STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF A HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTION

by

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I declare that the thesis that I hereby submit for the degree Doctor in Philosophy (DPhil: Human Resource Development) in the Faculty of Management (Department of Human Resource Management) at the University of Johannesburg, is my own work and has not been previously submitted by me for a degree in another university.

I declare that the content is a true reflection of the thesis that was examined.

SIGNATURE   **DATE**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to establish the stakeholders' perception of a Human Resource Development (HRD) intervention. This was prompted by the fact that the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE) has been regarded as one of the provinces that performs poorly on grade 12 results as compared to other provinces. A qualitative methodology was adopted in this study where in 20 participants were interviewed as internal stakeholders in the MDoE. The participants from different categories were purposefully selected from various regions in the MDoE in order to establish their perceptions of a HRD intervention.

This study established that the human resource development and training services were not properly managed. This is attributed to shortage of staff, insufficient budget, HRD practitioners' competencies, inaccurate information keeping and lastly the fact that the recommendations made by the internal auditors were not implemented. Consequently, the researcher ended up constructing an HRD audit process which could assist both private and public sector organization to improve service delivery. The proposed HRD audit process will hopefully ignite interest of scholars to test it, customize or even expand it.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Human Resource Development (HRD) is a powerful lever for improving both individual opportunity and institutional competitiveness. Governments and employees recognize the critical role a skilled workforce can play in being relevant. It all depends on the quality of an organization's human resources. Conversely, success for the HRD function is dependent on the contribution of stakeholders and how well the stakeholder relationships are managed to have a direct impact of the HRD Department (Mankin, 2009).

An HRD intervention is described by Mankin (2009) as any effort which is evidently intended for the development of the organization's human resources at all levels and at all dimensions in order to improve service delivery. Mankin (2009) contends that HRD interventions do add value in the organization while Sthapit (2008) states that HRD interventions help in discharging the stipulated HRD roles so that failures of strategy implementation can be converted into successes in the organization.

The current debate in South Africa is about policies and programmes to facilitate job creation. In his State of the Nation Address for 2012, His Excellency Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa indicated that the solution for the country therefore, is higher growth and job creation to reduce and ultimately eradicate poverty and inequality, Kraak (2004) states that government policies have been formulated, and are being implemented, which seek to deal with the severity of the lack of jobs through large-scale public works schemes and associated training initiatives. South Africa's human resources hold the key to many of its economic and social problems. The challenge is to provide the

people with a solid education and to equip the workforce with relevant skills. In a review of five large scale studies of enterprise training in South Africa, Badroodien (2003) concludes that South Africa has a mean annual training of between 20 and 30 per cent of the employed workforce across the national economy.

Altman and Mayer (2003) contend for the development of public sector investment in the non-traded sector. This is a way forward since, in the context of a global economy, South Africa needs to be able to generate domestic demand in areas of low skills to mop up unemployment. Hence, the key to ensuring that the state does not create a segmented low-skills market is for public investment in the non-traded sector to be accompanied by training so that workers, once recruited, will have a range of skilling options open to them. In essence, such a public investment policy would have the effect of creating an internal market in which skilling takes place in response to demand (Kraak, Lauder, Brown & Ashton, 2006).

However, in countries such as those in continental Europe, the presence of government legislation and institutional arrangement that impinge on the functioning of the market mechanism and cede to the state and organized labour a role economic development have acted as a catalyst for growth and global competitiveness (Kraak, Lauder, Brown & Ashton, 2006).

In his study of HRD audit in Indian organizations, Rao (1999a) indicates that HRD components are not well structured and the systems are not well integrated. On the other hand the staff employed in organizations have to be professionally trained and competent so that they should be able to enhance the maturity levels of all the HRD subsystems in order to give organizations competitive advantage. The significance of managing employee development has gained increased attention in recent decades particularly following the writings of prominent researchers advocating that future competitiveness advantage can be tracked to

the development of the creative human capital of the organization (Pfeffer, 1994; Hamel & Prahalad, 1996).

Although there is a considerable body of literature on HRD, there is little done especially in South Africa about HRD auditing. This study is positioned as exploratory work and will produce an HRD audit process which could assist organizations to achieve their strategic objectives.

The principal focus of this study is to establish the stakeholders' perception of an HRD intervention. For the purpose of this study, the stakeholders referred to are internal stakeholders, who are the senior managers, line managers, employees, organized labour (recognized trade unions in the Mpumalanga Department of Education) and HRD practitioners. Freeman (1984, pp. 31-32) define stakeholders as "those groups without whose support the organization would cease to exist". On the other hand Garavan (2007) indicates that the effectiveness of HRD is being evaluated by looking at its impact on stakeholders.

