The implementation of the succession policy and staff retention strategy: Joe Gqabi District Municipality

by

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the qualification Master of Public Administration in the Faculty of Arts at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

Supervisor: Prof E Draai
DECLARATION

This treatise is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the qualification Master of Public Administration in the Faculty of Arts at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

I, hereby declare that the work contained in this treatise is my own work, and all other references used herein have been acknowledged. This treatise was never submitted by me for any other degree being in full or partial fulfilment of the qualification at any other recognised institution.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to evaluate the implementation of the succession policy and staff retention strategy of the Joe Gqabi District Municipality (JGDM) in the Eastern Cape. Retention and succession are located within a broader understanding of administration and management, and specifically within the New Public Management theory.

A qualitative research methodology was used. Semi-structured interviews were primary means of data collection, supplemented by documentary analysis. A non-probability, stratified sample of 12 senior managers, middle managers, supervisors and professionals employed by the district municipality constituted the target group.

The findings reveal that both the succession policy and the staff retention strategy were hampered by severe implementation weaknesses, resulting in failure to stem the high rate of turnover and vacancies at the municipality.

The study recommends a series of measures to enhance future implementation success. These include, amongst others, implementation action plans with clear deliverables and timeframes, monitoring and evaluation; employee participation; linking execution to individual performance; and proactively addressing issues of staff satisfaction.
# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AG</td>
<td>Auditor - General</td>
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<tr>
<td>CoGTA</td>
<td>Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs</td>
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<td>DM</td>
<td>District Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDP</td>
<td>Integrated Development Plan</td>
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<td>IGR</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Relations</td>
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<td>JGDM</td>
<td>Joe Gqabi District Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>LED</td>
<td>Local Economic Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGTAS</td>
<td>Local Government Turn-Around Strategy</td>
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<td>LM</td>
<td>Local Municipality</td>
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<tr>
<td>MFMA</td>
<td>Municipal Finance Management Act</td>
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<td>MHR</td>
<td>Manager: Human Resources</td>
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<td>MLS</td>
<td>Manager: Legal Services</td>
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<td>MSA</td>
<td>Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000</td>
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<td>MUTAS</td>
<td>Municipal Turn-Around Strategy</td>
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<td>NPM</td>
<td>New Public Management</td>
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<td>PMS</td>
<td>Performance Management System</td>
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<td>PMU</td>
<td>Project Management Unit</td>
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<td>PPP</td>
<td>Private - Public Partnership</td>
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<td>SCM</td>
<td>Supply Chain Management</td>
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<td>SDBIP</td>
<td>Service Delivery Budget and Implementation Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>TASK Grade</td>
<td>Tuned Assessment of Skill and Knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>WSA</td>
<td>Water Services Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSP</td>
<td>Water Services Provider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Title Page</td>
<td>i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Acronyms</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER ONE: THE STUDY OVERVIEW**

1.1 Introduction 1
1.2 Rationale of the study 3
1.3 Research problem 4
1.4 Research questions 5
1.5 Research objectives 5
1.6 The significance of the study 6
1.7 Definitions of key concepts 7
   1.7.1 Staff retention 7
   1.7.2 Succession planning 9
   1.7.3 Relationship between staff retention and succession planning 9
1.8 Chapter outline 10

**CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

2.1 Introduction 12
2.2 Administration and management 12
2.3 The new public management 15
2.4 Principles of new public management 17
2.5 Performance management 22
2.6 Staff retention 24
2.7 Succession and planning 28
2.8 Linking staff retention to employee performance 30
2.9 Conclusion 32

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction 33
3.2 Research methodology 34
3.3 Research design 34
  3.3.1 Sampling procedure 37
  3.3.2 Data collection 39
  3.3.3 Data analysis 40
  3.3.4 Pilot study 42
3.4 Limitations of the study 42
3.5 Ethical considerations 44
  3.5.1 Research ethics 44
  3.5.2 Informed consent and participation 44
  3.5.3 Protection from harm 45
  3.5.4 Permission 45
  3.5.5 Plagiarism 45
3.5 Conclusion 46

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction 47
4.2 Findings relating to succession policy 49
  4.2.1 Understanding of succession policy 49
  4.2.2 Implementation of succession policy 49
  4.2.3 Employee development 51
  4.2.4 Professional development 51
  4.2.5 Staff rotation 53
  4.2.6 Gaps in implementation of succession policy 54
4.2.7 Analysis and conclusions 54

4.3 Findings relating to staff retention 56
4.3.1 Understanding of staff retention strategy 56
4.3.2 Implementation of staff retention strategy 57
4.3.3 Gaps in implementation of staff retention strategy 59
4.3.4 Analysis and conclusions 59

4.4 Findings relating to policy documents 60
4.4.1 Policy process 60
4.4.2 Career pathing and succession planning policy of JGDM 61
4.4.3 Staff retention strategy of JGDM 61

4.5 Conclusion 63

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction 64
5.2 Summary and conclusions 64
5.3 Recommendations 66
5.4 Conclusion 71

BIBLIOGRAPHY 72

LIST OF ANNEXURES 80

Annexure A: Letter of request to conduct a research
Annexure B: Copy of the approval letter to conduct research from the District Municipality
Annexure C: Copy of the ethics approval letter
Annexure D: Sample of the consent form
Annexure E: Sample of the questionnaire used for the research
Annexure F: Copy of proof of editing and translation
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.1</td>
<td>The doctrine of New Public Management</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 2.2</td>
<td>Comparison of New Public Management and classical public management</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Table 3.1</td>
<td>Non-probability stratified sampling</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE
THE STUDY OVERVIEW

1.1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa is a young democracy that came to birth in 1994, following decades of apartheid misrule and segregation, which disenfranchised the vast majority of the population based on racist criteria.

The new democracy was ushered in through an internationally acclaimed constitution that made respect for human rights and democratic values the foundation of the new society. It also created a system of government comprising three tiers of government: the national, provincial and local – with the local spheres of government enjoying a degree of autonomy from the other two spheres of government within a context of a unified state and cooperative governance.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 assigns to local government the responsibility to provide municipal services, such as the management and provision of utilities (water, sanitation, electricity, waste removal), and basic welfare (e.g. health) and safety and security functions, amongst others. Within this context, the delivery of basic services requires municipalities – be they the large metropolitan municipalities or the smaller regional (district) or local ones – to be staffed with competent public officials.

Service delivery is impeded by the acute lack of skilled and competent people experienced at local government level, particularly in small municipalities. This is a symptom of the poor education system, which is not producing the skills required for employment in all sectors of the economy at the rate that is required, and the fact that such municipalities struggle to attract and retain skilled persons.
It is, of course, also in part due to the political appointment of large numbers of unqualified people in many local institutions, through the governing party's policy of "cadre deployment" – a system of patronage which ensures that loyal members of the ruling party are rewarded with well-paying jobs.

However, even where skills already exist, staff turnover tends to be high, particularly in those municipalities, like Joe Gqabi District Municipality, which are small and located in rural areas. These rural municipalities themselves struggle to attract highly skilled individuals because of the low level of salaries. This forces affected municipalities to look at creative ways of managing their personnel to ensure that those limited scarce skills which already exist are retained and that there is institutional capacity to fill new vacancies that may arise as in the normal course of the life of an organisation, such as those caused by resignations, deaths or dismissals.

Moreover, JGDM carries the additional burden of a district municipality, as regulated by the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000, which entail delivery of basic municipal services to the communities it serves. JGDM became as of June 2012, a Water Services Authority (WSA), which means that in addition to providing water to residents of its constituent local authorities, it is now tasked to provide and maintain water infrastructure and also regulate the quality of water services in the district in order to ensure clean quality water and a sanitation system that is up to standard, of which both functions are essential for human dignity, development and the alleviation of poverty, and which meets constitutional demands for basic access.

These issues of how to manage local government staff in such a way as to retain existing skills and build new ones to ensure efficient and effective provision of basic services is what prompted the undertaking of this study.
1.2. RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to investigate how the Joe Gqabi District Municipality (JGDM), which is situated in Barkly East in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa, has attempted to deal with the challenge of staff retention and succession planning. The study will evaluate whether existing strategies to retain staff, particularly at middle management and professional levels, have been successful or not. The study will identify factors that account for the success or lack thereof and make recommendations on the actions that may be taken to improve the situation.

The South African system of local government consists of the large metropolitan municipalities, smaller towns and rural districts. The JGDM is one of the smaller, rural districts overseeing a number of smaller local municipalities. Like all rural municipalities it is facing challenges due to a limited resource base on the one hand and demands to serve vast areas populated by poor communities on the other hand. Institutionally, such municipalities also find it difficult to attract and retain skilled personnel. The lack of staff continuity due to high turnover and vacancy rates, particular in critical skills categories, further hampers service delivery for such municipalities.

The main objective of the Joe Gqabi District Municipality is thus to render basic services such as water and sanitation to all its citizens. As has been indicated, such delivery of services can only be achieved by employing competent and motivated human resources, including managers and professionals who understand the protocol and operations of the institution. Thus, in a context of high staff turnover and resultant loss of critical skills, it is important that mechanisms are continually introduced to ensure succession planning and staff retention to ensure the availability of human resources capable of delivering services at all times.
In order to address these challenges, JGDM introduced a Staff Retention Strategy in 2012 and a Succession Planning Policy later on. In order to improve service delivery, it was thought prudent at this time to undertake an exploratory study to assess whether the implementation of succession and retention had yielded any positive results. Furthermore, it is sought to determine whether the staff being retained would enable the institution to be a successful entity as a Water Services Authority (WSA).

1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The provision of basic municipal services, including water and sanitation, is a basic human right in terms of the Constitution; therefore, the JGDM as a responsible public entity is expected to deliver in line with the Constitution. Consequently, the impact of not successfully implementing the succession policy or failure to retain relevant staff capable of assisting the JGDM to deliver according to its mandate might have detrimental outcomes for both the community and the institution.

The issue of high vacancy rates and staff turnover was raised at a Mayoral Committee meeting of JGDM in November 2012 and a policy on staff retention was adopted at this time. Subsequently, a succession planning policy was also approved. Doubt existed as to the efficacy as these policies as evidence suggested that resignations were increasing unabated, to the point that by 2014, twenty-three (23%) of the positions on the organogram (out of a total of 1105) were vacant (JGDM 2014a). It is therefore against this background that the aim of this study is to determine the successes and challenges regarding the implementation of the adopted policies and the effectiveness of their existence as means to improve the employee morale and to curb the staff turnover. The study assesses the implementation of the succession policy and retention strategy at the JGDM.
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Within the broad aims of the research and conceptual framework set out above, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How does the JGDM implement the career and succession planning policy and the staff retention strategy in order to fulfil its mandate as set out in the mission statement of the institution?
- Are internal staff of JGDM fully and effectively utilised as a means to ensure continuity and to assist the institution in achieving its set goals?
- Is the institution ready to deliver the additional functions of water services provision?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of this study in relation to the problem statement are to:

- Review the theoretical framework as related to staff retention and succession planning in the public service;
- Review the existing the implementation of the staff retention introduced at the Joe Gqabi District Municipality, which is targeted at retaining mainly middle management;
- Identify factors causing staff dissatisfaction and the low morale of employees and how these are addressed with a view to retaining staff;
- Obtain the views of the JGDM employees affected by the approved retention strategy at their place of work as to how they think it would yield positive results in all aspects of the study;
- Review the implementation of the succession planning strategy introduced by Joe Gqabi District Municipality, which is aimed at ensuring the continued availability of skills in times of termination of services through resignations, deaths or dismissals.
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A lack of adequate and effective human resource capacity and development is detrimental to the retention of government employees and the JGDM is no exception. For the JGDM to fully discharge its developmental role and indeed for it to be able to carry out the additional functions of being a Water Services Authority providing water to other local authorities, the competency of its staff is of paramount importance. But before competence in delivery, the municipality needs to have competent men and women required to deliver these services. The mandate of the municipality and its viability as a public entity is seriously threatened by the constant loss of staff caused by failure to attract new competent employees or to retain its skilled compliment.

It is evident that there is a need for some form of examination as to how the problems and challenges faced by the municipality can best be resolved, since it is assumed that most service delivery protests are of the results of dissatisfaction from communities with regards to the level of basic services provision.

Through this exploratory research study, it is envisaged that factors impeding the successful implementation of the municipality’s efforts to retain staff and continuity when there are vacancies will be identified and solutions devised for them. This, in turn, will assist the institution to fulfil its objectives as per the mandate to deliver better and expected service delivery to its communities. The study may also offer lessons for other organisations facing similar problems.

