer. A total of two hundred questionnaires were emailed, with 160 were returned.

With regard to collecting information through the interview process, a series of interview meetings were conducted as per the agreed schedule and timeframes. These meetings lasted approximately twenty-five minutes and the researcher

took note of all the responses. A total number of one hundred and sixty face-to-face interview sessions were conducted and the responses were recorded by the researcher.

From the above discussions, the data obtained was deemed to be good enough for this study. This is supported by the fact that the data collected was received from reliable primary as well as secondary sources. In addition to this, the tools and techniques utilised were tested to ensure minimal errors during the data collection process.

3.3.4 Data analysis

The process of data analysis commences once the data gathering and the reduction of masses of data has been completed. Anderson (2009:210) states that data analysis involves more than describing what people said or what the researcher saw. Analysis is a process of thought that enables the researcher to understand the nature of what is being investigated, the relationships between the different variables in the situation, and the likely outcomes of particular actions or interventions. Anderson (2009:214) further states that analysis, therefore, involves finding answers to the research questions using the data collected.

In conducting data analysis, the researcher needs to choose the appropriate process which will depend on the research design and the study being undertaken.

The choices available are firstly, quantitative analysis which focuses more on concrete and quantitative data. The application utilises statistical techniques and methods in dealing with data. In this study, statistical quantitative analysis methods were used to calculate and compute data through the use of a Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Secondly, the data analysis can

take the form of qualitative analysis which employs the techniques guided by the following processes as defined by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2000:383).

In addition to quantitative analysis undertaken, this study also utilised a qualitative approach to analyse information collected through the use of an interview guide. A Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) was used to manage the amount of data as well as presenting and displaying the data.

The study takes the position of an inductive process where the researcher seeks to build up enough information to be utilised for future studies. The results of this process may lead to theory being developed to validate conceptual explanations.

- Categorisation and coding of data
- Unitising data, where possible
- Recognising relationships and developing categories to give meaning
- Developing and testing hypotheses to reach conclusions

3.4 Limitations

In every research study, there is bound to be limitations with regard to the method selected to conduct the research. The case study method's limitations mentioned earlier could have also been addressed by looking at other common research methods. Other methods that could have been utilised include:

- *Survey-based research method:* The advantages of this method are an excellent way of finding out peoples' opinions and attitudes. Surveys can also be used to illicit pure factual information.

- *Correlation-based research method:* This method relies on statistical comparisons where two or more variable exist and where there is a need to establish a relationship between the variables. It can be determined whether the relation presents a positive or negative coloration between the variables.
- *Historical studies:* Has the advantages for the researcher in that the study looks into the events in the past, utilising whatever sources may be available. These are either used to shed light on a particular event or contemporary issue.
- *Evaluative research / appraisals:* Seeks to come to a conclusion about the effect or success level of some situation or intervention. The impact may be determined and recommendations to maximise the positive impact can be further explored.

This research study reflects that correlation-based research may have been the appropriate research design for this kind of study.

3.5 Ethical considerations

Participants in real world studies may sometimes be involved without their knowledge. Sometimes they are misled about the true nature of the study or they may be faced with situations that cause stress or anxiety.

It is important that at every stage of the study to give serious thought and consideration to ethical matters of what the study is what trying to achieve. Ethics, according to Robson (1993:23) refers to rules of conduct, typically to conformity to a code or a set of principles.

In conducting the study, the following ethical principles were identified and observed:

- *No harm to participants:* The purpose and objective of this study was explained to all participants, and participants were asked to participate on a voluntary basis. Proper accommodation, seating was arranged for interviews and discussion during the research. They were informed of the procedures of conducting the study and the types of questions that would be asked.
- *Ensuring informed consent:* All participants were informed of the objectives of the research study. They were informed about all aspects of the research and how their participation will influence the study. Participants were asked to sign a consent letter to indicate and confirm their agreement to participate in the study.
- *Invasions of privacy:* All information to be kept in confidence and not shared unless proper procedures are followed for the sharing of the information.
- *Deceiving participants* – Consultation was conducted with all affected parties. The participants were provided with sufficient information prior to the commencement of the study. They were consulted appropriately and were requested to indicate their comfort level in participating in this study. The participants were also informed of their rights to withdraw from the research study at any time.
- *Data Management:* The information relating to responses to the questionnaires and interview guides will be kept confidentially and not disclosed to any parties unless authorised by the relevant authorities. The information from the competency assessment service provider and the performance management assessment scores from the employees' files will not be shared with any person.
- *Reciprocity and truthfulness:* The benefits of this study to the Department and the participants were explained, discussed and shared with each participant.

- *Conflict of interest:* It was explained and mentioned that there are no aspects of conflict of interests to this study.

3.6 Conclusions

In conclusion, the case study research design followed in this study was from a quantitative paradigm. The measuring instruments that were used were constructed from the critical competencies for SMS and the job satisfaction elements identified from literature. The questionnaire was distributed through the National Treasury's internet to the identified sample of sub-ordinates and superiors of the select group of senior managers.

The interviews were conducted with the selected senior managers and information was gathered from those discussions. The subordinates and the supervisors could respond at their own time. The data was analysed using quantitative methods of analysis following through the use of descriptive statistics. The limitation and ethical consideration for all research studies as discussed, were discussed and adhered to in conducting the research process.

The presentation and analysis of the data collected will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results findings and interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This main aim of this chapter is to focus primarily on the empirical study whereby the study results are presented, reported and fully discussed.

The statistical analyses of the responses from the measuring instruments will be conducted. This will be followed by discussing some of the observations emanating from the analysis.

4.2 Presentation of research findings

The section deals with how data collected has been arranged and presented to allow the process of analysis to proceed without difficulty. The data is presented through the use of tables and diagrams. The tables and diagrams are all numbered for ease of reference.

4.2.1 Analysis of supervisor ratings

The data obtained from the respondents and presented is analysed by utilising statistical methods and techniques. The analysis of the data enables the researcher to create meaning and arrive at some conclusions. In this section, ratios are computed; comparisons and relationships of the respondents are computed and explained. In addition to explanations, the information derived from the data is commented on.

4.2.1.1 Demographic Detail

A total of 160 respondents participated in the survey. About 73% of the respondents were males. The disparity in gender can be attributed to the fact that this was a once male-dominated position. In the past, very few women used to hold supervisory roles. However, nowadays the disparity in gender is one of the issues being addressed (Beijing Conference) and thus it can be noted that the female composition is improving as compared in the past.

Most of the supervisors (61.3%) were aged between 44 and 54 years. Only 21.9% were below 44 years. This is a role which is given to mature people who have been long on the job. Thus, one can conclude that the respondents are the right candidates who can articulate on issues of competence, leadership performance and job satisfaction. This was also supported by the fact that 63.8% have been employed for 11 to 15 years, which means that most of them are more experienced.

Almost 46% of the respondents indicated that they have been managing the person for 3 years whilst about 34% for 4 years. One can conclude that the length in managing the particular person is long enough to come out with a well placed opinion.

The respondents were asked on 11 competencies. These were:

KEY: LEVEL COMPETENCE DEMONSTRATION	
A	Strategic capability and leadership
B	Programme and project management
C	Financial management
D	Change management
E	Knowledge management
F	Service delivery innovation
G	Problem-solving and analysis

KEY: LEVEL COMPETENCE DEMONSTRATION	
H	People management and empowerment
I	Client orientation
J	Communication
K	Honesty and integrity

Table 4.1: Public service competencies for SMS

4.2.1.2 Analysis of results from supervisor competency ratings

- **Strategic capability and leadership**

Almost 94.3% of the supervisors agreed that there were able to provide vision, sets the direction for their unit and inspires staff to deliver departmental mandate. Only 5.7% were not sure. This aspect indicates that the supervisors are able to manage and motivate their subordinates. They believe that they have the leadership qualities. This was further supported by the fact that a clear majority, that is, 96.2% agreed that they hold self-accountable for executing the strategy. In conclusion one can say that from their point of view the supervisors think that they have strategic capability and leadership qualities.