The scope of this study covers internal stakeholders at the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE). This study will explore the stakeholders' perceptions of an HRD intervention. It will be shown that the MDoE has been performing poorly, and yet it has an HRD unit with HRD systems, structures, styles, policies / legislations in place. The researcher will end up developing an HRD audit process which could be useful in both private and public sectors to ensure that the HRD systems, structures, styles and policies are comprehensively evaluated in order to improve service delivery.

1.2 Background of the problem

The background to the problem described above, namely the MDoE is performing poorly yet it has an HRD unit with the HRD systems, structures, styles, policies / legislations and spends money on human resource development

and training is explored by jointly looking at the fact that MDoE has continuously obtained poor grade 12 results in the country despite measures in place such as the Internal Audit and the Auditor General; compliance to legislations including the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and the Treasury Regulation and the internal control deficiencies.

Unpleasant compliance and performance audit reports have become a normal and acceptable practice in the South African public sector. There is no indication that this status will improve because of the continuous use of similar systems and strategies, yet expecting dissimilar results. As King III reports, the economic value of a company is no longer based on a balance sheet only but rather on various non-financial issues such as the company's reputation, stakeholder relation, goodwill, an evolving forward looking strategy, social responsibility and the quality of governance (King III, 2009). It is imperative that organizations consider introducing new initiatives and interventions such as HRD auditing in order to improve business performance.

Organizations often feel that they are not getting value for the money spent on the development of human resources and are still not achieving their strategic objectives and as a result, a need for comprehensive HRD auditing has risen. The Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE) has continued to get poor grade 12 results in the country (see Table 1.1 below); this means that it is unable to achieve its mission of providing quality education for all. Internal and national auditors were conducting audits in the Department and there was no significant improvement with regard to service delivery. This was evident through the 2007/2008, 2008/2009 and 2009/2010 annual reports as well as the grade 12 results for the past nine years.

Table 1.1 - Provincial % pass rate from 2003 – 2010

Provinces	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
W. Cape	87.1	85.0	84.4	83.7	80	78.7	75.7	76.8
Gauteng	81.5	76.8	74.9	78.3	74.6	76.3	71.8	78.6
N. Cape	90.7	83.4	78.9	76.8	70.3	72.7	61.3	72.3
Fr State	80.0	78.7	77.8	72.2	70.5	71.6	69.4	70.7
N. West	70.5	64.9	63.0	67	67.2	67.9	67.5	75.7
KZN	77.2	74.0	70.5	65.7	63.8	57.2	61.1	70.7
E. Cape	60.0	53.5	56.7	59.3	57.1	50.6	51.0	58.3
Limpopo	70.0	70.6	64.9	55.7	58	54.7	48.9	57.9
National	73.3	70.7	68.3	66.6	65.2	62.2	60.6	67.8
MPU	58.2	61.8	58.6	65.3	60.7	51.8	47.9	56.8

Source: **www.education.gov.za**

Table 1.1 indicates the pass rate of the grade 12 examinations for 2009 in the Mpumalanga Department of Education as 47.9%. This is a decline of 3.9% compared to the 2008 pass rate and a massive decline of 17.4% since 2006. The pass rates across provinces reveal significant inter-provincial inequities. For instance, while the 2009 pass rate in Mpumalanga Department of Education was only 47.9% while that of the Western Cape Department of Education was 75.7%. Overall, the Grade 12 pass rate declined from 67% in 2006 to 61% in 2009. This translates to a 6% decline over a period of four years.

In the Education for All Country Report (2010), the Department of Education acknowledged that there is a dire need to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. The Department also acknowledged that teaching of poor quality takes place in many schools and it is aware that in many schools is often weak and lacks leadership and commitment. The systems are also inefficient. The Department also indicated that it is determined to ensure that steps are

taken to improve systems so that the goals of quality learning and teaching are realized. However, some educationalists argue that the comparability of Grade 12 examination results over years is inherently flawed, due to changes in the curriculum over time; the decline in the national pass rate remains a worrying phenomenon (Department of Education, 2010).

Even though audits are conducted in the MDoE Human Resources components, the audits are neither effective nor yielding positive results. The reason for the ineffectiveness as identified by the researcher is that the audit process is too general, focusing on the entire Human Resource Management (HRM) directorate, which means that the HRD component like any other components within the HRM directorate is given minimal attention. Hence, the internal audit's scope in line with the Treasury Regulations which is limited to the fact that only samples of transactions should be selected for audit.