The study also links retention and succession to employee satisfaction, and shows that staff morale is affected by the success and challenges of the succession policy, and its link to the adopted retention strategy. The exercise is meant to assist the JGDM administration to deliver the expected public services, and even achieve its intended audit outcome, by fully utilising the current employed human resources while building human capacity and skills within the same institution.
Finally, the study is anticipated to be of importance and benefit to the political office bearers, chief administration officials, and the employees of the JGDM. It was anticipated that it would reveal the possible reasons for the vast number of critical positions within the institution that are vacant, and the possible reasons behind the inability of professionals reporting directly to middle managers to fill the positions of their predecessors once the positions become vacant. The study could also assist the political office bearers and chief administration officials as mentioned above on how to curb the staff turnover.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS

This study explored relevant literature on the relevance of a succession policy and retention strategy in various municipalities and organisations. The study further explored documents and policies of the JGDM that take into account issues related to staff retention and succession planning.

1.7.1 Staff retention

Staff retention can be defined as a process of ensuring that employees are retained within the organisation, especially employees with valued or needed skills, with experience in critical fields, or those regarded as custodians of the institutional memory (JGDM 2014c). In the South African context, it is also an attempt to ensure that employees from the designated groups as defined in the Employment Equity Act, 1998, namely black people, women and people with disabilities, are included. It involves a range of ideas and human resource practices that should all be seen as interrelated.

Staff retention is designed and aimed at ensuring that the institution always has competent employees in its employ, namely those who are well trained and suitable for each position held within the institution, and for better assurance that the institution will deliver as expected. It is also aimed at ensuring increased levels of job satisfaction.
It is, however, known that the retention strategy will not necessarily curb the exit of employees, but constitutes a serious attempt to qualitatively and quantitatively reduce staff turnover.

Staff retention is heavily dependent upon factors of leadership skills of management and human resource strategy (Johnson, 2007: 80). Staff retention remains a major worrying factor in most institutions (Zenke, 2002: 24). It is also linked with employee satisfaction, as employees who are unhappy in an organisation will be motivated to leave that organisation. By contrast, employees who are happy have an incentive to remain.

Laff (2007:20) states that in contrast with gloom and doom forecasts about employee satisfaction, a survey can reveal that the majority of employees are content in their current positions. The irony is that while employees cite a greater sense of satisfaction, their managers are either unaware of, or cannot identify a retention strategy within the existing staff whom they manage.

According to Guld (2007: 19-21), while good employees are hard to find, dependable people are much harder to replace. The retention strategy of organisations is affected by certain factors, such as those pertaining to organisational climate, with employees likely to leave the employer should they perceive a lack of clear direction on the part of management or a level of control over the work environment (Lok and Crawford, 1991). It can also be affected by a factor such as job satisfaction, as a result of employee perception of how well their job provides in qualities that they perceive as important (Luthans, 1998: 44). Lastly, there is a factor pertaining to employee well-being which Warr (1990) described as the emotional state of employees within their total work setting as being either predominantly negative or positive.
1.7.2 Succession planning

On the other hand, succession planning policy can be defined as a means to ensure business continuity and the preservation of institutional memory in the event of the unplanned departure of key employees occupying critical positions within the institution (JGDM 2014d). It is aimed at ensuring that employees are prepared and trained for the roles and responsibilities of the future by developing talent.

It is also meant to provide career growth opportunities that help to motivate and retain current employees. It enables staff to become suitable candidates for future roles as the institution evolves. In addition, it develops staff to be the best possible candidates when an opportunity arises for recruitment. It is aimed at creating an ongoing supply of well-trained, broadly experienced, and well-motivated employees who are ready to step into key positions as and when required. It is meant to make the best use of internal staffing resources and talent by growing own staff.

1.7.3 Relationship between staff retention and succession planning

Staff retention and succession planning are related. The former seeks to keep existing employees, while the latter could be a tool that facilitates that. Employees are likely to remain in an organisation if they perceive that they have better career growth opportunities in that organisation.

In the study undertaken the background of the human resource practice and the satisfaction of employees provided the baseline for the analysis and the evaluation of the successful implementation of the policy and the strategy mentioned above, and a prognosis of the likely success or otherwise of the effective delivery of water services provision by the JGDM.
The disciplines of administration and management as tools of practice are considered in some detail in the literature review. The emphasis of the study, however, was on internal employee retention and development, for those internal professionals directly reporting to middle managers to be enabled and capacitated to assume the duties and responsibilities of their predecessors when the position(s) become vacant.

1.8 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The research report is structured as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and general nature of the study

The introductory chapter sets out the background information to the study, and details its purpose and objectives. The problem statement is clarified and significance of the study explained. Definitions of key concepts that form the backdrop to the study are given, namely succession planning and staff retention. Lastly a brief overview of each chapter is indicated.

Chapter 2: Literature review.

This chapter reviews the theory related to succession planning and staff retention strategy in the public service. This is undertaken in the context of the New Public Management perspective.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

The chapter describes and explains the research methods used in conducting this research project. Given the nature of the problem under investigation, a qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews is used.
Chapter 4: Findings and Data Analysis

The findings of the research are presented in this chapter and analysed, using the major themes that emerge from the data. Based on this analysis, conclusions are drawn which answer the research question.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

In the final chapter, a summary of conclusions is presented and recommendations are made on how to improve the implementation of the succession and staff retention plans of the municipality.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The concepts of staff retention and succession planning as practiced within public sector organisations must be located within a broader field of inquiry relating to public sector management and, in particular, within the disciplines of management and administration. This chapter presents an overview of developments in Public Administration and Management and the accompanying reform measures. The concepts of public administration and management, and the relationship between them, are explored. This is followed by a discussion of the philosophy of the New Public Management, which shows how private sector principles of management have been assimilated into Public Administration. The chapter further explains performance management as a key element of the NPM and demonstrates its linkage to employee retention and succession planning.

The discussion indicates a link between institutional performance and the quality of its employees and suggests that in order to deliver according to its mandate, it is necessary for any public sector organisation to create suitable administrative or management structures and employ and retain competent staff that is able to plan and execute the various functions of providing municipal services accordingly.

2.2 ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The administrative workforce operating within the public sector is familiar with the concepts of administration and management. The theory of Public Administration within the Administration-Management continuum refers to administration as the determination of major objectives and policies, while it refers to management as the carrying out of operations designed to accomplish objectives and give effect to policies (Cloete, 1986: 1). According to Cloete (1992: 14), public administration is an activity that takes place when two or more people come together to achieve a common goal. Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1991: 8) agree with the same sentiments.
saying such an activity may be in the form of managing municipal programmes, delivering water services or providing postal services in a town or in a village.

Therefore, public administration can be defined as an academic discipline that studies the behaviour of public officials, while at the same time it serves as a tool for preparing them to go beyond the expected outcome when doing public work and delivering public services to citizens. It is a field of inquiry with a diverse scope. Administration is defined as the management of the public, or the people who manage an organisation, and even as the government (Soanes, Stevenson, & Hawker, 2008). One of its fundamental goals is to advance management and policies, so that government can function and perform effectively and efficiently (Davids, Theron, and Maphunye, 2009: 57). It is also defined as the administration and management of public programmes, the translation of politics into the reality that communities see every day, the study of government decision-making, or the analysis of current policies so as to give necessary inputs to produce alternative policies should the need arise (Davids, et al. 2009: 30-33). Public administration can further be seen as a practical skill that uses the findings of business practice to get the public sector to work well.

On the other hand, management is best described as an organisational function that plays a crucial role in planning, implementing, and measuring the necessary improvements in productivity. Others define it as to be in charge of a business or an organisation or a group of people to cope with something difficult (Allen & Mannion, 2007). It is also defined as the social science that analyses the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services. Parkin & King, writing in the context of the private sector, further explain management as the theoretical science that figures out how the business sector works (Parkin & King, 1995: 80-84). It would argued that this definition is also applicable to the public sector, the difference being the end to which the science is applied – these being private goods in the business sector and public goods in the government sector.

Therefore, the activity of public administration in government institutions is seen as much wider in scope and nature than management in government institutions (Fox,
Schwella & Wissink, 1991: 2). Hence management is seen as a facet of public administration in government institutions. Management in government institutions cannot take place if the results of public administration do not enable those in managerial positions to manage (Du Toit, 2007: 46).

According to Meiring (2001), management is seen as a facet of public administration in government institutions and it cannot take place if the administrative functions are not carried out. Management is therefore the best practice in using the available resources in pursuit of set goals. With reference to the JGDM, management can be regarded as the method used to analyse the operations, processes and practices of the institution to improve the effectiveness and the efficiency of water provision as the core function of the District Municipality.

The relationship between the words management and administration – can best be defined in terms of the origins of the concept “economics”, which is from the ancient Greek word *oikonomia* meaning management of a household administration (Parkin, et al.1995: 7-10). The definition, the link, and the comparison of the two words as based on their fields of study, which is that of public administration and that of business management, are best explained by various authors in the fields as follows:

- Public administration is at times explained as objectively aimed at serving public bodies, including various departments in government. Management, however, is viewed mainly to be concerned with resource allocations with optimum development (Du Toit & Van der Waldt, 2007).

- Public administration needs resources for its various activities such as infrastructure building, and has to first allocate resources into various sectors before it is able to cater for the needs of welfare activities of its communities. Management, on the other hand, would be concerned with the utilisation of resource at their disposal (Du Toit & Van der Waldt, 2007).
• Public administration, for it to achieve its true purpose in terms of its role and mandate, has to take care of sustainable growth and development in terms of its employees. The money for such activities needs to be mobilised through municipal budget processes (JGDM 2013).

• Lastly, public administration has to decide whether to go for balanced growth or sectorial development (BGSD) based on the resources available, which means management has a great influence on the course of action to be considered by the public officials.

The link between what is done by public officials under the practice of public administration, and how things cannot be done without the application of management, clearly shows the dependence of the studies or the disciplines on each other. Hence, it is necessary to make reference to, and include discussions of, the New Public Management (NPM) philosophy, which uses concepts such as household, consumer, and customer mostly and mainly when defining the people serviced within the corporate world and space. In the public sector, on the other hand, reference to the same people is in terms of communities, society, or at times, beneficiaries. The mentioned relationship between management and public administration in the study undertaken is because of the commonalities found in the objectives, functions, and generic processes within the disciplines, such as catering for their own people, whether these beneficiaries or paying customers. That is how the NPM finds its expression in management theory and discussions within the research project.

2.3 THE NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

Since its inception in the 1980s the New Public Management (NPM) philosophy was used by government to modernise the public sector (Hood, 2000). According to Sharma (2006), the NPM became part of long on-going administration reforms. One of the main thrusts of the reforms was to reduce the direct involvement of the state in economic activities, enhance the role of business in the provision of public goods, and create an enabling environment for the growth of private businesses whilst
developing public sector partnerships (Sharma, 2006). These reforms were as the result of the changing external environment that threatened the survival of society while necessitating all spheres of government institutions to set goals and to avert potentially hazardous situations within given environments while pursuing those goals effectively and efficiently. The NPM was aimed at making the public sector more efficient and active by introducing the management ideas, methods and best practices of the private sector in the administrative activities wherever possible (Ogawa, 2008: 5).

The management perspective used within the public sector was adopted from the private sector market-driven practice. It was and still is used for the management of both policy making and policy implementation to improve services, performance and other related functions (Cox III, Buck & Morgan, 2011: 19), hence the NPM emerged. The NPM came about as the new paradigm of the public administration and Public Choice Theory.

The theory that emerged during the early 1950s was a semi-field of Public Administration and Economics. According to Shaw (1996:4), it was meant to deal with challenges that were considered to be constraints on service delivery and development. It sought to address the inadequate mechanisms of accountability, waste and inefficiency of resources applied. In South Africa, the approach of government, that of treating citizens as customers, was put into practice as a means to be responsive on improving government services to the people in the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (Batho Pele) (RSA 1997).

NPM is based on two fields of discourse or paradigms, those of public choice and managerialism. Public Choice is a contemporary field of discourse, and it is about the government’s wider concern than management (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994: 9-16). According to Hood (1991: 3-19), the NPM has several directions. These are, first of all, its focuses on hands-on and entrepreneurial management that is opposite to the traditional bureaucratic focus of public administration; second it explicitly sets standards and measures performance; and, third, it puts emphasis on output control.
The JGDM has a responsibility to employ competent staff as a means to ensure that its mandate is realised. Therefore the staff employed is subjected to performance evaluation, and hence the NPM as part of the contemporary management theories is performance improvement oriented. This implies that it forms part of the new managerialism, namely that of “let managers manage and be accountable” (Hughes, 2003: Shah, 2006).