- **Programme and project management**

A clear majority, that is, 97.5% indicated that there are able to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate specific activities in order to deliver the desired results. Only 1.9% were undecided and 0.6% disagreed that there can do the activities. Furthermore 97% agreed that they are able to initiate projects that lead to the achievement of strategic objectives. Only 3.1% were undecided. The high rates of agreement showed that the supervisors are confident that they are capable to do programme and project management.

- **Financial management**

About 96.9% were in agreement that they are capable to prepare budgets that are aligned to strategic objectives of the department. Only 3.1% were undecided. It showed that the supervisors are confident that they are capable to budget. Budgeting is a very critical aspect in an organisation and failure for managers to budget can result in serious consequences for an organisation. In addition, 97.5% of the supervisors agreed that they can develop, implement systems, procedures and processes to improve financial management. In terms of financial processes, the supervisors indicated confidence in performing the duties in their responses.

- **Change management**

Change management is a critical aspect to an organisation. We are living in a world where there is continuous change. New technology is always available and with it new ideas and methods. You need supervisors who do not resist change but are able to implement change and take risks. A clear majority that is 97.5% of the supervisors indicated that they are able to initiate and support change and transform in order to implement new ideas. Only 2.5% were undecided. This indicates that the majority of the supervisors do not resist change management. A large proportion, that is, 98.1% of the supervisors indicated that they can take calculated risks and constantly seek new ideas to bring about change management in service delivery. Only 1% was undecided and 0.6% was in disagreements. In conclusion, one can say that in terms of change management, the supervisor showed that they are capable to implement change management.

- **Knowledge management**

All the respondents agreed that they are able to promote the generation and sharing of knowledge and learning in order to enhance collective knowledge in the department. Furthermore 98.1% indicated that they hold motivational sessions with colleagues to share information and new ideas. In organisation, knowledge management is an aspect which enhances the performance of an organisation. Sharing of knowledge enables the smooth running of the business. This reduces any risks due to ignorance of information pertaining to the business.

- **Service delivery innovation**

A clear majority, that is, 98.1% agreed that they are able to explore and implement new ways of providing and delivering services. Only 1.9% was undecided. A successful organisation is one with good service delivery and always coming up with new innovations.

- **Problem-solving and analysis**

All the respondents agreed that they can systematically identify, analyse and resolve existing and anticipated problems in order to reach solutions timeously. Thus, in terms of problem solving the supervisors agreed that they are capable of solving problems timeously. An organisation that thrives for success is prompted by a system which is able to identify and solve problem timeously.

- **People management and empowerment**

Supervisors ensure that the job is done but the subordinates are responsible in implementing the task. Thus subordinates are very critical in an organisation. The satisfaction of employees indicates that good performance at the work place is enhanced. Employees work very well if they are empowered and the

organisation shows them how important they value them. Almost 99.4% of the supervisors agreed that they are able to manage and encourage their staff optimises their outputs effectively. Also, 98.7% agreed that they are able to create processes to ensure accountability for their staff. Only 1.3% was undecided. If employees are made to be accountable for their actions mistakes detrimental to the organisation are minimised.

All supervisors agreed that they are able to recruit, develop talented and competent people and 98.7% of the supervisors were in agreement that they are able to adapt their leadership style to different situations.

- **Client orientation**

Almost 99.4% were in agreement that they are able to design and implements clear service delivery improvement programmes. In the dynamic world we are living in, one needs to constantly review service delivery programmes in order to satisfy clients. Thus, the supervisors are confident in designing and implementing service delivery.

- **Communication**

A large proportion that is 99.4% agreed that they are able to express and exchange information and ideas in a clear and concise manner. A communication is one of the critical aspects in business. The ability to communicate helps in clearing any misunderstanding and thus improving the performance of an organisation. Furthermore, 99.7% of the respondents agreed that they are able to listen well, and are receptive to other ideas.

- **Honesty and integrity**

All the supervisors agreed that they honour commitments made. However it can be noted that only 5.2% strongly agreed. Almost 97.4% agreed that they establish trust and show confidence in others. Only 2.6% were in undecided. Thus, in conclusion one can say that in terms of honesty and integrity. The supervisors acknowledged that they have all the aspects.

- **Overall ratings**

The overall ratings of the competencies are as follows:

Competence	% in agreement	Rank
Problem-solving and analysis	100%	1
Client orientation	99.4%	2
People management and empowerment	99.2%	3
Knowledge management	99.1%	4.5
Communication	99.1%	4.5
Honesty and integrity	98.7%	6
Service delivery innovation	98.1%	7
Change management	97.8%	8
Financial management	97.2%	9.5
Programme and project management	97.2%	9.5
Strategic capability and leadership	95.3%	11

Table 4.2: Competency Ratings for Superiors

4.2.2 Analysis of responses from subordinate 1

The analysis of responses from subordinate 1 is being presented and analysed.

4.2.2.1 Demographic detail

A total of 160 subordinates participated in the survey. Almost half of the respondents were males, that is, 51.6%. Thus one can say that there was equal distribution in gender in the first group of subordinates. About 52.5% of the subordinates were aged between 33 to 43 years as indicated in the table below.

Age Group	Percentage
22 to 32 years	10.0
33 to 43 years	52.5
44 to 54 years	35.0
>54 years	2.5

Table 4.3: Age group of subordinates 1

Most of the subordinates are more than 32 years thus there are more mature. Almost 54.4% of the respondents attained a degree whilst 38.1% post-matric certificate and 7.5% have matric. However, one can deduce that in terms of subordinates half of them have degrees whereas in terms of supervisors the majority has degrees. The following table gives the length of time they have been managed.

Length	Percentage
1 year	6.3
2 years	23.1
3 years	42.5
4 years	28.1

Table 4.4: Length of time subordinates 1 were managed

It can be concluded that most of the subordinates have been managed for more than 2 years by the supervisor. Thus, the respondents are in a better position to evaluate the supervisor's management skills and style. Furthermore, almost 62.5% of the respondents have been employed for more than 10 years and only

6.3% have been employed for at most 5 years. This means that the subordinates are well experienced.

4.2.2.2 Analysis of competency ratings by subordinate 1

- **Strategic Capability and leadership**

About 86.9% of the respondents indicated that the supervisor gives direction to team in realising the unit's strategic objectives. One can conclude that the majority of the respondents think that the supervisor can lead the subordinates in achieving unit goals. Furthermore, 92.4% agreed that the supervisor assists in defining performance measures to evaluate the success of strategies. In terms of strategic capability and leadership, the first subordinate is in agreement with the supervisor.

- **Programme and Project Management**

A very large promotion (93%) agreed that the supervisor defines the role and responsibilities for project team members and clearly communicates requirements / expectations. Thus, the supervisor is able to do programme and project management.

- **Financial Management**

A clear majority (93.7%) indicated that the supervisor demonstrates knowledge of general concepts of financial planning, budgeting. In addition 91.8% also agreed that the supervisor ensures effective utilization of financial resources. In terms of financial management, the majority of the employees agreed that the supervisor is competent in the area.