Ideally, the function of internal audit is to enable management structures to more easily identify and solve problems and achieve management objectives. This is not the case in the MDoE because the Department is continuing to be the last of all the nine provinces in South Africa on matric / grade 12 results and bad media publicity despite the fact that it has a directorate responsible for human resources development of employees. The researcher obtained this information from the Departmental reports and her observation as one of the managers in the Department (Mpumalanga Department of Education Annual Report, 2008/2009). The fact that there is no proper HRD audit model contributes to poor performance of the Department.

The MDoE like any other government Department in South Africa utilizes the internal audit process to ensure adequate measures and procedures are in place for sound economic, effective and efficient management as required by the Public Finance Management Act no 1 of 1999. However, non-compliance to legislations is still a challenge. The 2008/2009 Annual Report indicates that

certain employees of the Department did not declare their business interests, as required by section 50(3) (a) and (b) of the PFMA. The accounting officer did not comply with section 85(1) (a) and (e) of the PFMA, read with Treasury Regulation 4.3.4, dealing with the submission of a report to the relevant treasury and Auditor-General on the outcome of disciplinary hearings. Payments due to creditors were not always made within 30 days from receipt of an invoice, as required in terms of section 38(1)(f) of the PFMA and Treasury Regulation 8.2.3 (Mpumalanga Department of Education Annual Report, 2008/2009, p. 51). The above has significant impact on HRD because the companies providing training to the Department are regarded as service providers because they provide human resource development and training services to the Department and if they are not paid for the service rendered they will not be able to provide services to the Department.

Internal control deficiencies were also identified because section 38(1) (a) (i) of the PFMA states that the accounting officer must ensure that the Department has and maintains effective, efficient and transparent systems of financial and risk management and internal control. The root causes of the problem that gave rise to the deficiencies in the system of internal control, led to the qualified audit opinion (Mpumalanga Department of Education Annual Report, 2008/2009).

Most of the HRD activities in the MDoE are centralized at the head office and this, according to Mankin (2009) makes the management of stakeholder relationship challenging because a centralized function may operate at a too much of a distance from line managers and other stakeholders. It will be shown in this study that some of the stakeholders felt left out and undermined by MDoE when processes like strategic planning takes place. Mankin (2009, p. 71) argues that "ongoing strategic level collaboration between the HRD function and key stakeholders, for example, senior managers and line managers, is needed to maximize the effectiveness of the HRD strategy". This can be achieved if HRD practitioners have developed a range of inter-related skills and an ability to think

strategically (Gilley, Eggland & Gilley, 2002). The study conducted by Lee (2009) on HRD professionals confirms this by endorsing the Delphi survey and further indicating the critical nature of skills such as strategic thinking, communicating effectively.

It is on the basis of the above background that the researcher's main focus was to establish the stakeholders' perception of a HRD intervention and subsequently construct an HRD audit process.

1.3   Research problem and objectives

The problem statement formulated for the purpose of this study is the fact that the MDoE is performing poorly, while it has an HRD unit with HRD systems, structures and policies/ legislations and spends money on human resource development and training. Internal auditing done in the MDoE particularly within the HRM directorate is not effective.

The objectives of this study are as follows:
- To establish the stakeholders' perceptions of an HRD intervention.
- To construct an HRD auditing process.

1.4   Motivation for the study

The researcher believes that this study is unique in that it provides prospects of establishing the perceptions of stakeholders about the HRD intervention. The research findings provide an opportunity for the construction of an HRD auditing process as an intervention based on social science which is new to local human resources management and development of organizations.

Internal auditing done in the MDoE particularly within the HRM directorate is not effective particularly in Human Resource Development component because it is

risk-based and the focus is not specifically on the HRD component but rather on general HRM. This means that if an area is not regarded as high risk, it will not be focused on. Despite that, not much attempts were made by management to monitor and evaluate the contribution made by the internal auditing process in various components. Thus, the researcher saw a need to establish the perceptions of stakeholders about the HRD interventions and to construct an HRD auditing process.

The researcher anticipates making the following social science, practice and policy contributions:

- The information obtained would add significant scientific knowledge about this relatively unexplored phenomenon [auditing HRD] in South African private and public sectors.
- The construction of the HRD auditing process which could be utilized by the public and private sectors.

This study is contextualized in the MDoE as a public service entity responsible for the provision of quality education in South Africa. The researcher is also theoretically, empirically and strategically motivated by the application of the following policy frameworks and their objectives:

- *The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.*
- *The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service.*
- *The Public Finance Management Act.*
- *The HRD Strategy.*
- *The Skills Development Act.*
- *The vision and mission of the Mpumalanga Department of Education.*
- *The Mpumalanga Department of Education strategic Plan.*
- *The SCOPA.*
- *The King Report III.*

The above mentioned frameworks outline the parameters in which public services must be rendered. However, despite the availability of these frameworks there are still challenges with regard to compliance.