In implementing such an orientation in practice, the performance management of employees is discussed along with the measures utilised by the municipality to evaluate performance and encourage staff commitment through training, development and succession planning, and ultimately be able to retain employees. That was done by looking into how the JGDM succession policy, its implementation and the results it has yielded could be linked to the same, in pursuit of reaching the common goal as reflected in the mission and vision statement of the DM. To ensure the success and sound findings of the research, the principles of the NPM are reviewed and discussed below.

2.4 PRINCIPLES OF NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

New Public Management is the most dominant paradigm in the discipline of public administration (Arora, 2003). It conjures up an image enmeshed with minimal government public services. It is market oriented, since it is contracting out public service, privatisation, and performance management. The mentioned features signify a marked contrast with the Classical Model of administration, which embodies a dominant role of government in the provision of services.

NPM is grounded in rational choice and public choice, and contains the elements of total quality management (TQM). It seeks to offer more efficient mechanism of delivering goods and services while raising governmental performance levels (Kelly, 1998). The paradigm shift from public administration to new public management involves a move in the basic design of public sector that becomes less distinctive from the private sector and the degree of discretionary power that is enjoyed by public managers.
NPM was and still is about change. Therefore change is hereby defined as a social external variable, influenced by attitudes, values, and lifestyles (Lamb, 2000: 34); hence it is feared by many. The introduction of the public management traits within the public sector was regarded as change, therefore it was received with varying attitudes from positive to negative and was subjected to much scrutiny and doubt while at the same time was being appreciated by many. The majority who advocated for the classical public administration as it was called, were sceptical that the introduction of private sector management into the administration of public affairs was a risk to the theory, and it was subjecting the abilities of public sector management style to those of private sector management style, and carried a potential to undermine the literature that was developed over a period of years (Dunsire, 1995). Among the areas that have since concerned most people was that it had the potential to replace the classical approach or infiltrate private sector management into the administration of public affairs. Some had fears of what works for the private sector may not necessarily work for the public sector. All these fears emanated from the general understanding that the private sector was for profit making and maximisation, while the public sector was more service-delivery orientated.

The researcher agrees with the statement and opinion that if Max Weber and Woodrow Wilson were to suddenly appear on the landscape of modernised public administration with normative theories, it was more likely those they would be unable to recognise the field of work they had founded and created. Government departments as the custodians and practitioners of public administration have accepted the introduction of private sector management to be practised within the public sector as part of change and administrative reforms. The public officials are the ones who opened a space and afforded change brought by the NPM as a chance to prove whether it was worth the recognition it was demanding in the field of public administration.
However, the few that also serve as public officials within government were found to be resistant to change. Hence Dunsire (1995) stated that the process for achieving objectives in the private and public sectors is ostensibly similar to each other because large organisations achieve results through the mobilisation of human resource. Cloete (1994: 6-62) also states that both the private and the public sectors are a collection of people working in a coordinated manner to realise set objectives. However, in the public sector today, the objectives mentioned above have been largely replaced by organisational private practice and culture. In this way many important services are provided through multi-organisational programmes such as tender processes that are followed and awarded to private companies. This is referred to as the outsourcing of services in the private sector. These programmes are essentially interconnected clusters of firms, government institutions and associations which come together within the framework of these programmes.
The doctrine of NPM is illustrated in Table 2.1 below:

**Table 2.1: The doctrine of NPM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Doctrine</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Justification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hands-on professional management of public organisation.</td>
<td>Visible managers at the top of the organization, free to manage by use of discretionary power.</td>
<td>Accountability requires clear assignment of responsibility, not diffusion of power.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit standards and measures of performance.</td>
<td>Goals and targets defined and measurable as indicators of success.</td>
<td>Accountability means clearly stated aims, efficiency requires a hard look at objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater emphasis on output controls.</td>
<td>Resource allocation and rewards are linked to performance.</td>
<td>Need to stress results rather than procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector.</td>
<td>Disaggregate public sector into corporate units of activity, organised by products, with devolved budgets. Units dealing at arm’s length with each other.</td>
<td>Make units manageable, split provision and production, use contracts inside and outside the public sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift to greater competition in the public sector.</td>
<td>Move to term contracts and public tender procedures, introduction of market discipline in public sector.</td>
<td>Rivalry competition as the key to lower costs and better standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress on private sector styles of management practice.</td>
<td>Move away from traditional public service ethics to more flexible pay, hiring, and rules.</td>
<td>Need to apply proven private sector management tools in the public sector.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress on greater discipline and economy in public sector resource use.</td>
<td>Cutting direct costs raising labour discipline, limiting compliance costs to business.</td>
<td>Needs to check resources demands of the public sector and do more with less.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Du Toit & Van der Waldt, 2007)
Table 2.2 by Araujo, (2001) illustrates the differences and relations between the two disciplines of NPM and Classical Public Administration:

**Table 2.2: Comparison of NPM and Classical Public Administration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements</th>
<th>New Public Management</th>
<th>Classical Public Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government organisation.</td>
<td>Break-up of traditional structures into quasi-autonomous units</td>
<td>Services provided on a uniform basis operating as a single aggregated unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of public organisations.</td>
<td>Hands-on professional management with clear statement of goals and performance measurement.</td>
<td>Control from the headquarters through the hierarchy of unbroken supervision and checks and balances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of output measures.</td>
<td>Stress results and output control rather than procedures.</td>
<td>Control of inputs and procedures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management practices.</td>
<td>Using private sector management style</td>
<td>Standard establishment procedures throughout the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline in resource use.</td>
<td>Check resources demand and do more with less</td>
<td>Due process and political entitlements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Du Toit & Van der Waldt, 2007)

As mentioned previously, the NPM was introduced to pave the way for the discussions on employees retention, which can be best achieved through employee training and development, so that it is possible for the institution to use the performance management as a tool on which it can base the findings relating to which and why employees were to be retained.
2.5 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management is a part of a continuous process of improvement done over time. It demands to be put into practice and paid attention to on a daily basis rather than bi-annually or even annually. Performance management requires willingness and a commitment to focus on improving performance at the level of an individual every day for the institution to be able to realise its objectives. It also involves the evaluation and assessment or measurement of the extent to which a programme or administrative and management function is operating as intended.

In a municipal environment, performance management is best described as the monitoring and evaluation tool used to evaluate the performance of the employees. A performance management system in a municipal environment can also be looked at from an angle of how efficiently and effectively the human resources are utilised with reference to administrative functions. The impact and outcome of the use of the performance management system will have specific usefulness that is measured through effectiveness and efficiency (Meiring, 2001: 91).

The idea of performance management orientation for public institutions is not itself a new phenomenon. The cynicism about the performance of government in general, and in local government in particular, is on-going (Venter, 2005). Performance definitions according to Cascio, (2003: 331) ensure that individual employees know what is expected of them, and that they stay focused on effective performance. The plans containing the baseline, of what is actually achieved, and reasons for variance were normally the components included on the tool or the system that is followed to evaluate employees. Such practice is known and related to the use of the key elements of performance management which are goals, measures, and assessments. Attention is being given to government performance as a communication tool, accountability mechanism, and feedback of information for improving management processes.
The management of government performance is important to address questions such as “How do communities know what is better performance?”, and “How can municipalities improve their level of performance?” to mention but a few. Therefore the intended outcomes are to be clearly and systematically documented on the performance agreement.

The municipal performance management system is one way of ensuring productivity aimed at targets in a work place (Craythorne, 2006: 199). Performance management can be seen as being part of a cooperative group action that is performed by municipal government and administration; hence it is expressed as having meaning in the promotion of the general welfare (Meiring, 2001: 81). Therefore when the institution has to assess the utility and value of the employees’ performance, it seeks to do the checks and balances against the following:

- Have the employees achieved a specific level of skill, knowledge, or performance through mainstream qualification or at least through the training and development as provided by the institution?
- Was there a change that occurred since the signing of the performance agreement?
- Was the change achieved through or because of training and development provided and attended?
- Is the change positively related to the institution attaining its objectives and mandate?
- Will a similar change occur with the new participants should they be involved in the programme and be made to sign performance agreements?

To yield desired outcomes for the institution, the performance management needs to be facilitated, meaning the institution should ensure the elimination of roadblocks to the successful performance. It should provide adequate tools of trade and other relevant resources to get the job done right and on time.
Lastly, the area of responsibility of the institution and management in a coordinated approach to performance management is performance encouragement.

2.6 STAFF RETENTION

Improved service delivery depends on the quality of employees responsible for such services; therefore management of employee turnover to ensure as little disruption in the workplace as possible is required. Hence staff retention is seen as a strategic human resource issue and is about finding the best employees for the job and ways of keeping those employees (Limpopo Office of the Premier, 2013).

In the previous Chapter, staff retention was defined as a process of ensuring that employees are kept within the organisation. This is especially aimed at employees with valued or needed skills, with experience in critical fields, or those regarded as custodians of the institutional memory (Merafong City Local Municipality, 2007). Staff retention is designed for and aimed at ensuring that the institution always has the best employees within its employ, who are well trained and suitable for each position held within the institution, for better assurance that the institution will deliver as expected (JGDM Policy, 2013). It is also aimed at ensuring increased levels of employee satisfaction. However, it is known that a retention strategy will not necessarily stop the exit or resignation of employees, but constitutes a serious attempt to qualitatively and quantitatively reduce staff turnover. Staff retention is heavily dependent upon factors of leadership skills of management and human resource strategy (Johnson, 2007: 80).

Therefore an institution has to have a retention strategy in place that should eventually be incorporated into a policy. The strategy should at least include a business plan, a value proposition, progress measures, and management influences that are meant to secure sustainable employee retention gains (Williams & Livingstone, 1994: 2-30), as explained below:
A business plan will indicate whether the institution will achieve its return on investment for efforts embarked on in retaining employees. This can be achieved by doing the necessary evaluation on the financial impact and consequences of employee turnover, since most of the time employees who are planning to leave the institution are normally less productive, whilst the new employees require more time before they can reach optimum productivity. On the other hand, the productivity and the quality of work of the employees may decline as a result of spending time training and assisting the new employee.

A value proposition will showcase the institution’s strength and differentiate it from others. It is known that employees want their personal and practical needs to be met most of the time, if not at all times, therefore employers need to offer compensation and benefits to match and manage expectations. Compensation packages offered should at least match those offered for similar positions in other institutions. However, compensation alone cannot be used to retain employees, but the strategy should be combined with other market-related packs such as the work environment that is competitively distinctive. Employees want to feel that their contributions are important, and want employers to demonstrate their commitment to stated corporate values, by being provided with opportunities to perform high-quality work and career advancement.

Measuring progress will assist the institution towards reaching retention goals at set and regular intervals; it will also assist in keeping the institution on track. This could be achieved by conducting an employee satisfaction survey.

The best managers require accountability; rewarding employees for success and taking corrective measures when necessary.
In ensuring the institution is an employer of choice, amongst other measures that should be taken by the institution, is to put together a sound staff retention policy, by establishing and understanding the reasons behind staff resignations. In addition, it is necessary to investigate the underlying factors that cause low morale, negative attitudes, and the average and under-performance of employees (Karin, 2008: 49). The same sentiments are shared by Ingersoll (2001: 15), namely that understanding why employees leave the institution is the first step of getting them to stay.

Darling-Hammond (2003: 8) concur with these sentiments by indicating that good salaries, career advancement, administrative support and other related factors indeed influence employees to be retained. Tommye & Melancon (2015: 4) state that in studying employers of choice, there are the following employment practices they have in common:

- Giving employees the responsibility and authority to get things done;
- Treating employees with respect and trust by creating an environment of trust through suggestion committees, newsletters and updates;
- Providing feedback on performance and recognising achievement. This is one of the low-cost strategies the institution could use when showing appreciation and recognition of a job well done. The supervisor can easily write out a personalised thank-you note, or even give periodic day(s) off to recognise good performance.
- Dedicating thought and resources to promoting high morale. This could be achieved through the practice of recognising personal or family milestones such as the birth of a baby, a wedding, and get well wishes.
- Hiring the right people. Recruit the right people from the outset by making sure all new appointments fit with the culture of the institution. Assess the candidates’ personality and leadership characteristics.
It is also known that the retention strategy is affected by certain factors, such as those pertaining to organisational climate, where employees are likely to leave the employer should they perceive a lack of clear direction on the part of management or a level of control over the work environment (Lok & Crawford, 1991). It can also be affected by a factor of employee satisfaction, as a result of employee perception of how well their job provides in qualities that they perceive as important (Luthans, 1998: 44). Lastly, there is a factor pertaining to employee well-being which Warr (1990) describes as the emotional state of employees within their total work setting as being either predominantly negative or positive. Therefore employee retention policies and strategies that are used as tools to ensure the same are dependent on or maybe associated with the importance of employee training and skills development.