- **Change Management**

About 94.3% of the respondents indicated that the supervisor volunteers to lead change efforts outside their work. It can be noted that the supervisor is able to motivate employees to do other issues not related to their usual job description. The subordinates acknowledge (93.7%) that the supervisor proactively seeks new opportunities for change. This means management listens and involve employees when looking for more innovations. Only 6.3% were undecided whilst 1.9% did not agree somehow. In terms of designing activities to enable changes that are aligned to strategic objectives, 93% were in agreement. Management is not resistant to change management and is able to involve employees design models and implement.

- **Knowledge Management**

A clear majority, that is, 97.5% indicated that supervisors are able to use appropriate information systems to manage organisational knowledge. Furthermore, 95.6% also agreed that supervisors nurture a knowledge-enabling environment. Supervisors are capable of sharing and retaining knowledge within the organisation.

- **Service Delivery Innovation**

The subordinates agreed that the supervisor communicates the benefits of service delivery improvement opportunities. This was echoed by 94.3% of the subordinates.

- **Problem-solving and Analysis**

About 94.3% of the subordinates agreed that the supervisor demonstrates logical problem-solving approaches and provides rationale for proposed solutions. Thus,

the subordinates are confident that the supervisor is able to solve problems they encounter.

- **People Management and Empowerment**

Empowerment of employees increases job satisfaction and hence it result in efficient delivery. Ninety-six percent of the subordinates agreed that the supervisor delegates and empowers others to increase contribution and level of responsibility.

- **Client Orientation**

The majority of the subordinates (95.6%) agreed that the supervisor adds value to the department by providing exemplary customer service, that is, a supervisor who leads by example.

- **Communication**

Almost 98.7% of the subordinates agreed that the supervisor delivers messages in a manner that gains support, commitment and agreement. One can conclude that the supervisor can communicate with his / her employees.

- **Honesty and Integrity**

A clear majority (95.5%) of the subordinates agreed that the supervisor admits to his / her own mistakes and weaknesses. A supervisor who admits mistakes allows for subordinates to freely air their views and the working environment will be one were people are honest and open with each other.

- **Overall Ratings**

The overall ratings of the competencies by subordinates 1 are as follows:

Competence	% in agreement	Rank
Communication	98.7%	1
Knowledge management	96.6%	2
People management and empowerment	95.6%	3.5
Client orientation	95.6%	3.5
Honesty and integrity	95.5%	5
Service delivery innovation	94.3%	6.5
Problem-solving and analysis	94.3%	6.5
Change management	93.7%	8
Programme and project management	93.0%	9
Financial management	92.3%	10
Strategic capability and leadership	89.6%	11

Table 4.5: Overall ratings competency ratings for subordinate 2

4.2.3 Analysis of responses from subordinate 2

The analysis of responses from subordinate 2 is being presented and analysed.

4.2.3.1 Demographic Detail

A second group of 160 subordinates participated in the survey. The male comprised of 62.5% of the respondents. Thus, the ratio of females to males was almost 2:3.

The following table gives the distribution in age of the respondents:

Age Group	Percentage
22 to 32 years	2.5
33 to 43 years	30.0
44 to 54 years	56.9
>54 years	20.6

Table 4.6: Age group of respondents from subordinate 2

It can be noted that 67.5% of the subordinates were more than 43 years old. Thus, one can conclude that the respondents are more mature.

In terms of qualification almost half, that is, 53.8% have a post matric certificate, 35% have a degree, 6.3% have a matric and 4.4% have a post-graduate degree / diploma. Thus, the majority of the subordinates have either a post-matric certificate or diploma.

In terms of length of time, the majority of the subordinates (74.4%) have been managed by the respect line supervisor for at least 3 years as shown in the following table.

Age Group	Percentage
1 year	0.6
2 years	25.0
3 years	61.9
4 years	12.5

Table 4.7: Age distribution of subordinate 2

It can be concluded that the subordinates have been under the supervisor for some time and hence are capable of commenting on his /her performance.

Looking at experience, 43.7% have been employed for more than 10 years and 55.6% have been employed between 6 and 10 years. It means 99.4% have been

employed for more than 5 years. The subordinates are well experienced on the job.

4.2.3.2 Analysis of competence ratings by subordinate 2

- **Strategic Capability and leadership**

About 85.4% of the respondents agreed that the supervisor is able to give directions to the team in realising the unit's strategic objectives. Only 14.6% were undecided. One can conclude that most of the respondents think that the supervisor has leadership qualities. Furthermore, this was supported by 93.7% who agreed that the supervisor assists in defining performance measures to evaluate the success of strategies. Only a small minority, that is, 6.3% were undecided. In conclusion, one can say that at least 85% of the respondents agreed that the supervisor can lead and is strategically capable in executing his / her duties.

- **Programme and Project Management**

A clear majority, that is, 98.1% agreed that the supervisor defines the role and responsibilities for project team members and clearly communicates requirements / expectations. Thus, the supervisor clearly allocates duties to his / her subordinates that are clearly defined and outlined.

- **Financial Management**

Almost 93.7% agreed that the supervisor demonstrates knowledge of general concepts of financial planning, budgeting. Only 5.7% were undecided and 0.6% disagreed. It means the respondents agree that the supervisor has knowledge of financial administration. This was further supported by the fact that 93.7% agreed that the supervisor ensures effective utilization of financial resources. Handling of

financial resources is very critical in an organisation. In order for an organisation to thrive you need management that effectively utilise resources especially financial resources.

- **Change Management**

A clear majority, that is, 93.6% agreed that the supervisor volunteers to lead change efforts outside their work. Thus management is able to site other channels outside the normal day to day activities. Furthermore, 96.2% agreed that the supervisor proactively seeks new opportunities for change. We are living in a dynamic world that needs supervisors who think “outside the box” and who do not resist change. Thus, in this case subordinates are agreeing that the supervisors are always looking for ways for more opportunities. The majority of the respondents (96.2%) also agreed that the supervisor design activities to enable changes that are aligned to strategic objectives.

- **Knowledge Management**

Almost all the respondents (98.7%) agreed that the supervisor uses appropriate information systems to manage organisational knowledge. Management is capable in utilising the knowledge within the organisation and also retaining. This was further supported by the fact that 96.8% agreed that the supervisor nurtures a knowledge-enabling environment. Knowledge management plays a very important part in an organisation. An organisation that promotes knowledge sharing, acquisition of knowledge and be able to maintain it within the organisation helps in promoting succession within the organisation.

- **Service Delivery Innovation**

Most of the respondents (97.5%) agreed that the supervisor communicates the benefits of the service delivery improvement opportunities. It means

management is always ensuring that the customers is efficiently served and are able to utilise new techniques at any time since they are always looking at improvement opportunities.

- **Problem-solving and Analysis**

A clear majority, that is 97.5%, agreed that the supervisor demonstrates logical problem solving approaches and provides rationale for proposed solutions. A supervisor who is a listener is able to solve problems and gains trust with employees. This results in employees able to follow his / her leadership while at the same time gaining confidence on their jobs.

- **People Management and Empowerment**

About 97.5% of the respondents agreed that supervisor delegates and empowers others to increase contribution and level of responsibility. Thus, the supervisors are able to empower their subordinates and also provide good leadership.

- **Client Orientation**

Almost all the respondents (95.6%) agreed that the manager adds value to the department by providing exemplary customer service. Only a small minority (1.3%) disagreed whilst 3.2% were unsure. A supervisor who practises good customer service ensures that his / her subordinates are also practising good customer service.