Verreault and Hyland (2005, p. 524) stated that both "high performance work systems" and "strategic fit" should guide internal audit in planning, designing audit programs, and executing strategic audits of human resources consistent with the risk management paradigm. They also indicate that internal audit should devote substantial resources to the evaluation of strategic risk in HRM audits. In constructing the HRD auditing process, the researcher will consider the work systems which are in place at the MDoE. This study attempts to strengthen the positive institutional culture of lifelong learning and assist the senior management in decision making on key priorities of the MDoE.

The application or use of human resource accounting must be followed by a separate HR audit to ascertain whether or not the performance of the managers was true and fair in the overall interests of the organization they serve (Batra, 1996). HRD auditing and HRM auditing are related in that they both evaluate human resources activities. An HRD audit is more specific within the HRD component specifically evaluating the HRD strategies, structure, systems, styles and culture whereas the HRM audit generally evaluates the HR costs, compensation and benefits, HRD activities included legal compliance and Employee Health and Wellness.

The researcher will focus on the establishment of the perceptions of stakeholders on an HRD intervention and the construction of the HRD auditing process. The following fundamentals motivated the researcher:

- The MDoE spends significant amount of money on HRD and yet its performance has not significantly improved for the past years.

- Internal auditing done in the MDoE particularly within the HRM directorate is not effective because it is risk-based and the focus is not specifically on the HRD component but rather on general HRM. This is supported by Verreault and Hyland (2005) who further listed six reasons for internal auditors to develop expertise in the assessment of human capital management, and for audit researchers to develop more understanding of how such expertise can be encouraged, accomplished, and measured.

- Currently there is no link between the systems such as the Skills Audit System, Performance Management and Development System and Internal Quality Management System (IQMS); an HRD audit could assist in ensuring that there is a link within various systems and those that are not positively contributing toward the improvement of service delivery are either reviewed or terminated. Chang (1994, 1998) contends that one of the reasons that institutional subsystems become incoherent and fail to interlock is because of the absence of reliable and up-to-date information upon which governments can act.

- HRD auditing could assist in ensuring that the effectiveness of the HRD systems, structures and practices is checked and reviewed to establish whether it is positively contributing to service delivery or not.

- HRD auditing process could be able to motivate the top managers to think in terms of strategic, short and long-term business plans.

- No attempts were made by management to monitor and evaluate the contribution made by the HRD unit towards the achievement of the strategic goals and objectives of the MDoE.

- In the past recent years, the education system in South Africa has undergone several changes with the aim to enhance service delivery;

however, only limited results were shown whereas in other areas the situation got worse.

- The King III report, which has as its purpose promotion of the highest standard of corporate governance in South Africa indicates various principles of good corporate governance which private and public sectors need to adhere to. Furthermore, an inclusive approach as a way of ensuring future sustainability.

- HRD strategy for the Public Service vision 2015 is silent about the internal audit process and its effectiveness in relation to Human Resource Development processes.

- The strategic planning processes and direction of the MDoE should take account of the findings and recommendations of the HRD auditing.

- The principles of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 stipulates that public administration should adhere to a number of principles which include that public administration must be accountable; efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted; a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted; and good HRM and career development practices to maximize human potential must be cultivated.

- The White Paper on Public Service Training and Education does not indicate anything about HRD auditing even though its objective centers on training and development of the public servants; hence, the researcher's intention to influence Departmental strategies and policies.

- The Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999) (PFMA) assigns responsibility for the economic, efficient and effective use of

resources to the accounting officers of the various national and provincial Departments and public entities under their control. However, it is the responsibility not only of accounting officers to ensure the economic, efficient and effective use of resources but also that of all other officials (section 45 and 57). Section 40 and 50 of the PFMS require the accounting officers to report in the annual report on, amongst other things the performance of the institution against predetermines targets.

- The Treasury Regulation 3.2.12 has issued in terms of the PFMA, provides that the internal audit must assist the accounting officer in achieving the objectives of the institution by evaluating and developing recommendations for the enhanced or improvement of the process through which the accomplishment of the of objectives is monitored and accountability is ensured. The researcher intended to take this process further by narrowing it down to Human Resource Development Auditing.

An HRD audit will not be a once-off implementation process but an ongoing process. The researcher believes that the MDoE like any other organizations should have a strategic and proactive orientation and should be continuously aware as to whether or not their systems, styles, structure and culture are matured and effective and positively contributing towards the achievement of the strategic objectives. The HRD auditing is an important process that should be conducted on a periodic basis to ensure continuous development and to stop organizations from sliding back into bad or less effective procedures. Regular audits should be to account also for any changes, amendments and/or additions required, as a result of legislation or new initiatives. The HRD culture which is created by the HRD tools, staff and their styles also play a crucial role in building sustainable competencies in the organization. As a result they need to be measured and monitored.