Employee training is best explained as the planned programmes designed to improve performance at the individual and group level. In turn this implies that there have been measurable changes in the knowledge, skill, attitude, and social behaviour of employees (Cascio, 2003: 290). Employee training is meant to assist the institution to deliver or achieve better. Therefore for such delivery to be ensured, a number of structural issues must be addressed. In a situation such as that of the local government, one of the structural issues will be the qualification degrees awarded to graduates, but with no guarantee that the graduates have actually mastered the necessary skills. As a result municipalities must spend money to retain employees with the basic skills as means to ensure service delivery continuity.

The second structural issue relevant to municipalities will be that of the fact that despite the rhetoric about training being viewed as an investment, the current accounting rules require that it be treated as an expense. With the revised accounting rules, plant and equipment are recorded as assets on the asset register of the institution, whilst the training expenditures are seen merely as expenses to be deducted in the year in which they occurred.
Employee training and development are part of the organisational culture; they are tied to municipal strategies and objectives, and also linked to bottom-line results. An ongoing comprehensive, systematic approach to employee training and development ensures commitment to invest the necessary resources to provide sufficient time and money for training (Cascio, 2003: 293-294). Training and development are considered to be methods that will enable the institution to select employees who should be trained in various areas accordingly. Therefore the institution is able to choose to train and develop employees through the information presentation and technique, which include the form of lectures, conferences, systematic observation, and programmed instructions. Secondly, it can opt for the simulation methods through role playing, virtual reality, and business games, to mention but a few. Last, it can decide on the most popular and most frequently used method of the on the job training which mostly includes job rotation, committee assignments, and performance appraisals.

However, there is an interesting paradox regarding employee training. If employees are well trained and developed, they are more marketable and the likelihood would be after achieving or acquired training provided by the employer they might leave the employ. At the same time, if the institution provides adequate training and development opportunities to their employees, it is likely to retain its employees because of the interesting and challenging environment that would have been created. Hence the study deems it necessary to discuss one of the tools that are necessary to be employed or implemented by the institution to realise its mandate. That is the tool of planning the succession or ensuring business continuity.

2.7 SUCESSION PLANNING

Succession planning can be defined as a …“systemic, long-term process of determining goals, needs, and roles within an institution and preparing individuals or employee groups for responsibilities relative to work needed within an organization” (Luna, 2012: 60). Succession planning can be defined as means to ensure business continuity and the preservation of institutional memory in the event of the unplanned departure of key employees occupying critical positions within the institution.
It was initially conceived of as a risk management strategy designed to mitigate the loss of key leaders in a large organisation (Rothwell, 2010). Succession planning serves as a tool to manage knowledge and change, develop leadership capacity, build smart teams, and retain and deploy staff in a manner that helps an organisation operate to its greatest potential (Groves, 2003: 239-260). It is aimed at ensuring that employees are prepared and trained for the roles and responsibilities of the future by developing talents, skills, and enhancing employee potential, since individuals are becoming more strategic in their own career development and job searches (Fink, 2010: 33). It is also meant to provide career growth opportunities that help to motivate and retain current employees.

Succession planning enables staff to become suitable candidates for future roles as the institution evolves. The complex nature of work in public sectors means that institutions cannot rely on the serendipitous replacement of skilled employees, nor can they expect to have a pool of willing and qualified candidates ready and waiting (Fink & Brayman, 2006: 62-89; Zepeda, 2012: 136-158). Hence, succession planning exists to develop staff to be the best possible candidates when an opportunity arises for recruitment. It is aimed at creating an ongoing supply of well-trained, broadly experienced, and well-motivated employees who are ready to step into key positions as and when required. It is meant to make the best use of internal staffing resources and talent by growing own staff through training and development.

Succession planning is necessary to maintain and develop knowledge in a volatile political economy (Griffiths, 2012: 900-911). Effective planning for succession enables most organisations to realise cost savings and achieve the synergies necessary to thrive within the rapid evolving contexts in which they operate. Furthermore it instills confidence in the employees of an organisation and improves buy-in to the organisation’s culture (Clunies, 2007: 321-340).

Succession planning in municipal administration has several particularities. The most notable of these is the fact that even in the most stable municipal governments, there is regular turnover in key leaders (Leland, 2012: 44-50). Therefore, it is often beyond the mandate of elected leadership to plan for succession, as it may be beyond their
scope of work. Often, within the municipal environment, successors may seek to implement initiatives that are far different from those of their predecessors, which often lead to succession plans that are ultimately scrapped. This ultimately constitutes an inefficient use of scarce resources.

Failure to implement such a tool, or the incorrect implementation of the same could be detrimental to the institution, since it will not be possible to retain staff which in turn results in the institution failing or delaying to realise its mandate. Skill and worker shortages as a result of improper succession planning can result in inadequate staffing and poor performance in all aspects of the delivery of services.

The success of an institution such as the JGDM depends on the correct implementation of the succession plan to ensure that suitable employees are retained (JGDM 2014d). However, such correct implementation is not merely applicable to all employees since individuals perform differently and have different capabilities, potential, and level of education. Hence the researcher deems it necessary to introduce and discuss the performance management system as an effective tool that can be used to measure the employees’ potential, and that will also easily determine the deserving staff members who qualify to be retained and who qualify to be trained and developed through the succession plan.

2.8 LINKING STAFF RETENTION TO EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

As discussed above, staff retention is aimed at ensuring that an employee remains with the same institution or municipality (JGDM 2014c). This is important for both the employer and the employees because it ensures stability on operations and guarantees quality service delivery. Most municipal employees in management positions are employed on what is known as performance-based contracts, which are measured through the performance management system (PMS). The PMS can be seen as a tool that is used to benefit both the employees and the employer as it forms part of the documentation used for evaluation that will determine whether the employee should be retained. The employer benefits when the staff turnover is minimised.
On the other hand, the staff benefit through the usual or increased benefits such as fancy tools of trade such as tablet gadget over and above the laptop and performance bonuses over and above the 13th cheque.

On appointment, the candidate enters into an employment contract that is performance based. Both parties have the responsibility to deliver according to the stipulated conditions set out in the contract (JGDM 2014b). This is further detailed in the individual manager’s Service Delivery Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) that feeds the institutional Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which is the strategic guiding document with set out plans and targets that are to be achieved by the municipality within the tenure of the council elected (JGDM 2014a). Every task assigned to each manager is directly linked to the SDBIP scorecard of the Director the manager reports to the institutional scorecard of the Municipal Manager.

This forms the basis and the baseline of where evaluation of performance should start. Then the determination to keep the candidate or renew the employment contract stems from that. The link comes from the fact that the strategic objectives of the institution, the behaviour of employees, the programmes and achievement of results as outcomes are inseparable and variable parts of its performance. Hence employees are rewarded as per their performance that is linked to what is detailed on the institutional strategic document of the IDP.

In a public institution such as the JGDM, no implementation plan can be successfully achieved without a proper performance management system in place that will ensure that all municipal departments work together in striving to achieve the common set goals and targets of the institution. Hence the employee capacity building is deemed both a dignifying right as well as an economic instrument that will benefit both the institution and employees’ performance and lead to subsequent retention.
2.9. CONCLUSION

In this Chapter, reviewed developments in the theory of management and administration. This was important because staff retention and succession planning must be located within the broader theoretical understanding of these concepts, and in particular the New Public Management philosophy. NPM is a relatively recent development in the field of modern public administration and entails the introduction of private sector notions of management into classical public administration.

One of the values of the NPM is the manner in which it empowers managers to make operational decisions – “let managers manage”. Staff retention and succession planning are specific areas within the human resource field where public sector managers are called to manage, and is enriched by the broader theoretical understanding. It has been demonstrated that administration and management are intricately linked, and that management is an important facet of public administration.

The literature review as outlined and discussed above provided an overview of several key areas of research related to both succession planning and staff retention. It has been shown that the latter are linked to general conceptions of management and administration, and are essential for institutional performance.

The literature shows that the effectiveness of succession planning and staff retention is best coupled with the discussions of the performance management for best realisation since the measurement of government performance has been an instrument for influencing policies throughout the history and practice of the public administration discipline (Davidson, 1991: 360). The literature also suggests that once the institution engages with succession planning as a tool for knowledge and management, the institution could retain the expertise of key employees, and also build upon it to create value, cost efficiencies, and most importantly, improved employee morale.

The discussion will now explain how the study was undertaken, before reporting on its findings and conclusions.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Every scientific research project needs to have a sound base embedded in a research design to depict the elements, their interrelationships, the data collection and analysis processes to ensure that the final report answers the research questions (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2010: 161; Babbie & Mouton, 2011: 89). It is a planning structure for the implementation and the testing of the research questions. It is seen as the process of designing the overall plan for collecting and analysing data, including the specifications for enhancing the internal and external validity of the study.

It is also a strategic framework and vital for the success of the research project. The results of the project can be accepted, rejected, replicated or sometimes even be understood in the context of how to get there by those making use of the same (Hofstee, 2006: 107; Mouton, 2002: 36; Mouton & Marais, 1990). The qualitative research is appropriate to the study of those attitudes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting, as opposed to the somewhat artificial settings of experiments and surveys (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 270).

This chapter describes and explains the research methodology adopted in this study and the overall design used when conducting the research project. Then the sampling types, the procedure the research study followed, and the data instruments and methods used are elaborated on. Finally, the manner in which data is analysed is explained and ethical considerations emanating from the study are discussed.
3.2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2009: 5) knowledge is generated and improved through the application of research, which is a logical and scientific way of discovering something new. Usually the research paradigm is divided into two philosophies, namely positivistic (quantitative) research and phenomenological (qualitative) research. The researcher in the positivist tradition (law-like generalisations) presumes that the information gathered must be interpreted through the method that ensures that the pure objectiveness of the person conducting the analyses is maintained (Saunders et al, 2003: 83), while researchers in the phenomenological tradition (complex and unique situations) contend that the vast awareness of this “multiplex world” is minimized into principles of general statements and concepts (Saunders et al, 2003: 84).

Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007: 559) states that qualitative research can inform theory and model development in a way that leads to insights into the processes and practices within a particular setting, location, time, context activity or experience.

A qualitative approach was selected because it allows the gathering of rich and detailed data that leaves the perspective of the participants intact. Furthermore, data analysis in qualitative methodology allows a focus on intangible information and its interpretation, and so enables the researcher to look at the values and perceptions (informative insight into the research topic) of the selected sample from population Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design employed in this study follows the qualitative approach. Shajahan (2000: 67) states that the “research design” is the plan that is used by a researcher of information that directs him/her in the way of gathering, interrogation and explaining of the discovered information. The instruments used to gather data in qualitative methodology are appropriate for studying and understanding social forces through a wide range of open-ended techniques (Cloete, 2007: 513).
Mouton (2002:35) states that research methodology involves the application of a variety of standardised methods and techniques that will increase the likelihood of attaining validity in the scientific endeavour (Mouton, 2002: 35).

The study that is being undertaken here, as indicated in the introduction, is an assessment of the extent to which a particular organisation (the Joe Gqabi District Municipality) has succeeded in implementing a particular intervention (succession and staff retention plans) with a view to obtaining a particular result (retaining skilled employees). In this study, then, the unit of analysis is the JGDM. Specifically, the study is looking at the succession planning policy and retention strategy of the municipality in order to assess its impact on its employees and the organisation.

According to Robson a research study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular phenomenon within its real life context using “multiple resources of evidence” (Robson, 2002: 178). What Robson calls “multiple resources of evidence” in essence refer to the particular methodological approaches, or techniques, deployed to generate the data that answers the research question.

In this study, we have collected the data using semi structured questionnaires, supplemented with evidence gleaned from official documents as the research instruments.