- **Communication**

One of the most important aspects in a business is good communication. Poor communication strategies lead in poor customer service. One needs an organisation that speaks with one voice to all its clients. In this case, almost

99.3% agreed that the supervisor delivers messages in a manner that gains support, commitment and agreement. Thus, subordinates agreed that they communicate well with their supervisors.

- **Honesty and Integrity**

About 97.5% of the subordinates agreed that the supervisor admits their own mistakes and weaknesses. A supervisor who is capable of admitting any wrong they leave room for subordinates to freely discuss any of his / her issues. Employees are able to bring forward any new ideas at any time.

- **Overall Ratings**

The overall ratings of the competencies by subordinates 2 are as follows:

Competence	% in agreement	Rank
Communication	99.3%	1
Programme and project management	98.1%	2
Knowledge management	97.8%	3
Service delivery innovation	97.5%	5.5
Honesty and integrity	97.5%	5.5
Problem-solving and analysis	97.5%	5.5
People management and empowerment	97.5%	5.5
Client orientation	95.6%	8
Financial management	93.7%	9
Change management	95.3%	10
Strategic capability and leadership	89.6%	11

Table 4.8: Overall ratings subordinate 2

4.3 Correlation analysis

The relationship between respondent's answers is done by conducting a statistical analysis. This analysis computed using the Pearson product – moment

correlation coefficient. The nature and strength of the relationship is derived by the result obtained from the computation.

4.3.1 Correlation Analysis between groups

Correlation analysis was done between the groups and the following results were obtained.

		Supervisor	Subordinate 1	Subordinate 2
Spearman's rho	Supervisor	1.000	.757**	.360
	Correlation Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.007	.277
	N	11	11	11
	Subordinate 1	.757**	1.000	.638*
	Correlation Coefficient			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.	.035
	N	11	11	11
	Subordinate 2	.360	.638	1.000
Correlation Coefficient				
Sig. (2-tailed)	.277	.035	.	
N	11	11	11	

Table 4.9: Correlation analysis for respondents

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* .Correlation is significant at the 005 level (2-tailed).

4.3.2 Correlation between subordinates' ratings

A correlation analysis was done to determine whether two groups of subordinates agreed on the level of competence. The proportion in agreement of level of competence was used. The following rankings were obtained:

Level of Competence	Rank of Subordinate 1	Rank of Subordinate 2
Strategic capability and leadership	11	11
Programme and project management	9	2
Financial management	10	10
Change management	8	9
Knowledge management	2	3
Service delivery innovation	6.5	5.5
Problem-solving and analysis	6.5	5.5
People management and empowerment	3.5	5.5
Client orientation	3.5	8
Communication	1	1
Honesty and integrity	5	5.5

Table 4.10: Competence ranking

A Spearman's rank correlation was obtained. A correlation coefficient of $r = 0.638$ was obtained. This means that there is a positive correlation between subordinate 1 and subordinate 2. The correlation was found to be significant at the 5% level of significance ($p\text{-value} = 0.035$).

4.3.3 Correlation between supervisor and subordinate 1

A correlation analysis was done to determine whether the rankings of level of competence were the same for subordinate 1 and supervisor. The following rankings were obtained.

Level of Competence	Rank of Supervisor	Rank of Subordinate 1
Strategic capability and leadership	11	11
Programme and project management	9.5	9
Financial management	9.5	10
Change management	8	8
Knowledge management	4.5	2
Service delivery innovation	7	6.5
Problem-solving and analysis	1	6.5
People management and empowerment	3	3.5
Client orientation	2	3.5
Communication	4.5	1
Honesty and integrity	6	5

Table 4.11: Competence ranking

A correlation coefficient of $r = 0.757$ was obtained. This means that there was a strong positive correlation between supervisor and subordinate 1. The correlation was significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.007$) at the 1% level of significance and at 5% level of significance. Thus, the correlation is significantly different from zero. Thus one can conclude that the supervisors and first group of subordinates gave the same views.

4.3.4 Correlation between supervisor and subordinate 2

A correlation analysis was done to determine the association of the level of competence between supervisor and subordinate 2. A weak positive correlation of $r = 0.360$ was obtained. The correlation was not significant ($p\text{-value} = 0.277$).

Level of Competence	Rank of Supervisor 1	Rank of Subordinate 2
Strategic capability and leadership	11	11
Programme and project management	9.5	2
Financial management	9.5	10
Change management	8	9
Knowledge management	4.5	3
Service delivery innovation	7	5.5
Problem-solving and analysis	1	5.5
People management and empowerment	3	5.5
Client orientation	2	8
Communication	4.5	1
Honesty and integrity	6	5.5

Table 4.12: Competence ranking

In conclusion, it was observed that all groups gave similar views (as evidenced by the positive correlation). However the rankings of the level of competence of supervisor and subordinate 1 were very closely related, the rankings by the subordinate 1 and subordinate 2 were moderately related, and the rankings of the supervisor and subordinate 2 were lowly correlated.

4.3.5 Input and analysis of interview responses

4.3.5.1 Descriptive analysis

Competence scores of respondents were recorded when participants were recruited. The minimum competency score was 2.5 whilst the maximum competency score was 4.8. The average competence score of 3.7 was obtained.

Performance rating scores were obtained over a 3 year period. The ratings were as follows.

Year	Average performance score
1	149.4
2	151.5
3	155.4

Table 4.13: Performance rating score averages

The level of performance increased with length of stay in the job. It can be concluded that the respondents were performing better as the years go by. The mean plot is shown below.