There are various processes and interventions in place within organizations with the aim to enhance service delivery. The processes among others include performance management models; skills audit processes and internal auditing models. Despite their availability there is still a need to develop an HRD auditing process which must comprehensively evaluate the current human resource development strategies, structures, systems, styles, and skills in the context of an organization's business plans. HRD auditing is required to review periodically the HRD functions and the effectiveness of implementation of HRD processes. In this regard, the audit findings facilitate the review of the HRD systems in the organization (Haldar, 2009).

This research therefore sought to establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention and based on empirical research an HRD audit process could be developed to guide organizations to audit HRD. The study is timely because the Public Service Commission report for 2011 stated that one of the main challenges which HRD components said they faced was the lack of management support. During interviews, Departments cited that due to lack of support from line managers, HRD components experience difficulties in implementing HRD practices effectively. It was argued that managers have little understanding of the PMDS, do not engage with their employees regarding their PDP's, do not monitor employees to determine areas of weakness and generally do not view training and development of staff as a key priority. Line managers tend to shift this management responsibility to HRD practitioners. Some managers do not release staff for planned training interventions, which could lead to fruitless and wasteful expenditure if training is already booked and paid for. It is evident that if the challenges raised in the PSC assessment are not addressed, government will continue to invest on training and development interventions that are yielding fewer results on the Departments' strategic objectives and leading to service delivery being compromised (Public Service Commission Report, June 2011).

Furthermore, most of the research studies which are conducted deal with human resources audit, (Shaban, 2012; Costel, 2008; Vito, 2008), therefore an HRD audit process framework developed in this study could help in this regard to contribute to scientific knowledge and inspire future research in this field.

1.5   Current level of knowledge

In order to address the research problem, literature in the field of human resource development was reviewed globally focusing on the HRD trends in order to establish the current knowledge of an HRD intervention and its challenges. The literature on HRD in South Africa is discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

A prerequisite to a successful research study is the investment of time in surveying what is already known about the subject (Wiseman, 1999). To date studies are published on HRD and audits separately (Sandberg, 2000; Fisher, 2005; Xie, 2005; Hanson, 2006; Hassan, Hashim & Ismail, 2006; Hassan, 2007; Antwi, 2009; Carmeli & Zisu, 2009, Penini & Carmeli, 2010). In contrast a limited number of publications could be retrieved specifically relating to HRD auditing (Torraco & Swanson, 1997; Jomon, 1998). On the other side a number of articles were published outlining Human Resources audit and internal auditing. HRD audit is a comprehensive evaluation of the HRD systems and strategies, structures and competencies, culture and impact in the context of the short-term and long-term business plans of an organization. It examines the alignment of HRD strategies and systems to business goals and challenges. The auditors evaluate, through a HRD score card, as to how well the HRD efforts and strategies drive business goals and their achievement. Thus, HRD score card is an assessment of the HRD maturity level of any organization (Rao, 2008, p. 298).

Studies indicate that human resource auditing helps organizations to discover the efficiency and integration of the available systems. In his study of HRD audit in Indian organizations, Rao (1999a) indicates that HRD components are not well structured and the systems are not well integrated. On the other hand the staff employed in organizations has to be professionally trained and competent so that they should be able to enhance the maturity levels of all the HRD subsystems in order to give organizations competitive advantage. The significance of managing employee development has gained increased attention in recent decades particularly following the writings of prominent researchers advocating that future competitiveness advantage can be tracked to the development of the creative human capital of the organization (Pfeffer, 1994; Hamel & Prahalad, 1996).

1.5.1 Human Resource Development.

The concept human resource development has been perceived to be ambiguous and problematic (Mankin, 2001) despite the growing interest and all the efforts made by researchers and practitioners over the past years regarding definition of HRD, the aims and purpose of HRD theory and practice. There is no single way to understand or to do HRD. Definitions of HRD are always likely to be working definitions, emerging from the experience of attempts to do HRD (Elliott & Turnbull, 2005). HRD remains a contested concept within the more broadly contested field of organization and management theory. Lee, Stewart and Woodall (2012) argue that this is neither a drawback nor weakness on the one hand, nor an advantage or strength on the other because both threats and opportunities present themselves for the future growth of HRD as an academic field, and as an arena of professional practice.