An interview is when “a number of people are engaged in meaningful conversation” (Saunders et al, 2003: 245) citing (Kahn and Cannell, 1957). Interviews can be divided into three different types namely tightly shaped (sometimes called structured or closed) interviews, semi-shaped (semi-structured) interviews and unshaped (open-ended) interviews. Interviewer-monitored questionnaires are utilised in the tightly shaped interviews where questionnaires founded on pre-arranged and uniform or same set of questions are administered, while the interrogator in the semi-shaped interviews is guided by pre-arranged topics and questions that he/she wants to be addressed and also enjoys great flexibility with regard to the direction of the
interrogation (Saunders et al, 2009: 320). Unshaped or open-ended interviews are “informal” and look deep into the common concerns and curiosity of the interviewees (Saunders et al, 2009: 321). Thus, the methodological approach of this research project is qualitative by means of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with employees with the option of telephonic interviews if deemed necessary.

According to Dahlberg & McCaig (2010: 34), qualitative research and key research questions may only emerge during the initial data gathering stage, then the design will have to be revisited in effect to become a reiterative process, rather than an essentially linear process. Punch (2006: 22) agrees with the same sentiments where he states that in qualitative research questions tend to be more general, more abstract, and usually are not directly answerable because they are too general. He further goes on and say in quantitative research questions tend to be more specific, detailed and concrete when they are directly answerable, especially when questions point directly at the data needed to answer them.

A questionnaire as an instrument of collecting primary data was utilised, where a list of pre-structured and pre-tested questions were given to a chosen sample in order to extract reliable data (Babbie, 2004: 244). In this study the questionnaire used structured and semi-structured questions. The questionnaire solicited current and former employee-related information, and their input on the implementation of the succession planning policy and the staff retention strategy.

The questionnaires were sent to all the participants of the study via e-mails together with the permission letter from the Municipal Manager, so that the participants have enough time (minimum of 5 working days) to apply their minds and prepare their responses. The type of research undertaken is an evaluative study in order to gauge the perceptions of informed participants with regard to the efficacy of management interventions to retain staff.
As indicated above, official documents were also used as secondary sources to obtain answers to the research questions. These documents included legislation; the policies of the institution under study, specifically its Staff Retention Strategy and Succession Planning Policy; as well as official reports and Council resolutions for whose use consent had been duly obtained.

3.3.1 Sampling Procedure

Saunders et al (2003: 150) states that the method of selecting and limiting the volume of information you require by only gathering information from a “subgroup” instead of all “possible cases or elements” is called a “sampling technique”.

A sample of a population is used to simplify the research, since it is easier to study a representative sample of population than to study the entire population (Brynard & Hanekom, 1997: 43). Neuman (2006) explains that a target population is a specific group of people to be studied while Bless and Higson-Smith (1995: 87) elaborated further by saying that it is a set of elements on which the researcher focuses and to which the results obtained by testing the sample should be generalised. The basic requirements and characteristic of a sample is that it should be representative of the population from which it is taken (Basley & Clover, 1988: 95).

Population sampling is categorised into two kinds, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling consists of elements such as random sampling, systematic sampling, stratified sampling and cluster sampling, while the non-probability sampling consists of quota sampling, convenience sampling, snowball sampling, and purposive sampling elements. Punch (2000: 209) states that purposive sampling involves selecting elements for the sample that the judgment of the researcher and prior knowledge suggest would best suit the purpose of the study, and would provide the best information. In this study non-probability purposive sampling was used to source information from the respondents. In some investigations, the study takes the form of choosing a sample that specifically excludes certain people because their presence within the sample might confound the research findings.
The target population group that was considered for this study was the community of the and employees of the Joe Gqabi District Municipality. The respondents under the group of JGDM employees that were considered were those who are in supervisory positions but do not have any decision-making powers and are not in managerial positions. Middle and senior managers in the institution of the JGDM also formed part of the respondents.

The researcher used one questionnaire with different sections. The questionnaire was issued to cover a balanced number of representatives, within the different categories of the target population, these being senior management (at least one out of five directors), middle management (at least five out of twenty-three), and supervisors (at least five out of thirty).

Non-probability purposive sampling was used to source information from the respondents, and stratified random sampling of the non-probability sample was also used so as to allow the researcher to decide on the final number of respondents for the research project. The objective of choosing these types was to minimise the possibility of human bias.

The result in terms of participants who formed the actual sample that was interviewed is reflected in Table 3.1 below:

**Table 3.1: Non-probability stratified sampling**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY OF EMPLOYEE</th>
<th>NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Senior Managers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Managers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisors/Professionals</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3.2 Data Collection

The key to data collection is reliability. The reliability of the data collection instrument refers to the degree to which the instrument can be depended upon to yield consistent results if it is consistently used on the same person or used by two different investigators (Polit & Hungler, 1995: 295). It is necessary to ensure that at all times the findings of the study provide consistent results. It is therefore a requirement that the application of a valid measuring tool or instrument used with various respondents should at the end lead or yield to the same observation (Mouton, 1996: 144).

It was already indicated in the preceding sections that a qualitative approach to the study was adopted and the instruments used to gather data for the study included document analysis and semi-structured questionnaires which were answered by the sampled group during the interviews. The gathered data started with the review of existing policy documents and the retention strategy of the institution under study.

During the study the researcher conducted follow up self-administered interviews with respondents. The questionnaires were emailed to respondents five (5) days before the interview to give them time to apply their minds to the questions. Then, an appointment was scheduled to conduct personal interviews as a follow-up on the answers provided. The permission of the respondents was sought for a recording device to be used to record the interview. However, some of the respondents were not comfortable with being tape-recorded. So, only completed questionnaires and the researcher’s notes were used to take out the main thematic concepts, statements and opinions of each participant.

The questionnaire that was administered contained two sections. The first section dealt with biographical information. This was used to identify the respondent and to identify the occupational category to which he/she belonged (i.e., senior manager, middle manager, supervisor or professional). The intention with this classification was to compare, during analysis, whether responses would differ amongst these
persons for whom the retention policy was primarily designed. In the event, responses were mostly neutral in terms of occupational category.

In line with the aim and objectives of the study, the questionnaire contained a set of nine (9) questions. The first seven (7) questions were related to succession planning, while the last two (2) were related to staff retention. Since issues of employee development and staff rotation are central to succession planning, questions on them were also included. Respondents were also asked to identify gaps, if any, in both the staff retention strategy and the succession policy. Questions asked invited respondents to explain their answer in order to get deeper insights into their opinions.

The key research questions contained in the questionnaire are listed below:

i) What is your understanding of succession planning?
ii) According to your own knowledge, has the municipality put into practice or implemented the succession plan?
iii) According to your knowledge, does JGDM support employee development?
iv) Does JGDM provide adequate opportunities for professional growth?
v) Does JGDM allow duties to be rotated by staff within supervisory levels as a means to enable employee development?
vi) Are there any gaps identified in the succession policy?
vii) What is your understanding of the staff retention strategy?
viii) According to you knowledge, has the municipality put into practice or implemented the staff retention strategy?
ix) Are there any gaps identified in the staff retention strategy?

3.3.3 Data analysis

Data analysis is a quest for valid meaning or understanding of the data collected and its relation to the research objective (Finch, 1990: 20). It is a search for patterns in data-recurrent behaviour, objects, or a body of knowledge (Neuman, 1997: 426). The
analysis of data is organising collected data in a way to answer the research question.

However, data on its own does not or cannot answer the research question, hence the data collected must be processed and analysed in some orderly way that allows patterns and orderliness to be discerned (Polit & Hungler, 1993: 41,431 and 434). Thorough analysis of the data will increase information, as well as its reliability and its relevance to the subject matter. Once suitable and sufficient data has been collected, a pattern is identified, and it is interpreted in terms of a social theory or the setting in which it occurred. In the analysis of data, the researcher examined, sorted, categorised, evaluated, compared, contemplated and reviewed the data.

The information in question was transformed into useful information by grouping data into themes and patterns. Shajahan (2000: 317) argues that the motive is the development of first-hand understanding of connections between pieces of information so that worthwhile conclusions are able to be made. Utilization was made of content, thematic and narrative analysis of what was said by the selected sample of respondents with regard to the implementation of succession planning and staff retention at JGDM.

After the data was collected using questionnaires, all factual information was described, explained, and then suitable deductions were made. The data was codified to check whether there was any pattern identified, and it was interpreted in terms of a grounded theory as it is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 498).

During the analysis of the data, the recurring themes that emerged were identified. These themes were:

- Understanding of succession policy
- Implementation of the succession policy
- Employee development
- Staff rotation
• Understanding of the staff retention strategy
• Implementation of the staff retention strategy

3.3.4 Pilot study

A pilot test was conducted with 3 respondents in order to test that the questions do not have double meanings. The motive behind the conducting of pilot test is the improvement of the quality of questionnaires to ensure that needed information is captured without any difficulties by the interviewees in answering the interview questions (Saunders et al, 2003: 308). On the basis of this, minor amendments were effected to one question.

3.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The size of the sample chosen for the study can be considered to be too little. Twelve (12) respondents completed and returned the questionnaires. However, it needs to be borne in mind that this was not a statistical study, but a qualitative one. Its value therefore lies in the in-depth understanding and insights that it is able to reveal, rather than in the generalisability of its results.

Participation was limited to senior managers, middle managers and professionals of the municipality. In the view of the research problem, an expanded research sample which included former employees who were in supervisory positions, other administration staff not directly affected by the findings of the study and other categories within the employment of the municipality, may have been interestingly benefited and enriched the study and its recommendations. However, this was constrained by the fact that the scope of application of the staff retention policy of the municipality was restricted to these groups mentioned of which it is something to be consider as a weakness in the municipality’s policy. Thus, extending the study to other levels of employees, theoretically meaningful as it might be, would not have been practicable in this evaluative study.
The fact that the researcher was an employee of the same institution under study also created some barriers and suspicions that, for participants to remain anonymous was somehow going to be compromised. Although the participants were ensured of the confidentiality of their participation in the study, most participants were sceptical and uncomfortable to participate. Others eventually opted out without participating and yet were the individuals that are mostly and directly affected by the findings of the study. These were replaced. Respondents were also not comfortable with the use of tape recorders. Consequently, these were also not used, and reliance was placed on note-taking.

The close ended questions where most participants answered with a YES or NO did not allow the researcher an opportunity to probe and get more elaboration on the views of the participants. The questionnaire provided generous spaces for elaboration and indeed these were utilised in the vast majority of cases. It is possible that respondents who answered with a simple YES or NO expressed in those words all they wanted to in response to the question.

The two subjects combined of the study that was undertaken had limited literature. Most literature on the two subjects of the study – namely succession planning and staff retention – tend to treat the topics separately and not together. Literature which treats them together is limited.

Lastly, there is no guarantee that the type of information received from the respondents was completely reliable and accurate, since the possibility cannot be excluded that many might have used the study to air their own frustrations or provided limited answers to protect and secure their jobs. Information testing would be required in this regard for future research which would need more time and resources.
3.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

3.5.1 Research Ethics

In carrying out the research a number of ethical considerations were adhered to. Ethical considerations are paramount in research in order to have findings which are unbiased, and at the same time have a research project that is standard and agrees with the basic ethical principles of research.

Saunders et al. (2003: 129) cites Wells (1994: 284) who explains that the “etiquette of research” - which is a set of rules regulating proper practice in conducting the self - is what ethics are about. The upright manner in which the whole research process is handled from how we formulate and clarify the research topic, research design, data gathering, utilization and keeping of information to write up of research findings is what research ethics is about (Saunders et al. 2009:184).

This study complied with research ethics. The ethical issues that were significant in this research are discussed below.

3.5.2 Informed consent and participation

The protection and utmost care of participants’ integrity through the safeguarding of their “privacy” is central to researchers, because all elements and steps in research are faced with serious ethical issues (Saunders et al. 2003: 131). Hence, in conducting this research all the information deemed private was treated as such. Maximum confidentiality was observed at all times and costs. Where the persons involved in the research required that their names be kept anonymous, their right to confidentiality was indeed observed.
Participant interviews were conducted one on one in a private location, in order to ensure confidentiality. The participants were provided with the information sheet that accompanied the questionnaire which informed them of the reasons as to why the research project was being undertaken. Furthermore, the aim of the study was clearly explained and discussed with the participants beforehand.

### 3.5.3 Protection from harm

The researcher ensured that no physical and emotional harm is experienced by participants of this study. No coercion or undue influence was used in carrying out the research. When permission to record the interviews was refused by a number of participants, this was respected. The participants were also assured that what they say is for the purposes of the report and cannot be used against them. An environment that ensured the participants could express their opinions without fear was created to ensure unbiased results.