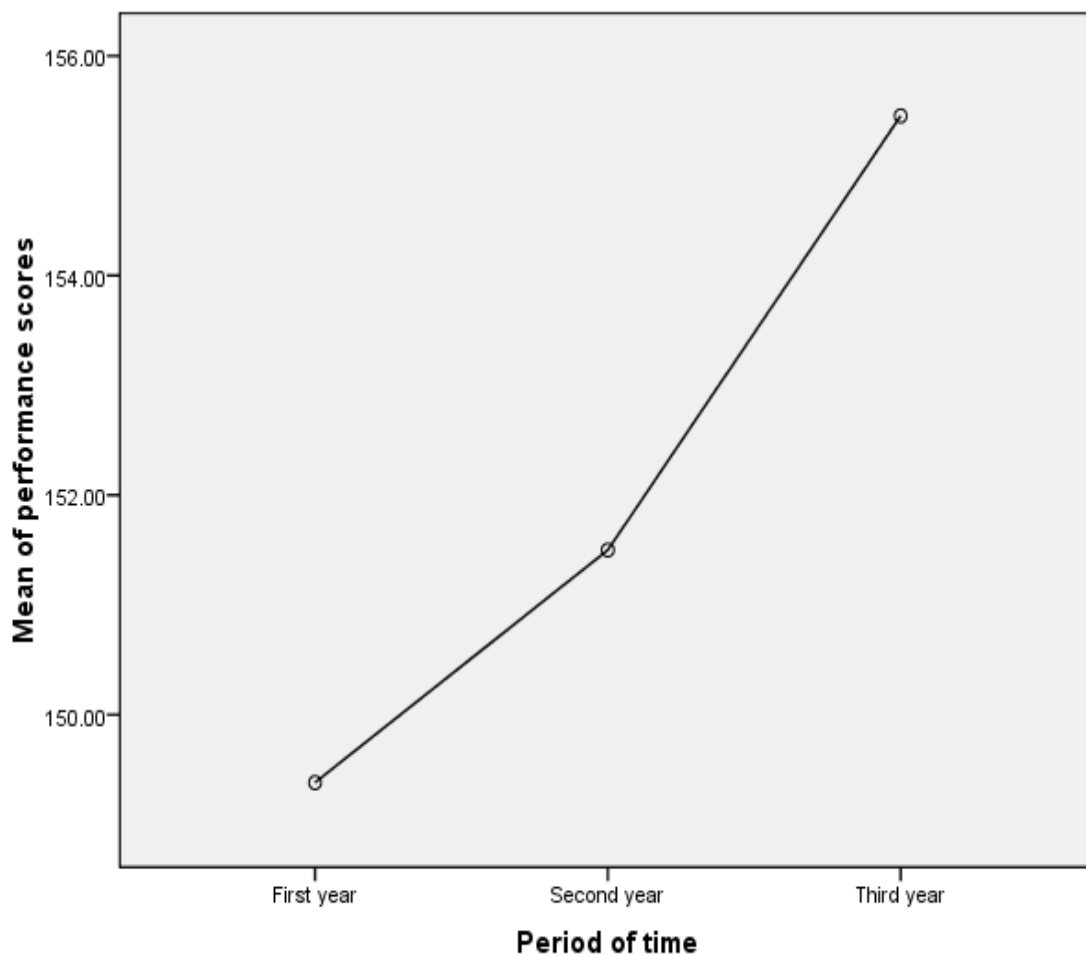


Figure 4.1 Comparison of performance scores over a period of time

4.3.6 Correlation analysis on performance score and competency assessment score

An analysis was done to determine the level of correlation between competence score at entry and performance scores over the years. The following correlations were obtained.

		Competence Score	Performance score for year 1
Competence score	Pearson Correlation	1	.233**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,004
	N	156	152
Performance score for year 1	Pearson Correlation	.233**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	152
	N	152	152
Performance score for year 2	Pearson Correlation	.132	.092
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.106	.259
	N	152	152
Performance score for year 3	Pearson Correlation	.042	.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.603	.585
	N	152	152

Table 4.14: Correlation Analysis

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A significant positive correlation was obtained between competence score and performance score for year 1. In terms of the other years there was no significant correlation between competence scores and performance scores. It means the

competence scores are a good indication of how an employee performed at entry into the job. However, as time passes on there is no correlation. This may be attributed by the fact that employees are receiving training and are becoming more experienced on the job. This can contribute to the increasing performance scores as the years go by as shown in the mean plot.

4.3.7 Comparisons of the Performance Scores

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine whether the average performance scores over the years were the same. This was testing for equality of means, that is:

H_0 : The means are equal

H_1 : At least one of the means is different from the other

	Sum of Squares	IF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2887.750	2	1443.875	6.670	.001
Within Groups	98055.546	453	216.458		
Total	100943.296	455			

Table 4.15: ANOVA performance score

A *p-value* of 0.001 was obtained as indicated in the ANOVA table. Thus, the null hypothesis of equal means was rejected.

Furthermore, the rejection of the null hypothesis prompted the researcher to perform a post-hoc analysis to determine where the difference is. The following results were obtained.

Tukey HSD ^a	Period of time	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		N	1	2
	First year	152	149.3816	
	Second year	152	151.5000	151.5000
	Third year	152	155.4539	
Sig.		.421	.051	

Table 4.16: Post Hoc Tests: Homogeneous Subsets Performance Scores

Means for groups in homogenous subsets are displayed.

a. Users Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 152.000

Two homogeneous subsets were obtained. Group 1 consisted of year 1 and year 2 which are not significantly different from each other. Group 2 consisted of year 2 and year 3 which are not significantly different from each other. Thus, the major difference was caused by year 1 and year 3 which are significantly different from each other. Thus performance score in year 1 is significantly different from performance score in year 3.

4.3.8 Interview feedback analysis on competencies

- **Strategic Capability and leadership**

There were three items testing whether respondents state key words or behaviour indicators relating to strategic capability and leadership. The following information was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3
Did not mention or state any key words or behaviour indicators	1.3% (2)	6.3% (10)	2.5% (4)
Mentioning or stating at most two key words or behaviour indicators	88.8% (142)	85.6% (137)	92.5% (148)
Mentioning or stating at least three key words or behaviour indicators	10% (16)	8.1% (13)	5% (8)

Table 4.17: Competency key word stating

It can be concluded that at least 85% of the respondents mentioned at most two key words or behaviour indicators relating to strategic capability and leadership. However, one can conclude that at least 90% of the respondents mention at least one key word or behaviour indicator.

- **Programme and Project Management**

There were three items testing respondent whether they know any key words or behaviour indicators relating to programme and project management. The following data was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3
Did not mention or state any key words or behaviour indicators	3.1% (5)	4.4% (7)	3.8% (6)
Mentioning or stating at most two key words or behaviour indicators	92.5% (148)	88.1% (141)	85.6% (137)
Mentioning or stating at least three key words or behaviour indicators	4.4% (7)	7.5% (12)	10.6% (17)

Table 4.18: Competency key word stating

Only less than 4.5% of the respondents did not mention or state any key words or behavioural indicators pertaining to programme and project management. About 85.6% were able to mention across all three items at most two key words or behaviour indicators. Thus, one can conclude that the level of knowing key words or behaviour indicators pertaining to programme and project management is at least 85.6%.

- **Financial Management**

Only one item was used to determine knowledge of key words or behaviour indicators pertaining to financial management. Only 3.1% did not mention or state any key words whilst 86.9% stated at most two and 10% stated at least

three. Thus, it can be concluded that almost 97% stated at least one key word or behavioural indicator.

- **Change Management**

Two items were used to determine knowledge on key words or behaviour indicators referring to change management. The following information was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2
Did not mention or state any key words or behaviour indicators	6.3% (10)	2.5% (4)
Mentioning or stating at most two key words or behaviour indicators	88.1% (141)	92.5% (148)
Mentioning or stating at least three key words or behaviour indicators	5.6% (9)	5% (8)

Table 4.19: Competency key word stating

At least 88% mentioned or stated at most key words or behavioural indicators whilst at least 5% mention at least three key words or behavioural indicators. Thus, the proportion who state or mention at least one key word or behaviour indicators relating to change management is at least 94%.

- **Knowledge Management**

Only one item measured was used to determine whether respondent mention or stated key words or behavioural indicators relating to knowledge management. In this case only 5% did not mention or state any key words or behavioural indicators. About 88.8% mentioned or stated at most two key words or behaviour indicators whilst 6.3% mentioned at least three. Thus 95% of the respondents mentioned or stated at least one key word or behavioural indicator.

- **Service Delivery Innovation**

Only one item was used to determine knowledge on key words or behavioural indicators on service delivery innovation. Five point six percent did not mention or state any key words or behavioural indicators. About 88.8% stated at most two key words or behaviour indicators whilst 6.9% mentioned at least three key words. In conclusion, one can say that at least 94% state at least one key word or behavioural indicator.

- **Problem-solving and Analysis**

Only one item was used to determine whether respondents knew any key words or behavioural indicators about problem-solving and analysis. One point nine percent did not mention any. Thus, at least about 98% stated at least one key word or behaviour indicators with 91.3% mentioning at most 2.

- **People Management and Empowerment**

Three items were used to determine whether they stated or mentioned any key words or behaviour indicators relating to people management and empowerment. The following data was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3
Did not mention or state any key words or behaviour indicators	1.3% (2)	1.3% (2)	1.9% (3)
Mentioning or stating at most two key words or behaviour indicators	90% (144)	93.8% (150)	91.3% (146)
Mentioning or stating at least three key words or behaviour indicators	8.8%(1 4)	5% (8)	6.9% (11)

Table 4.20: Competency key word stating

It can be noted that at least 90% stated at most two whilst at least 5% stated at least three. Thus, at least 98% stated or mentioned at least one key word or behaviour indicator relating to people management and empowerment.