McGoldrick, Stewart and Watson (2002) suggest that the process of defining HRD is thwarted by the lack of boundaries and the lack of depth of empirical evidence of some conceptual aspects of HRD, such as strategic HRD, learning organization and knowledge management. Confusion also arises over the

purpose and the intended beneficiary of HRD. This is complicated by efforts to define HRD from an international or global perspective (McLean & McLean, 2001; Wang & McLean, 2007). The emerging field of national HRD (NHRD) have also been explored and debated and has had notable influence on the definition of HRD.

In every country human resource development refers to formal and explicit activities, which will enhance the ability of all individuals to reach their full potential. By enhancing the skills, knowledge and abilities of individuals, HRD serves to improve the productivity of people in their field of work, whether it is in formal or informal settings. Increased productivity and improvements in the skills base of a country supports economic development, as well as social development (Department of Education, 2008).

Nadler and Nadler (1990) define HRD as an organized learning experience in a definite time period to increase the possibility of improving job performance growth. HRD is conceptualized and defined as both an organizational role and field of professional practice. The fundamental purpose of HRD is to contribute to long term strategic performance and more immediate performance improvement through ensuring that organizational members have access to resources for developing their capacity for performance and for making meaning of their experience in the context of the organization's strategic needs and the requirements of their jobs.

Vince (2010) indicated a critical perspective on HRD, arguing that staff responsible for learning and change in organizations has put too much effort into the development of individuals and not enough into understanding and engaging with organizational dynamics that limit and shape individuals' opportunities and abilities to learn and change. He explains HRD as an intervention within a political system and practice of management and leadership, with all the difficulties and contradictions that attempting to manage and to lead are likely to

contain and reveal. This means that the focus of HRD is on action, on developing the capacity to act, on generating credibility through action, and on influencing and working with others in situations loaded with emotion and politics.

1.5.2 HRD in global context

In addressing the global context of HRD, the researcher deemed it necessary by covering the global description of HRD, the global HRD trends, the impact of globalization on HRD, the global nature and purpose of HRD and the HRD global issues and challenges.

Global description of HRD

Describing global HRD can be very difficult as HRD has evolved differently in different countries. A number of endeavors to describe global or international HRD have been made. Wang and McLean (2007) argue that this is complicated by attempts to define HRD from an international or global perspective. McLean and McLean (2001, p. 322) define global HRD as "…*any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity and satisfaction, whether for personal or group or team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation or ultimately, the whole of humanity*".

Wang and McLean (2007) maintain that various definitions are still US-centric and consider HRD only in business organizations, excluding other relevant dimensions related to globalization and internationalization. McLean and McLean (2001) define global HRD as any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity and satisfaction, whether for personal or group or team gain, or for the benefit of an organization, community, nation or ultimately, the whole of humanity.

McLean and McLean (2001) claim that a single definition of HRD for the global context might not be possible, as the work environment is constantly changing and evolving. Moreover, as discussed earlier, the purposes, theoretical concepts and influences of HRD vary between countries in consonance with their internal (organizational) and external (national) environments. Ruona (2000) suggests that the pursuit of a single global definition of HRD is not a worthy cause, as it will never achieve consensus. Nevertheless, as this is the paramount global definition of HRD, McLean and McLean (2001) anticipate it to serve as a starting point for researchers to further discuss HRD from a global perspective, which may provide new insights into global HRD.

Global HRD trends

As offshoring gathers pace in the United States and the UK, so South Africa may be at an advantage in having intermediately and highly skilled English speaking workers. As wages rise, the global auction will cut in and such jobs, at the call-center level may disappear in the future. Over the years highly skilled and knowledge based jobs are increasing while low skilled jobs are decreasing. Ritapure (2012) contends that this calls for future skill mapping through proper human resource management initiatives. Indian organizations are also witnessing a change in systems, management cultures and philosophy due to the global alignment of Indian organization. Therefore, there is a need for multi skill development.

The recent quality management standers ISO 9001 and ISO 9004 of 2000 focus more on people centric organization. Currently, organizations need to prepare themselves in order to address people centered issues with commitment from the top management, with renewed thrust on HR issues, more particularly on training (Ritapure, 2012).

With the increase of global job mobility, recruiting competent people is also increasingly becoming difficult, especially in India. Therefore by creating an enabling culture, organizations are also required to work out a retention strategy for the existing skilled manpower. Ritapure (2012) further argues in order to ensure success, HR managers should use workforce skills and abilities in order to exploit environmental opportunities and neutralize threats; employ innovative reward plans that recognize employee contribution and grant enhancements; and indulge in continuous quality improvement through TQM and HR contributions like training, development and counseling.