### 3.5.4 Permission

A request to conduct the study was submitted to various relevant persons. Then, permission was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, the supervisor and the Faculty of Arts at the University.

In addition, the Municipal Manager of the JGDM signed off permission for the study to be conducted at the Municipality and approved the request to access to the official documents used in the study.

### 3.5.5 Plagiarism

Avoidance of plagiarism was observed to avoid academic theft. All the information acquired from other sources other than of the researcher has been acknowledged.
3.5 CONCLUSION

In every research project it is important to determine the exact methods that will be used to collect data, including the factors that influence the same. The study analysed the available documents on the subject of staff retention and succession planning in the municipality. The research design, method, sampling procedures, as well as the data collection methods used and followed were all explained and discussed in detail in this chapter. The interviews and document review methods were also highlighted. The limitations of the study and ethical considerations were discussed. The next Chapter, will present the findings of the study.
CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As explained in the previous chapter, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from a total of twelve respondents. In this chapter, the data in question is transformed and used to answer the research questions. This is done by grouping the data into themes and patterns in order to develop first-hand understanding of connections in the information provided so that it makes it possible to make worthwhile conclusions.

A thematic approach is thus used as the principle method in analysing the data collected. This approach uses the data of the interviews to identify trends from the statements and opinions of the respondents and compares and contrasts them using meaningful categories. Data analysis is conducted according to the two major topics of this study, namely succession planning and staff retention. Within succession planning, core themes, which constitute the aim of this research, namely:

This chapter presents the findings of the data collected on both the implementation of the succession policy and implementation of the retention strategy at the JGDM. The objectives of the study in relation to the problem statement were:

- Review the theoretical framework as related to staff retention and succession planning in the public service;
- Review the existing implementation of the staff retention introduced at the JGDM, which was targeted at retaining mainly the middle management;
- Identify factors that caused the staff dissatisfaction and the low morale of employees and lastly;
- Obtain the views of the JGDM employees who are affected by the approved retention strategy and how they thought the same could be implemented to yield positive results in all aspects and ensure effective retention of human resources within the municipality.
The researcher planned to conduct face-to-face administered semi-structured interviews with the use of a recording device to record the interviews. However, that could not materialise in all cases owing to participants not being comfortable with being recorded and some not being available for interviews. Those who were not available were, however, willing to complete questionnaires on their own. Therefore questionnaires were distributed and personal interviews conducted using the same questionnaire as a guide, and the basis of the interviews were from the responses provided by the respondents. Thereafter the information or data collected during the interview was recorded on the questionnaire.

As indicated in the previous Chapter, 12 questionnaires were completed. The results of these questionnaires are reported and analysed in this Chapter. A sample of the questionnaire is attached to this report as Annexure E.

The data was codified to check whether any pattern was identified, and it was interpreted in terms of a grounded theory as it was inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 498). During the analysis of the data, the recurring themes that emerged were codified using the open coding type. After the data was collected, all factual information was described and explained, where after suitable deductions were made.

The themes according to which this data is analysed are the following:

- Understanding of succession policy
- Implementation of the succession policy
- Employee development
- Staff rotation
- Understanding of the staff retention strategy
- Implementation of the staff retention strategy
4.2 FINDINGS RELATING TO SUCCESSION POLICY

4.2.1 Understanding of succession policy

Respondents were asked about their understanding of succession policy. All the respondents displayed a remarkably good understanding of succession planning.

The respondents were able to identify the objectives that a succession plan would seek to achieve. This is not surprising as all the respondents are in supervisory roles or higher, and would be expected to have familiarity with basic people management concepts. Respondents saw a succession plan variously as one meant to effect upward mobility in the workplace, to develop or grow employees to hold supervisory, skilled or leadership positions and to meet employment equity targets. All the respondents were conscious of the role played by succession planning in ensuring continuity when vacancies arise as well as its potential to reduce staff turnover within the organisation.

4.2.2 Implementation of succession policy

When asked whether, according to their knowledge, the municipality has implemented its succession policy, respondents gave varying responses. The majority (6) felt that the municipality had not put its succession plan into practice, while four (4) of the respondents felt that it had. Two (2) of the respondents felt that the plan was only partially implemented.

Among those who answered that the succession policy has been implemented, only one gave an unequivocal “Yes”; the other three qualified their response in some way, as the following examples indicate:

Yes, there is a succession policy in place but it is not implemented the way I would have implemented it. (Respondent F)
To a certain degree, attempts are made to get it off the ground. (Respondent R).

Those who feel that the succession plan has not been implemented are scathing in their remarks, and blame lack of will and inequitable implementation. Two (2) of the respondents expressed the cynical view that the municipality was not serious about succession planning and that the plan was there only for “compliance purposes.” One Respondent expressed her frustration thus:

No, the municipality is not implementing this policy or plan. [It is] evident that people with 10 years long service are still juniors and newcomers and people with less experience are holding management positions (Respondent Z).

This aspect of inequitable implementation has given support by Respondent L who resents the fact that qualified people are undervalued:

Three supervisors in one section are in the same level or task grade as per the institutional organogram. However, the qualifications are not the same since the other two are only with Matric, yet the succession is planned in such a way that all three are given equal opportunity to be evaluated for the same upward mobility which is the manager position they all report to, This according to myself is unfair as the abilities of all the three are not the same and the initiative they show is not the same given the obvious thing that a person with a M+ [post-Matric] qualification cannot be compared with those with Matric for a manager position.

Thus, respondents generally felt that the municipality was not implementing the succession policy (based on the poor succession planning) and elaborated further by saying most employees are sitting with frustration that their initiatives and abilities are not recognised and are ignored. The respondents further said that although the municipality does have a succession policy, it has not been put to practice as expected. Except for its good implementation in the Health Services department, there was a feeling among respondents that where it has been implemented, this
had been done haphazardly or inequitably and that in a sense it is a policy drafted for compliance purpose only.

4.2.3 Employee development

Respondents were asked: “According to your knowledge, does JGDM support employee development?”

All twelve (12) respondents interviewed without exception were of the opinion that JGDM support staff development. The means identified by the respondents through which this was done include opportunities for training and capacity building, further study, staff rotation and the granting of study and examination leave.

A downside identified by Respondent Z, however, was that while investing in training for employees, the municipality was failing to reap the benefits thereof as trained staff were not staying but leaving the organisation. This is of concern and points to a possible failure in linking employee development to staff retention. It may also suggest the absence of a strategic approach.

4.2.4 Professional development

Although JGDM is given much credit by all respondents for its employee development efforts, the opinions are split when it comes to its commitment to the professional development of its employees. Asked whether JGDM provides adequate opportunities for professional growth, an equal number of respondents (5 each) answered YES and NO respectively, while two (2) indicated that the commitment was partial.

Those who responded favourably to the question whether they considered professional development opportunities at JGDM to be adequate indicated appreciation for the fact that JGDM supported professional growth in the form of further studies, learnerships, short courses, encouraging affiliations with relevant professional bodies where applicable and internal candidates were given preference
when vacancies arose. However, they qualified their responses by pointing out lack of strategic intent in the implementation.

Yes they do, ‘cause they give us opportunity for further study though they won’t consider what you have. (Respondent P)

When individuals are enrolling for their degrees, Masters, PhD and so forth the [District Municipality] does not assist financially and adequate time is not given to employees to further their studies. Yet qualifications are highly considered when advertising positions within the institution (Respondent N).

Those who answered in the negative lamented the emphasis placed on training programmes and that some of the training was not useful. In the words of Respondent L:

The type of training that most employees are sent to are not relevant or fair. For example, where one will be sent to attend a training where only a certificate of attendance will be offered or where a lesser NQF level certificate will be offered, e.g. being in possession of a B-degree which is equivalent to NQF Level 6 and be sent to a training that will provide the same person with an NQF Level 4 certificate.

Other factors that were identified as impacting on the level of support for professional growth were budget constraints which meant that no bursaries were granted for graduate studies, and “non-recognition of professionalism” within the municipality. As one respondent puts it:

Succession planning is seemingly linked to employment equity and treating all the same and not about supporting those with initiative (Respondent F)

Training was further said to be selective, mostly for those in management and the selective few that are vocal and put up an argument before they can be considered for training.
4.2.5 Staff rotation

Respondents were asked whether JGDM promoted staff rotation as a means for employee development. The responses were interesting as all senior managers (4) felt that JGDM did promote staff rotation for development, while many supervisors and middle managers (4) felt this was not the case.

Among those supervisors who responded that JGDM did support staff rotation, all the YES responses were qualified, indicating a lack of satisfaction with the “how” of the implementation of the staff rotation policy.

Supervisors and professionals who confirmed the statement by the middle managers that duties and staff rotation was not promoted at JGDM, cited that they were not sure if it was done for “employee development” and that while some sections did it, it was not done throughout the organisation.

This is what Respondent L had to say:

Not at all. You will do what you came to do and not explore what other colleagues are doing… We are not given an opportunity to do anything outside your job description.

Lack of staff rotation was deemed to be depriving potential supervisors of an opportunity to perform duties of their fellow colleagues so as to be in a position to assume duties of their managers should the positions be vacant in future. It was elaborated that most of the time supervisors are made to only perform duties that are within their scope and job descriptions. When requesting exposure to do other related supervisory duties within the same section they are denied the opportunity. This in turn makes them feel redundant and frustrated, having the potential to do more yet forced to do the same things over and over again for years without recognition and possibility of growth.
4.2.6 Gaps in implementation of succession policy

All respondents were asked if there were any gaps they could identify in the manner in which the succession policy was implemented in JGDM. The answers were grouped into three categories and are listed below:

Gaps indicating lack of strategic direction
- Succession planning is not linked to the organisational structure.
- Succession planning is not linked to performance management.

Gaps relating to the absence of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms
- No time-frame for the upskilling of individuals.
- Individuals task with implementation of succession planning are in many cases not “capacitated” as the incumbents are not trained or qualified for the jobs they hold.

Gaps that have an adverse effect on employee satisfaction
- Some departments do give employees an opportunity to do anything outside your job description.
- Some departments do not implement or put into practice the succession policy at all and employees end up leaving the organisation because they are not considered.
- Current implementation is based on treating everyone equally and ignores those with initiative.

4.2.7 Analysis and conclusion

Senior management thought that succession policy at JGDM was a plan that allows upward mobility. Though the municipality has the policy in place it was not implemented accordingly.
The municipality was said to be supporting employee development, since the municipality was allowing duties and staff rotation though employees were not keen as they do not see the value in succession planning in its current format, since it was viewed as not opening any upward career mobility opportunities. However, the municipality was not adequately providing opportunity for professional growth to individuals, since the adopted succession policy was linked to the employment equity and therefore treating every employee the same and not supporting those with the initiative. Senior management further confirmed that indeed the succession policy of the municipality has gaps, since it was not supporting those with the initiative drive and potential. It was explained as taking the blanket approach to all those in the same TASK grade to be given the same opportunity without considering individual potential.

They further agreed that the municipality does support employee development as stated in the MFMA looking at the implementation of financial management alone, since there was very minimal development supported in other areas. Middle managers further felt that there was absolutely no opportunity provided for professional growth and further explained that there is very little evolution of positions and recognition of professionalism.

The respondents to the study seemed to have a clear knowledge and understanding of the concept regarding the succession policy and its implementation within the JGDM. Everyone demonstrated a clear understanding of all the processes that are followed before a policy can be regarded as an approved or an adopted policy of the Council, and understood that the same is only after it has been adopted where it is binding on all and is expected to be implemented by all.

Respondents confirmed that the JGDM indeed has a succession policy in place. However, most respondents also confirmed that the same policy was not being correctly implemented and therefore was regarded as not being implemented. It was further evident to the researcher that professional growth was compromised at the JGDM, since most responses received were negative towards the question of
professional growth within the Municipality. Responses and interviews confirmed that growth was not a priority, especially regarding the supervisors and professionals.

Many reasons were cited, including the notion that many managerial positions that existed within the Municipality could have been filled by the supervisors and professionals the institution has at its disposal, because the same people were second-in-charge to those managers who had left the employ and created the very same vacancies. The reasons provided to substantiate the notion were that those second-in-charge professionals were to be considered first and be provided with managerial training since they were familiar with rest of the work done by their predecessors as in the past they have worked closely with those managers who had left the employment. Therefore the gaps identified within the policy by employees, and alluded to in the questionnaires, pose limitations to the implementation of the policy.