- **Client Orientation**

Only two items were used to determine knowledge on key words or behaviour indicators relating to client orientation. The following information was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2
Did not mention or state any key words or behaviour indicators	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)
Mentioning or stating at most two key words or behaviour indicators	94.4% (151)	98.1% (157)
Mentioning or stating at least three key words or behaviour indicators	4.4% (7)	1.3% (2)

Table 4.21: Competency key word stating

At least 98% mentioned or stated at least one key word or behavioural indicator relating to client orientation. Thus, the proportion who did not state any key word or any behaviour indicator was at most 1.5%. Thus, respondents have knowledge on client orientation.

- **Communication**

Only two items were used to determine knowledge on key words or behaviour indicators relating to communication. The following information was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2
Did not mention or state any key words or behaviour indicators	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)
Mentioning or stating at most two key words or behaviour indicators	98.1% (157)	98.1% (157)
Mentioning or stating at least three key words or behaviour indicators	0.6% (1)	1.3% (2)

Table 4.22: Competency key word stating

In both items about 98.1% of the respondents mentioned or stated at most two key words or behavioural indicators. Overall, approximately 99% mentioned or stated at least one key word or any behaviour indicator.

- **Honesty and Integrity**

Only one item was used to determine knowledge on key words or behavioural indicators referring to honest and integrity. Thus, only 1.3% did not mention or state any key words or behaviour indicators with 98.8% mentioned or stated at most 2.

4.3.9 Analysis of Performance Indication

There were 5 indicators used to determine leadership performance, namely:

KEY: PERFORMANCE INDICATION	
1	Set the direction / path finding / inspired vision
2	Mobilise individual commitment / empowerment / Enable others to act
3	Demonstrate personal character / modeling the way
4	Engender organisational capability / alignment / challenge the process
5	Total leadership competence

Table 4.23: Leadership performance indicators

- **Set the direction / path finding / inspired vision**

There were 5 items measuring the aspect. The following data was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5
Did not mention or state any word that relates to performance indication	5.6% (9)	5% (8)	0.7% (1)	0.7% (1)	5% (8)
Mentioning or stating at most two words that relates to performance	83.1% (133)	86.3% (138)	92.7% (140)	91.3% (136)	86.3% (138)
Mentioning or stating at least three words that relates to performance	11.3% (18)	8.8% (14)	6.6% (10)	8.1% (12)	8.8% (14)

Table 4.24: Leadership performance indicator key word stating

Overall at least 86% mention a word that relates to performance indication. At most 5% of the respondents did not mention or state a word relating to performance with respect to setting the direction / path finding / inspired direction.

- **Mobilise individual commitment / empowerment / enable others to act**

There were four items measuring whether respondents had knowledge on mobilise individual commitment / empowerment or enabling others to act. The following data was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4
Did not mention or state any word that relates to performance indication	3.1% (5)	3.1% (5)	2.5% (4)	0.6% (1)
Mentioning or stating at most two words that relates to performance	93.8% (150)	90.6% (145)	93.1% (149)	98.8% (158)
Mentioning or stating at least three words that relates to performance	3.1% (5)	6.3% (10)	4.4% (7)	0.6% (1)

Table 4.25: Leadership performance indicator key word stating

On average, at least 90% mention or stated a word that relates to performance indication. However averagely at most 3% did not mention or state any words that relates to performance indication.

- **Demonstrate personal character / modelling the way**

There were two items determining whether respondents knew about demonstrating personal character modelling the way. It was found out that generally at least 96% mentioned or stated any word relating to this aspect as indicated in the table below.

	Item 1	Item 2
Did not mention or state any word that relates to performance indication	0.6% (1)	3.1% (5)
Mentioning or stating at most two words that relates to performance	98.8% (158)	96.9% (155)
Mentioning or stating at least three words that relates to \$performance	0.6% (1)	

Table 4.26: Leadership performance indicator key word stating

It can be noted that at most 3% did not mention or state any key word relating to demonstrating personal character or modelling the way.

- **Engender organisational capability / alignment / challenge the process**

There were seven items measuring whether respondent had knowledge on performance indication relating to engender organisational capability / alignment or challenging the process. The following information was obtained.

	Item 1	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 6
Did not mention or state any word that relates to performance indication	5.0% (8)	8.1% (13)	4.4% (7)	5.0% (8)	6.3% (10)	4.4% (7)
Mentioning or stating at most two words that relates to performance	86.9% (139)	88.1% (141)	89.4% (143)	91.9% (147)	88.8% (142)	91.9% (147)
Mentioning or stating at least three words that relates to performance	8.1% (13)	3.8% (6)	6.3% (10)	3.1% (5)	5.0% (8)	3.8% (6)

Table 4.27: Leadership performance indicator key word stating

It can be noted that at most 8% did not mention or state a word relating to engender organisational capability / alignment or challenge the process. Thus, one can conclude that 90% had knowledge on performance indication relating to engender organisational capability / alignment or challenge the process.

- **Total leadership competence**

Only two items measured whether respondents had knowledge that relates to performance indication with respect to total leadership competence. At least 92% mentioned or stated at least one word relating performance indication on total leadership competence. The following table gives the data.

	Item 1	Item 2
Did not mention or state any key words or behaviour indicators	8.1% (8)	5.0% (8)
Mentioning or stating at most two key words or behaviour indicators	82.5% (132)	90.6% (145)
Mentioning or stating at least three key words or behaviour indicators	9.4% (15)	4.4% (7)

Table 4.28: Leadership performance indicator key word stating

Thus, almost 8% did not have knowledge.

- **Overall**

Generally, it can be concluded that the majority of the respondents have knowledge relating to performance indicators.

4.3.10 Job satisfaction

The respondents were asked to mention any of the eight job satisfaction elements. These were:

- Pay;
- Work-job tasks;
- Recognition and reward;
- Promotion opportunities;
- Supervision;
- Co-workers;
- Working conditions ; and
- Job security.

The following gives the rating of how respondents mentioned any of the elements

Elements	% Mention	Ranking
Working conditions	88.7%	1
Job security	86.9%	2
Pay	85.0%	3.5
Work-job tasks	85.0%	3.5
Co-workers	80.0%	5
Supervision	79.4%	6
Recognition and rewards	78.7%	7
Promotion opportunities	75.7%	8

Table 4.29: Job satisfaction key elements

Thus, the mostly highly mentioned or stated elements are working conditions, job security and pay. The least mentioned were supervision, recognition and rewards and promotion opportunities. It can be concluded that respondents are more concerned with their job and what it offers in terms of remuneration.

4.3.11 Overall correlation analyses

RELATIONSHIP	CORRELATION CO-EFFICIENT
Supervisor rating and competency assessment score	+ 0,412
Subordinate 1 and competency assessment score	+ 0,584
Subordinate 2 and competency assessment score	+0,492
Researcher interview and competency assessment score	+0,408
Overall subordinate and competency assessment score	+0,576
Overall performance and competency assessment score	+0,578

Table 4.30: Correlation analysis comparisons

The table indicates a positive correlation between various scores and the competency assessment score. This confirms that there exists strong

relationship between competency assessment and actual performance as reported by both subordinates and the supervisor.