HRD managers are expected to be involved with the creation of learning environment through HRD tools. In this regard they are concerned with development rather than traditional personnel functions. In his HRD audit study on Indian organizations Rao (2007) indicates that the real HRD Managers envisaged two decades ago are getting practically extinct. The HRD roles are being reduced gradually to recruitment and retention roles essentially involving salary revisions, performance appraisal and reward systems. There is very little effort made or time left for competency building, creation of learning environment and to aligning HRD with business strategies.

Mankin (2001) contends that it is significant for HRD practitioners to be able to embrace change and ambiguity. This is because the ability of organizations to maintain flexibility and change rapidly is not a luxury but a necessity in today's business environment. HRD practitioners are being increasingly challenged by the dynamics of a changing workplace (Monaghan & Cervero, 2006; Garavan, O'Donnell, McGuire & Watson, 2007). Hence, there is a need to rethink both the practice and theory of HRD in the changing and global economy (Marsick, 2007).

The economist Alfred Marshall wrote in his book "Principles of Economics" that the most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings (Michael, 2000). The reason for the increased importance of HRD in achieving socioeconomic

development lies largely in the emergence of knowledge work, technological advancement and the demand for information and their relationship to globalization is supported by Drucker (1992). One major trend with implications for HRD is globalization. The principal drivers of globalization are advancements in technology and communications, global competition, and changing organizational structures. These have impacted on business in various ways Figure 1.1 below. Organizations require among other things global leadership, adaptable and flexible organizational structure in order to advance globally. Turner (2001) argues that technology is helping the emerging economies to develop much faster than their Western counterparts were able to do it in the past.

Figure 1.1 - Globalization drivers and organizational requirements.

Organizational Requirements
Global leadership.
Adaptible and flexible organizational structures.
Managing supplier chains
Managing diverse workforce.
Updating core competencies and skills.
Inovation.
Knowledge management systems.
Retention of intellectual capital.
Cost reduction.
increased production.

What is required?

Globalization Drivers:
Technology and communication.
Global competition
Organizational structure

Source: Own construction

The impact of globalization on HRD

Globalization is having a huge impact on the role, nature and purpose of HRD in organizations of all sizes and sectors across the world. However, much of the literature has been written from the perspective of large private sector organizations. There have been far too few studies of HRD in other countries such as Greece, Kenya, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam (Mankin, 2009).

Since the world is becoming a global village with a borderless and knowledge-based economy, globalization can have far-reaching implications for HRD and management practices in general (Bae & Rowley, 2001). The importance of systematically developing human resources in today's highly complex and dynamic organizational environments is increasingly recognized in practice (Holton & Trott, 1996; Robinson & Robinson, 1995). Hence, the field of HRD is more divided today than ever before (Bierema, 2000; Swanson & Arnold, 1996). The mission and purpose of HRD provide an explanation as to why this is true. Gilley, Eggland and Gilley (2002) asserted that HRD's mission is to provide the following:

- Individual development focused on performance improvement related to a current job.
- Performance management systems aimed at improving organizational performance.
- Organizational development activities that optimize human potential and organizational performance, which together improve the efficiency of the organization.

Therefore, HRD professionals' primary purpose is to provide interventions and initiatives that improve employees' skills and competencies, improve performance, and enhance organizational effectiveness. Consequently, the following three philosophical orientations of HRD have emerged:

- Organizational learning,

- Organizational performance, and

- Organizational change (Gilley & Maycunich, 2000).

HRD professionals that adopt an organizational learning perspective believe that learning is the primary purpose of HRD, whereas those HRD professionals who embrace organizational performance believe that performance improvement and management are the essential components of HRD. Others embrace organizational change by believing that the more important activities they can perform are to alter the organization's culture, structure, work climate, mission, and strategy to improve organizational effectiveness (Nadler, 1998). These differences in philosophy and practice affect the decisions, priorities, actions, behaviors, and efforts of HRD practitioners. Furthermore, each domain is attempting to assert its influence over the direction of the field, which is affecting the interaction, cooperation, and partnerships between and among HRD practitioners (Swanson & Arnold, 1996).

The HRD professionals that embrace the performance and change domains focus their attention on the organization rather than the individual. In practice, they adopt a planned, data-based approach, which involves goal setting, action planning, monitoring feedback, and evaluating results (French & Bell, 1999). They would also use a systems approach that closely links human resources to technology, business processes, and change while utilizing behavioral science technologies, research, and theory (Nadler, 1998). The systems theory approach captures the complex and dynamic interactions of environments, organizations, process, group, and individual variables operating at any point in time and over time (Swanson, 2008).