4.3 FINDINGS RELATING TO STAFF RETENTION

4.3.1 Understanding of staff retention strategy

The answers provided to questions seven to nine of the questionnaire were relating to the retention strategy. Therefore answers provided by the senior managers gave an overview that was summarised as follows:

All respondents showed a good understanding of staff retention and the strategy thereof. These understandings included seeing staff retention as a methodology to reduce the skills exodus of highly skilled and essential staff. Further the intention of staff retention is seen as to retain scarce skills employees and those in critical positions so as to ensure stability and continuity of municipal operations.

Some of the definitions included means through which staff retention could be promoted in an organisation, such as through promotion, internal head-hunting, attractive salaries and flexible work schedules. Career development according to
respondents in this category was said to be by far the best way of retaining staff, and communication was deemed extremely vital.

4.3.2 Implementation of staff retention strategy

Respondents were asked whether they thought the municipality had implemented its staff retention strategy.

An overwhelming number of respondents (8) thought that JGDM was implementing its staff retention strategy with four (4) saying that it had not been implemented or was only partially implemented.

Payments of a “retention bonus” to those in middle management, payment of performance bonus, signed retention agreements and allowing special leave were cited as evidence of implementation. It should be recalled, however, that the signing of retention agreements with the municipal manager by middle managers was voluntary and not everyone took up the option. Nevertheless, it would seem from the responses that the retention strategy was indeed generally implemented across the organisation. As one respondent confidently put it:

Yes, the retention strategy of middle management is implemented and seems to be working fine (Respondent D).

Respondents who disagreed that the JGDM was implementing the retention strategy validated their statements by saying that employees were leaving the employment all the time for better opportunities. One Respondent, in response to the question whether the staff retention of the municipality was being implemented, said:

Certainly not, as there is a huge number of staff loss in the institution, almost three employees in two months (Respondent X).

One respondent opined that perceived lack of implementation was “caused by [the prevalent] style of management and organisational culture for staff being retained”
(Respondent Z). This criticism would seem to be a comment on how the organisational climate militates against successful implementation, rather than an indication that no implementation is taking place.

Another respondent identified the absence of a link of staff retention to skills development as a problem:

_They are not aligning the [staff retention] strategy with the institutional goals to ensure maximum return on investment. At times they will take people to trainings but still be willing to release the person_ (Respondent P).

Other views expressed were that JGDM does not financially cater well for its employees. The municipality does not recruit to fill vacant positions of middle managers, instead the staff below the middle management level were made to close the gap by way of “acting” in those positions without any form of recognition, or salary top up, or even consideration of the same people for full time employment in those positions they act on when the interviews are conducted.

By far the single most prominent factor identified by respondents as a major limitation to the effectiveness of the staff retention strategy is the fact that it is selective in that as a policy it applies only to middle managers.

The focus of the staff retention strategy on one level of employees in the institution has the effect of demoralising those employees who feel excluded. This results in perverse incentives in that employees who are not part of middle managers are not incentive for outstanding performance.

It was therefore mentioned that management was to consider implement the strategy in a correct manner that will cater for all employees of the municipality, since the staff lower than the managers were regarded as the foot soldiers that ensures that day to day operations do not collapse.
It was further mentioned that the lack of providing staff with relevant training needs was demotivation to staff and the issue of not offering performance bonuses to all staff or consider cascading performance was also negatively affecting commitment of staff to stay with the municipality.

4.3.3 Gaps in implementation of staff retention strategy

All respondents were asked if there were any gaps they could identify in the manner in which the succession policy was implemented in JGDM. The answers can be summarised as follows:

- The limited scope of application of the staff retention strategy was identified as a weakness by most respondents (10 out of 12). The general feeling is that it should be extended to all levels of staff in the municipality.
- The staff retention strategy is not linked to identified training needs; “It is only a financial benefit.” (Respondent A)
- The strategy was not communicated properly to employees, and “some perceived it as part of the employee benefits.” (Respondent R)
- The strategy is not being to the succession planning and technical development of employees.

4.3.4 Analysis and conclusions

From the respondents of the study, it was evident that most employees at the JGDM were not pleased with the retention strategy, both those participating and benefiting from the strategy and those who were not beneficiaries of the same. The study revealed that although the strategy exists at the Municipality, that did not curb the staff turnover because the strategy was selective and therefore did not qualify to be regarded as the “staff” retention. The reason for this is that other categories such as those of supervisors and professionals as part of the staff of the JGDM had never been catered for since the inception of the strategy.
Part of the problem is that the retention strategy had never been accepted by all since the action was viewed by employees to be selective and only the middle managers were retained: nothing was said on how the institution was planning on retaining other staff members. It was further said the retention was biased given the different percentages offered to the managers.

This matter sparked discussion in various platforms such as local labour forum (LLF) in which this issue itself was a source of employee dissatisfaction.

4.4 FINDINGS RELATING TO POLICY DOCUMENTS

As mentioned in the first chapter, this study was intended to explore and assess the implementation of the succession planning policy and staff retention strategy documents as a measure intended to assist the Municipality to carry out its mandate effectively and fairly.

4.4.1 Policy process

A policy can be best described as aims or plans documented, either by an individual, a group, or institution (Soanes, Stevenson, & Hawker, 2008). A policy is a plan document that is binding on all once it is approved. The process followed at the JGDM before the policy was adopted was that the relevant office responsible for the drafting of the same, which is known to be the custodian of the policy, will do the following:

- Draft the policy according to the legislated steps.
- Table and present the same to the top management.
- On agreement with the contents of the policy, the same is presented to the Rules and Ethics Committee, which is a section 79 committee of Council.
- If all is well and there are no changes to be effected, the policy is sent to staff for inputs and comments.
- Then engagements with the local labour forum begin.
• Where-after, if there were no disputes with regards to the policies, the policies are tabled before Council for adoption and then will be ready for implementation and be binding on all.

However, if the implementation calls for review of the same, similar adoption process are to be followed to rectify the gaps identified.

4.4.2 Career pathing and succession planning policy of JGDM

The implementation of the policy on career and succession planning at the JGDM had never successfully been put into practice since the inception. This is proved by various discussions and roadshows that were embarked on to resuscitate and encourage the implementation of the policy.

Some of the discussions took place during the Broad Management meeting held on 21 July 2014. The report brought to light that the implementation of the policy was failing, as per the information that was gathered during the roadshow that took place between 14 and 28 January 2014. The challenges cited by the employees were as listed below:

• Employees claimed that they knew nothing about the policy.
• Others were worried about inconsistency in implementation and issues of discrimination and favoritism.
• There was resistance by managers and supervisors towards implementation, due to inferiority complex-related issues.
• Others did not see it as important and did not really believe in the employer’s willingness to allow growth within the institution.
• Others viewed it as an empty promise as the institution does not really budget for bursaries or training and development.

4.4.3 Staff retention strategy of the JGDM

The Mayoral Committee of the JGDM took a resolution in 2012 to retain the middle managers of the institution under the resolution number 320/12/MC. The action was viewed to be selective by employees since only the middle managers were retained
and no provision was made for retention of other staff. The same matter was also reported as a finding by the Auditor-General during the 2014/15 audit financial year (JGDM 2015).

Furthermore, the issue of critical positions that were still vacant was further reported, especially relating to the positions of the Chief Financial Officer were a finding with a matter of emphasis since the positions were long overdue and not filled for more than twelve months. With reference to the latter statement it can be easily assumed that by virtue of the audit report uplifting and highlighting the issue of critical vacant positions within the municipality that might open an opportunity against the municipality to be further criticised on poor level of staff retention, on poor level of skill available to the municipality, and on poor implementation of the strategy that is already in place and in existence within the municipality, of which that was detrimental and negative to the municipality since the municipality is rendering the most important function of both being the Water Services Authority (WSA) regulating water provision to local municipalities and the Water Service Provider (WSP) providing water to its communities as mentioned in chapter one of the study.

The retention strategy adopted at JGDM in the year 2012 and reviewed in 2014 was further viewed as biased by the employees of the municipality given the different percentages offered to the managers.

Findings present evidence that neither the implementation of the succession policy nor that of the staff retention strategy at the Joe Gqabi District Municipality were effective. Gaps existed from the inception of both documents. This is evidenced by the fact that when the documents were discussed on various platforms such as that of the broad management and the LLF meetings, they were mainly concerned with the dissatisfaction of employees. Then the responses from the participants confirmed that these gaps need to be addressed for the continuity of smooth operations, as the answer to both question six (6) and nine (9) of the questionnaire were the same in all ten (10) analysed responses.
4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher presented the raw data in the transcripts of the semi-structured interviews of the key respondents, and analysed it systematically according to themes that correspond to the research question. The chapter also analysed the available documents on the subject of staff retention and succession policy in the Joe Gqabi District Municipality.

The expressed opinions of the employees’ at all relevant levels were sourced and discussed in order to reach the conclusions detailed in this chapter. The interviews and document review methods were also highlighted. The analysis of the data in this chapter indicated the views and insights of municipal employees on the matters of staff retention and the succession plan within the Municipality. The responses provided gave suggestions on how to curb the continuous possible failure of implementing both the policy and the strategy.

The main conclusion of this chapter is that the succession policy and retention strategy of the Municipality were not correctly implemented. In the next chapter, the researcher will distil and translate these findings and conclusion into recommendations.
CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a summary of the conclusions that are drawn based on the findings of the research as mentioned in the previous chapter. In addition, the chapter presents recommendations on both the policy and the strategy on how to close the gaps that were identified during the data collection that had been analysed and allowed the researcher to present the findings outlined in Chapter Four above.

Then recommendations are made and the study will be published through the relevant accredited institution, so it becomes a public document that will be accessible to the participants and the management of the municipality under study.

5.2 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Both the succession policy and the retention strategy are important district municipal documents. The documents are even more valuable to both the municipality and the employees once their authenticity has been proven by way of successful and satisfactory implementation. The continuous employee consultation on matters such as succession policy and retention strategy which affect their performance, professional growth, and wellbeing must at all times be enhanced and strengthened.

The challenge as mentioned and inferred from the data has been the implementation of the two municipal documents, since no positive results were ever proven nor yielded as intended when the documents were drafted and enforced. One of the criticisms received from the affected employees regarding the incorrect and partial implementation of the two documents was that both documents seem to exist in the municipality for compliance purposes only.
The conclusion that the JGDM failed to implement the retention strategy and the succession policy is reached on the basis of the intended goal that was to be achieved by introducing the documents never having materialised. This was proved by the resignation of four middle managers in the critical positions of legal services, disaster management, human resources and health services within short intervals following each other. Before the introduction of the retention strategy, key personnel in one of the most important sections in the municipality, namely water services manager and water quality scientist, also resigned. That alone proved the failure of the retention strategy to contain or limit the staff turnover of key personnel.

The succession policy has also failed to yield the intended results; since its inception no employee was ever promoted to a higher position based on the results of the succession plan or even a motivation from the same. To date most middle managers, when asked about the policy and its implementation, are still not clear about what is expected of them or how to apply the policy.

Those managers who tried to implement it abandoned it without any further explanation to those identified to be on the succession plan. One of the managers who tried to implement the policy and who eventually abandoned the process was asked the reasons for such action, and her answer was that: she was asked as to why she only had one employee in her section undergoing the succession plan instead of all three supervisors who reported directly to her. On that basis she abandoned the process. It is therefore clear that even managers who are to implement the policy do not quite know what to do and how to go about it as illustrated by the example provided.

In conclusion, in future there is a need for the involvement and consideration of all relevant stakeholders when such policies and strategies are to be drafted. This is to assist with the acceptance of documents which are to be owned by all and to be easily implemented, rather than documents which are resisted and constantly criticised.
This was proven by some of the answers provided by participants, where reference was made to the fact that the matters were discussed in various platforms such as those of the broad management and the LLF meetings, where discussions mainly centred on the dissatisfaction of employees with the different percentages awarded to middle managers that were on the same Tuned Assessment of Skill and Knowledge (TASK) grade. This was a clear indication that no consultation had ever been conducted before the retention strategy was tabled for adoption; therefore there was no ownership of the document, not even by those affected and considered for the same. Furthermore, reference was made to policies being drafted solely by middle managers as the foot soldiers, leaving very little room for external comments to be considered or put to effect once the policies are circulated for comments.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are based on the research findings with regard to the failure, partial and incorrect implementation of the succession policy and the retention strategy at the JGDM.

The recommendations will benefit the council of the Joe Gqabi District Municipality in understanding some of the possible reasons behind the resignations, and the resistance and failure to implement the succession policy, including the criticism of the retention strategy.