4.4 Conclusion

In this chapter the data obtained from the participants were presented. The presentation was done by using tables that were numbered for ease of reference. The data was converted into useful information through the use of various statistical analyses and computations.

The presented data was analysed by using statistical tools and techniques. The analysed data was used to create information which was utilised to validate some findings. In analysing the data gathered, the researcher employed mathematical and statistical formulae provided by the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). A detailed discussion and comments of the results was also undertaken. The results of the analyses were reported to conclude work on the chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions, reflections and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on conclusions and recommendations from the study. The conclusions will be drawn regarding the literature review as well as the empirical study.

In concluding the study, a number of recommendations for leveraging the use of Competency Assessments will be made. In addition to these recommendations, a motivation for further study will be proposed.

The study conducted involved the determination of whether the competency assessment conducted during the recruitment had any value toward the placement and the future job performance of those recruited into the organisation.

The purpose was to answer various questions relating to the return on investment that must be shown to exist for the conduct of the competency assessments.

5.2 Literature review input

The literature review was conducted through the use of books and academic journals. Some information was also obtained from the internet. In going through the literature, it became evident that the focus of the literature was on the competencies and how the competencies were being assessed. The literature also focused on why the organisations use competency assessments and how these organisations have employed different methods to assess these competencies. In addition, the literature dealt more on the history of

competences and how they are determined. The literature also gave a perspective on the advantages and disadvantages of using competencies in the world of work.

In going through the study, a number of gaps relating to the purpose of the research were identified. These included the absence in the literature with regard to the value-add that the competency assessment processes have in the recruitment and placement of potential employees in an organisation. The literature does not say enough on the concept of the return on investment with respect to the process of assessing competencies.

The benefits that are highlighted mostly relate to the reasons for an organisation to conduct competency assessments, and the work areas suitable for conducting competency assessments. The work areas looked at was: learning and development and succession planning management. It was not evident that many organisations that conducted competency assessments went to determine whether there is a relationship between competency assessment results and effective placement and job performance of those recruited on the basis of a decision informed by competency assessment scores.

In going through literature, one specific example of determining the return on investment for doing competency assessments was cited by a case study whereby the following were reported by Spencer & Spencer (1993:259):

- An increase in turnover by sales people who went through competency assessments compared to a slight increase in turnover by those that did not go through a competency assessment when hired.
- Turnover cost avoidance whereby employees who went through a competency assessment process during recruitment remained with the organisation and performed satisfactorily, as compared to those that did not

go through a competency assessment process and left the organisation after a relatively short period of time. This implies that the competency assessment through the score is a good predictor of good future job performance.

The value of competency assessments is further supported by Collins, (2001:41) when he states that if we get the right people on the bus, the right people in the right seats, and the wrong people off the bus, then we will figure out how to take the bus some place great. It is further stated that if the organisation had the right people on the bus the problem of how to motivate and manage people, largely goes away. The right people, according to Collins, (2001:42) don't need to be tightly managed. They are self motivated by the inner drive to produce the best results and to be part of creating the bigger picture. This demonstrates, once again, the value add that competency assessments offer to organisations.

5.3 Key observations from the data analysis

- Feedback from supervisor and subordinates, through their ratings on the questionnaires, indicates good placement and good performance by those recruited into the organisation.
- Feedback from the interview session with the recruited line managers, suggests that these employees are well placed and are performing in their job responsibilities.
- The statistical computation regarding correlation analysis suggests and confirms that competency assessments through the scores have a positive relationship with the placement and job performance of those recruited. This is an indication of value add of the competency assessment process.
- There is a strong relationship between competency assessment score and the year 1 performance evaluation result. This is another indication of a

successful placement and job performance of those recruited into the organisation. It also shows that those who were recruited on the basis of competency assessment process are performing their jobs as required. It can be concluded that competency assessment processes, through the use of a final assessment score, which led to the decision to place, does add value to organisations.

Some salient features became observable through the analysis of the data. These include the following:

- There is confirmation of good performance of those recruited into the organisation with the aid of a competency assessment process;
- Most employees assessed have stayed longer than three years in the organisation and this relates to the benefit of staff retention as aided by an efficient and effective selection process; and
- There is an indication of job satisfaction as well as environmental fit by those recruited and appointed in the senior management positions. This indicates that employees recruited and placed are performing as required and have settled satisfactorily in their jobs and in the organisation.

5.4 Conclusions from analysis

Given the feedback from the result analysis, it can be confirmed that a competency assessment process does add value to the placement and job performance of those recruited and placed in given jobs.

The study concludes that competency assessment conducted on the recruitment and placement of senior managers within the public service has had a positive impact on the placement and performance of the managers within the public service. It can be further stated and concluded that there is a relationship

between competency assessment score and the placement and performance of the senior managers.

There is also a value add with regard to the retention of staff in critical positions.

5.5 Key Recommendations

Having gone through the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations emanating from the study need to be considered:

- Further work needs to be done to determine whether there is a relationship between the performance management score, the research feedback through research instruments, as well as the competency assessment score.
- It is recommended to have a future study on competency assessment and its value add in other areas of human resources management. This needs to cover the following areas:
 - Learning and development to determine the value add with regard to employees speed in learning new tasks and the application of the acquired learning;
 - Succession planning to determine if there is value add from competency assessments;
 - Comparison of the competency base interview score with the competency assessment score through an assessment centre in predicting best job placement as well as future work performance;
 - It is also recommended that the study should look at other levels, within the public service, where competency assessments have

influenced decisions within human resources management processes;
and

- The study can be utilised to prescribe competency assessment processes for the recruitment of people in all critical positions within the public service.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter focused on conclusions regarding the study conducted within the National Treasury. Recommendations for further study have been proposed, and suggestions specific to the organisation studied have been presented.

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that there is value add in utilising competency assessment for recruiting senior managers within the public service. This demonstration confirms that the research questions have been answered by the study undertaken.

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APPENDIX 1

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Obadiah Khwinana (012 426-8009 / 079 529 4639)

Supervisor: Taashir Vajeth (031 260-7575)

The Impact Of Competency Assessments On The Appointment Of Senior Managers

(1) QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SUPERIORS

The purpose of this survey is to solicit information from employees at the National Treasury regarding the work performance of their managers. The information and ratings you provide us will go a long way in helping us identify the value and impact of competency assessments in the placement of managers and how the National Treasury can leverage this to further enhance the recruitment and placement of Senior Managers.

The questionnaire should only take 15-20 minutes to complete. In this questionnaire, you are asked to indicate what is true for you, so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to any question. Work as rapidly as you can. If you wish to make a comment please write it directly on the booklet itself. Make sure not to skip any questions.

Thank you for participating!

Name	
Department	
Division / Section	
Your Post Level	
Manager's Job Level	
How long have you managed this person?	
This Person	

1. Your age-group is < 21 22 - 32 33 - 43 44 - 54 > 54 years.
2. Are you _____male _____ female?
3. What is your highest academic/professional qualification?
 Below Matric Matric PostMatric Cert Degree PGDegree/Diploma Other, specify
4. For how many years have you been employed? < 1 1 - 5 6 -10 11-15 > 16 years.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by placing a check mark in the appropriate box.