Recommendations will further benefit the management of the JGDM in understanding the employee exodus and how to improve the existing policies and strategies to yield the intended results when introduced.

Lastly, the recommendations will benefit employees of the district municipality by way of opening up and addressing issues openly with management in the interest of a better understanding so that all within the employ of the JGDM can work together for the benefit of the communities at all times.
The following are therefore recommended:

5.3.1 Address employee satisfaction as a central component of staff retention

The success of the operations for each municipality depends on the satisfaction of its workforce. Therefore since what employees suggest is for the betterment of the operations of the Municipality, management should at all times consider working with the employees in realising the mandate of the Municipality.

5.3.2 Capacitate currently employed workforce

A lack of recognition and delayed in-house capacity building for employees, especially those in supervisory positions, at the Joe Gqabi District Municipality are serious challenges that need urgent attention as they affect work performance that will in turn affect service delivery owing to demoralised employees.

This challenge can only be resolved if all relevant stakeholders come together to devise a transparent retention strategy and implementation of the succession policy which are meant for capacity building and that can ensure unbiased staff retention and motivate all employees within the institution.

It is recommended that the Municipality capacitates the currently employed workforce that it has at its disposal. This can be done first by considering and giving an opportunity to internal staff to fill vacancies, which in turn will address both the retention strategy and successfully put the succession plan into practice.

5.3.3 Practically implementation existing succession and retention policies and strategies fairly, transparently and uniformly across the organisation

Full implementation of the succession policy and a fair and unbiased attraction and retention strategy for all within the employ will uplift the morale of all employees and
should engender a positive environment that will in turn ensure a win-win situation for the district municipality.

It is recommended that the municipality can only achieve this by way of first ensuring that the municipality gives equal opportunities to the currently employed workforce that it has at its disposal, since the success of the operations depends on the workforce whose personal and career goals are satisfied. Therefore what employees suggest for improving the operations of the municipality, is that management should consider working with the employees at all times in realising the mandate of the municipality.

5.3.4 Implement a targeted approach to succession planning

The blanket approach followed by the municipality when applying the succession plan should be considered for change in future by way of looking at employees individually and considering the capabilities and initiative of each person. This will encourage employees with potential and the remedial action will address the closing of the vast gap between middle managers and those regarded as second-in-charge personnel. The remedial action will also address the issue of employees who are seemingly regarded to be only good for acting in the positions of the managers they report to, and not for actually being trained to fill the position of the predecessor when the vacant position becomes available.

5.3.5 Link retention strategy and the succession policy to the performance management policy of the municipality

In chapter two of the study, reference was made to the importance and relevance of performance management as a tool to be used in ensuring that the two documents discussed in the study are implemented. This was to bring about the assurance that the retention strategy and the succession policy are implemented since the performance management was to evaluate and measure each responsible middle manager against the implementation of the two documents. This was also going to instil some form of accountability from the managers.
Linking succession policy to performance management will encourage repeated performance through the provision of sufficient rewards that are of real value to employees in a timely and fair manner.

It is recommended that middle managers take responsibility and account for the failure of the retention strategy and that of the succession policy, since a structured ownership of the implementation of the mentioned documents was to be embedded into each middle manager’s SDBIP and performance agreements.

5.3.6 Develop both the succession plan and implementation plan of the retention strategy

Failure, success and partial implementation of the succession plan is dependent on how managers promote the developed plans. In order for the succession policy to be more effective at the municipality, visible and clear succession plans (as opposed to mere policies or strategies) have to be mapped. Each section or manager involved should show commitment. Some of the plans to be crafted and be put to action should include the following:

- Key positions should be identified and be supported by the succession plan.
- The plan should show clear requirements for the employee to be identified for a position to be succeeded both in terms of education and experience needed.
- After the employee has been identified for succession, possible existing gaps between the employee’s educational background and experience versus the requirements of the position are to be identified. Then the municipality has to have a plan in place on how to intervene and assist the employee to meet the requirements, by way of grooming the employee and assign a mentor that the employee will shadow his/her duties.
- Then the monitoring and evaluation of progress be done by the mentor assisted by Human Resources Department.
• Lastly, the plan should have time frames.

5.3.7 Ensure enforcement by developing action plans and risk management plans with periodic monitoring and evaluation

Action plans on how to implement working plans and risk management plans for the retention strategy would include the following:

• The implementation plan should list all the initiatives that the municipality is going to undertake as means to achieve the objectives of the strategy.
• Each initiative and target set should have the responsible person assigned and the time frames thereof.
• The progress made on the plan should be monitored and be timeously reported to the relevant structures of council.
• Events which could result in the failure to implement the set targets should be included in the risk plans and be tabled for discussion by the risk committee of the municipality.
• Then the risk mitigating action plans should be listed, communicated or reported and constantly monitored.

It is therefore recommended that both the municipal documents of the succession plan policy and the staff retention strategy should be constantly reviewed at least each five years.

5.3.8 Areas of possible future research suggested by the study

Future research relating to a similar study should concentrate on the following focus and discussion points:

• Linkage on different interests of employees;
• Reasons behind managers leaving the area irrespective of the steps taken to retain managers;
  i) Could it be the location of the main office?
ii) Could it be the fact that they are not originally from the area of Joe Gqabi?

iii) Could it be true that Joe Gqabi is not the municipality that one can serve until retirement is reached?

- How does staff morale affect service delivery?
- Recognition of all employee roles in the municipality; and
- Effects of cascading performance management.

5.4 CONCLUSION

This study has sought to evaluate the implementations of the succession policy and staff retention strategy of the Joe Gqabi District Municipality. A qualitative research approach using semi-structured interviews was used as a data gathering research tool. Findings made, support the conclusion that both the succession policy and retention strategy were poorly implemented. The study identified the underlying implementation problems and made recommendations for future improvement.

The study proved to have reviewed the theoretical framework related to both documents that were discussed, examined the existing implementation of the documents, and identified factors causing the staff dissatisfaction. These factors included that of non-recognition and the fact that the staff’s qualifications were not considered when succession was implemented. The research objectives were therefore met by the findings as indicated.

This study has broadened the researcher’s findings in many ways. Key insights were gained around the gap between employees and the effect it had on individual employees. Insight was further gained around the gap between planning and drafting a compliance tool and the actual implementation of the same. The researcher learnt that even the best policy documents are worthless if there is no subsequent implementation. The mandate of the district municipality as set out in its policy documents guiding local government stands to be compromised if many of the challenges highlighted in the study are not considered and acted upon.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


### RESEARCHER'S DETAILS

| Title of the research project | The Implementation of the Succession Policy and the Staff Retention Strategy: Joe Gqabi District Municipality |
| Interviewer                  | Ms M Ramarou |

### A. DECLARATION BY OR ON BEHALF OF PARTICIPANT

**I, the participant and the undersigned**

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**I confirm that I am over 18 years of age.**

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### A.1 HEREBY CONFIRM AS FOLLOWS:

**I, the participant, was invited to participate in the above-mentioned research project**

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**that is being undertaken by**

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### THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED TO ME, THE PARTICIPANT:

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<th>The investigator is assessing the implementation of succession and retention strategy at Joe Gqabi District Municipality</th>
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**The data will be used for derive recommendations to look at strategies to improve talent retention for improved service delivery.**

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**2.2 Possible benefits:**

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**2.3 Confidentiality:**

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### A.2 I HEREBY VOLUNTARILY CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PROJECT:

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INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STAFF RETENTION STRATEGY AND SUCCESSION POLICY AT JOE GQABI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

The aim of the study and the reason for the interview is to assess the level of implementation of both the succession policy and the staff retention strategy as primary means of human resources management. Furthermore, to assess the extent of which the policy and strategy can assist the JGDM to obtain a clean audit as set out and provided for in the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS).

Please read the questions carefully and make use of an “X” next to your preferred answer.

**SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION**

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**INTERVIEW QUESTION**

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<td>According to your own knowledge, has the municipality put into practice or implemented the succession plan?</td>
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<td>According to your knowledge, does JGDM supports employee development?</td>
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<td>Does JGDM provide adequate opportunity for professional growth?</td>
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<td>Does JGDM allow duties to be rotated by staff within the supervisory levels as a means to enable employee development?</td>
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<td>What is your understanding of the staff retention strategy?</td>
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<td>Are there any gaps identified in the staff retention strategy?</td>
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Thank you for your participation
15 A Gene Street  
Aliwal North  
9750  
Email: s50404164@nmmu.ac.za  
Cell no: 082 724 7108  

20 October 2014

The Municipal Manager  
Joe Gqabi District Municipality  
Private Bag x102  
Barkly East  
9786

Attention: MR ZA WILLIAMS

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE  
SUCCESION POLICY AND THE STAFF RETENTION STRATEGY: JOE GQABI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

I, Moleboheng Ramarou, am a Master of Public Administration student in the  
department of Public Management and Leadership at the Nelson Mandela  
Metropolitan University. I am currently engaged with my research study, and I am  
required to complete a research project to qualify and to obtain the degree. My study  
is titled: The implementation of the succession policy and staff retention strategy: Joe  
Gqabi District Municipality (JGDM), under the supervision of Dr E Draai who can be  
contacted at 041 504 3608 during office hours.

The aim of the study is to assess the level of implementation of both the succession  
policy and the staff retention strategy as primary means of human resources  
management. Furthermore, to assess the extent of which the policy and strategy can  
assist the JGDM to obtain a clean audit as set out and provided for in the Local  
Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS).

The data collection will be in a form of interviewing JGDM employees and rolling out  
of questionnaires to sampled employees. Data collection is anticipated to commence  
during February 2015. I herewith request permission to conduct the study at JGDM. I  
will submit a copy of the findings to your office on completion of my study. This study  
will be conducted within the ambit of the research ethics as required by the  
university. Responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and participants'  
may withdraw from the study at any time should they deem it necessary.

Thank you for your willingness to assist with information handled by your  
municipality.

Yours Faithfully

M Ramarou (Ms)  
Researcher
21 October 2014

Dear Ms M Ramarou,

REQUEST TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUCCESSION POLICY AND THE STAFF RETENTION STRATEGY: JOE GQABI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Your letter dated 20 October 2014 has reference.

Kindly be advised that you are granted the permission to conduct your research study at the Joe Gqabi District Municipality.

Yours Faithfully

[Signature]

Z A WILLIAMS
MUNICIPAL MANAGER
Ref: H/15/ART/PGS-008

24 JULY 2015

Ms M Ramarou
1 Nxadi Street
KWAMAGXAKI
PORT ELIZABETH
6001

Dear Ms Ramarou

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUCCESSION POLICY AND STAFF RETENTION STRATEGY: JOE GQABI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Your above-entitled application for ethics approval served at the FPGSC Higher Degrees sub-committee of the Faculty of Arts Faculty Postgraduate Studies Committee.

We take pleasure in informing you that the application was approved by the Committee.

The Ethics clearance reference number is H/15/ART/PGS-008, and is valid for three years, from 05 JULY 2015 – 05 JULY 2018. Please inform the FPGSC, via your supervisor, if any changes (particularly in the methodology) occur during this time. An annual affirmation to the effect that the protocols in use are still those for which approval was granted, will be required from you. You will be reminded timely of this responsibility.

We wish you well with the project.

Yours sincerely

Mrs N Mngonyama
FACULTY ADMINISTRATOR

cc: Promoter/Supervisor
HoD
School Representative: Faculty FPGSC
15 A Gene Street
Aliwal North
9750
Email: s50404164@nmu.ac.za
Cell: 082 724 7108

20 October 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Moleboheng Ramarou, am a Master of Public Administration student in the department of Public Management and Leadership at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

I am currently engaged with my research study, and I am required to complete a research project to qualify and to obtain the degree. My study is titled: The implementation of the succession policy and staff retention strategy: Joe Gqabi District Municipality (JGDM), under the supervision of Dr E Draai who can be contacted at 041 504 3808 during office hours.

The aim of the study is to assess the level of implementation of both the succession policy and the staff retention strategy as primary means of human resources management. Furthermore, to assess the extent of which the policy and strategy can assist the JGDM to obtain a clean audit as set out and provided for in the Local Government Turnaround Strategy (LGTAS).

I am required to collect information through interviews from employees and communities of Joe Gqabi District Municipality. The interviews are not expected to take more than ten minutes of your time. At the end of data collection, a research report will be finalised and issued. This study will be conducted within the ambit of the research ethics as required by the university. Responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and participants may withdraw from the study at any time should they deem it necessary.

Thank you for your willingness to share your knowledge.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

M Ramarou (Ms)
Researcher