1. Provides vision, sets the direction for his / her unit and inspires staff to deliver on the departmental mandate	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
2. Hold self-accountable for executing the strategy.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
3 Plans, manages, monitors and evaluates specific activities in order to delivery the desired results.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
4. Initiates projects that lead to the achievement of strategic objectives	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Prepares budges that are aligned to strategic objectives of the Department	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
6 Develops and implements systems, procedures and processes to improve financial management	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
7. Initiates and supports change and transformation in order to implement new initiatives	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Takes calculated risks and constantly seeks new ideas to bring about change in service delivery	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Promotes the generation and sharing of knowledge and learning in order to enhance collective knowledge in the Department	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
10.Holds motivational sessions with colleagues to share information and new ideas	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
11.Explores and implements new ways of providing and delivering services	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
12.Systematically identifies, analyses and resolves existing and anticipated problems in order to reach solutions timeously	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

13.Manages and encourages his / her staff, optimizes their outputs effectively	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
14.Creates processes to ensure accountability for his / her staff	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
15.Recruits, develops talented and competent people	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
16.Adapts his / her leadership style to different situations	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
17.Designs and implements clear service delivery improvement programmes	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
18. Expresses and exchanges information and ideas in a clear and concise manner	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
19.Listens well and is receptive to other ideas	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
20.Honours commitments made	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
21.Establishes trust and shows confidence in others	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

**OBADIAH KHWINANA
RESEARCHER**

APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Obadiah Khwinana (012 426-8009 / 079 529 4639)

Supervisor: Taashir Vajeth (031 260-7575)

The Impact Of Competency Assessments On The Appointment Of Senior Managers

(2) QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SUBORDINATES

The purpose of this survey is to solicit information from employees at the National Treasury regarding the work performance of their managers. The information and ratings you provide us will go a long way in helping us identify the value and impact of competency assessments in the placement of managers and how the National Treasury can leverage this to further enhance the recruitment and placement of Senior Managers.

The questionnaire should only take 15-20 minutes to complete. In this questionnaire, you are asked to indicate what is true for you, so there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to any question. Work as rapidly as you can. If you wish to make a comment please write it directly on the booklet itself. Make sure not to skip any questions.

Thank you for participating!

Name	
Department	
Division / Section	
Post Level	
Your Manager's Job Level	
How long have you been managed by your line manager?	
My Line Manager	

5. Are you _____ male _____ female?
6. Your age-group is < 21 22 - 32 33 - 43 44 - 54 > 54 years.
7. What is your highest academic/professional qualification? Below Matric Matric PostMatric
 Cert Degree PGDegree/Diploma Other, specify
8. For how many years have you been employed? < 1 1 - 5 6 -10 11-15 > 16 years.

1. Gives direction to team in realizing the Unit's strategic objectives.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
2. Assists in defining performance measures to evaluate the success of strategies.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
3. Defines roles and responsibilities for project team members and clearly communicates requirements / expectations.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
4. Demonstrates knowledge of general concepts of financial planning, budgeting.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
5. Ensures effective utilization of financial resources.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
6. Volunteers to lead change efforts outside our work team.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
7. Proactively seeks new opportunities for change.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
8. Designs activities to enable changes that are aligned to the strategic objectives.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
9. Uses appropriate information systems to manage organizational knowledge.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
10. Nurtures a knowledge-enabling environment.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
11. Communicates the benefits of the service delivery improvement opportunities.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
12. Admits own mistakes and weaknesses	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
13. Demonstrates logical problem-solving approaches and provides rationale for proposed solutions.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

14. Delegates and empowers others to increase contribution and level of responsibility.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
15. Adds value to the Department by providing exemplary customer service.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
16. Delivers messages in a manner that gains support, commitment and agreement.	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

**OBADIAH KHWINANA
RESEARCHER**

APPENDIX 3

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MBA Research Project

Researcher: Obadiah Khwinana (012 426-8009 / 079 529 4639)

Supervisor: Taashir Vajeth (031 260-7575)

The Impact Of Competency Assessments On The Appointment Of Senior Managers

(3) INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SMS

The purpose of this interview is to solicit information from you regarding the work performance of the National Treasury Senior Managers. The information and ratings you provide us will go a long way in helping us identify the value and impact of competency assessments in the placement of managers and how the National Treasury can leverage this to further enhance the recruitment and placement of Senior Managers.

The interview should only take 15-20 minutes to conduct. In this interview, I will ask you questions which relate to your work, so there are no "right" or "wrong" answers to any question. I will guide you through the interview. Please feel free to stop me at any time during the interview.

Thank you for participating!

Name	
Department	
Division / Section	
Post Level	
How long in post?	
Date appointed to SMS	
Competency Assessment Date	
Performance Score Rating	
Number of Direct Reports	
Number of Staff in own section	

9. Your age-group is < 21 22 - 32 33 - 43 44 - 54 > 54 years.

10. Are you _____ male _____ female?

11. What is your highest academic/professional qualification?

Below Matric Matric Post Matric Cert Degree PG Degree/Diploma Other, specify

12. For how many years have you been employed?

< 1 1 - 5 6 - 10 11-15 > 16 years.

1. What key strategic objectives are you currently implementing?	
2. What processes are you using to implement and execute the strategy?	
3. How do you measure the success?	
4. What systems do you use to monitor and evaluate the strategy implementation?	
5. What new projects have you implemented in the past two years?	
6. What successes have you realized in implementing these?	

<p>7. What key work programmes are financed by your section's budget?</p>	
<p>8. Tell me about new change initiatives you have successfully implemented.</p>	
<p>9. What have you learnt in implementing the above change initiatives?</p>	
<p>10. What have you done to promote Knowledge Management in your unit?</p>	
<p>11. What kinds of work-related problems have you not managed to solve completely?</p>	
<p>12. Give me new creative and innovative methods you implemented to improve service delivery for your section's clients.</p>	
<p>13. What <u>tools</u> have you utilized to enhance the levels of staff work performance in your unit?</p>	

<p>14. How have you dealt with poor performing employees? What about those high performers?</p>	
<p>15. What have you done to enable your work team to focus on work and to remain motivated?</p>	
<p>16. What processes have you implemented to help your staff to be client-orientated?</p>	
<p>17. Share with me your successes in addressing the requirements of Batho Pele principles.</p>	
<p>18. What tools have you employed to facilitate effective communication in your unit? What was the success rate?</p>	
<p>19. Share with me some of the things you have done to maintain high standards of ethical and moral conduct?</p>	

20. How do you personally feel about your performance as a senior manager in the Public Service?	
21. What is so exciting about your job?	
22. Any comments for me?	

Thank you for taking the time to complete the questionnaire.

**OBADIAH KHWINANA
RESEARCHER**

APPENDIX 4



Enquiries : Stadi Mngomezulu
Tel : 012 315 5133
Fax : 012 315 5190
Email : stadi.mngomezulu@treasury.gov.za

20 June 2008

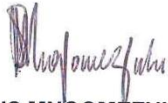
Mr R O Khwinana
P.O. Box 11257
Queenswood
Pretoria
0121

Dear Mr Khwinana

I hereby grant you permission to conduct research on "*The Impact Of Competency Assessments On The Placement And Work Performance Of Senior Managers*", at the National Treasury in partial fulfillment of your MBA dissertation.

Wishing you all of the best in this meaningful endeavour.

Yours truly,



JS MNGOMEZULU
ACTING DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: CORPORATE SERVICES

ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
WESTVILLE CAMPUS
TELEPHONE NO.: 031 – 2603587
EMAIL : ximbap@ukzn.ac.za

11 SEPTEMBER 2008

MR. RO KHWINANA (203513470)
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Dear Mr. Khwinana

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0522/08M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

"The impact of competency assessments on the placement and work performance of Senior Managers"

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years

Yours faithfully


.....
MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA

cc. Supervisor (Taashir Vajeth)
cc. Mrs. C Haddon