Globalization presents HRD practitioners with the opportunity to deliver a wide range of HRD interventions that add value to an organization. However, in order to achieve this, HRD practitioners need to work in partnership with the key

stakeholders at both strategic and partnership level. Managing these stakeholder relationships is a challenging and complex task and is influenced by how the HRD function is structured (Mankin, 2009).

Organizations have had to make structural changes in order to keep pace global trends. This presents HRD practitioners with the opportunity to deliver a wide range of HRD interventions that add value to and organization (Mankin, 2009). However, for the success of the organization, HRD practitioners must understand the global trends, cultural differences and how they impact on formal and informal workplace learning, global economy and different national and HRD policies and practices (Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005; Marquardt, Berger & Loan, 2004; Swanson & Holton, 2001).

The challenge facing HRD practitioners working in an international capacity is how to operate effectively at both global and a local level (Hall, 2005). On the same vein Hatcher (2006) argue that HRD practitioners are also faced with the challenge of having the ability to think globally but act locally. Cooke (2004) maintains that it has been increasingly recognized that country and local context influence the HR practices of multinationals.

The global nature and purpose of HRD

The nature and purpose of HRD at an organization level differs across countries and regions between different types of organization. There are examples of sophisticated indigenous approaches to HRD in the developing economies of India and China, although training costs are minimized in the Chinese manufacturing sector (Mankin, 2009). A study conducted by Cooke (2004) at a toy manufacturing company in China revealed that new recruits undertook a 3 months training process but were paid less than half the wage of a fully trained employee. Selmer (2006) argues that China is a country which expatriate managers find it difficult to adjust to. Wang *et al.* (2005) indicated that China's

preference for indigenous approaches has to HRD has led to some Western managers becoming frustrated when collaborating with their Chinese counterparts.

Global HRD issues and challenges

One of the most challenging issues in the Asia Pacific region is the growth and proliferation of Direct Foreign Investment (DFI) which has a direct, major impact on HRD and HRM. There is the flow of skilled manpower or high-level manpower (as opposed to low-level manpower) from the DFI source countries to effect transfer technology. This reflects the workers-to-work flow. With HRD as the motivation for most countries seeking the industrialization path, once they are past the employment benefits of DFI, technology transfer and the flow of high-level manpower become more crucial. In terms of distribution, the United States and Australia are the largest hosts of highly skilled expatriates. DFI has increased the demand for highly skilled workers in the Asia Pacific economies. This has created a temporary labour shortage but this gap between supply and demand will close as educational investments in Asia Pacific economies yield fruit. Studies in several countries revealed that the relationship between DFI and high-level manpower policies have been positive (Low 1994). The creation of employment effects, transfers of skills and technology and localization of expatriate positions have generally been witnessed and take place rather amicably although some Asia Pacific economies have quite strict regulations to ensure that they occur (Heng & Low, 1994).

When it comes to globalization trends, the global logic of multinational corporations surpasses the national logic of many countries. However, they have recognized HRD as a strategic tool for competitiveness. To go global essentially means tapping and merging comparative advantages and competitive advantages found in different locations. The sole objective is to be internationally competitive which is made possible by such an international value-added chain.

Drucker (1987) argue that reinforcing this globalization trend are three fundamental and probably irreversible changes that have occurred in the last decade or so. Firstly, the primary products economy has become uncoupled from the industrial economy. Secondly, production has also been uncoupled from employment. Finally, capital movements rather than trade have become the driving force of the world economy in both goods and services (Heng & Low, 1994).

1.6 Research design

The research design for this study was exploratory, descriptive and interpretive in nature, using a qualitative approach. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008, pp. 7 – 8) argue that "qualitative research is suited to promoting a deep understanding of a social setting or activity as viewed from the perspective of the research participants'. Since HRD is highly context dependent, the power of a qualitative method to explore, describe and interpret these contexts needed to be applied.

The general strategy for this research was a basic qualitative study at various levels of the units of analysis. The units comprised of the HRD practitioners, the Internal Auditors, Managers, Curriculum Implementers, Circuit Managers, School Principals, Educators, a Member of Parliament [MP] and Unionists. Within this strategy, individual face to face interview technique was used. Data was collected by interviewing various participants who are experienced in MDoE through a semi-structured interview protocol.

In this study, a purposive sampling method was used. Interviews were conducted on a maximum variation sample of qualified people known to the researcher. Data was analyzed thematically based on transcripts of the interviews, using manual method. The coding into themes and then the construction of categories were conducted by the researcher independently and discussed outcomes with the promoter for quality assurance.

1.7 Ethical consideration

Research has become an issue of ethics in many domains. Questions of how to protect the interest of those who are ready to take part in a study have repeatedly drawn research ethics to the foreground (Flick, 2009). Before the process of participants 'selection and data collection can resume, the researcher obtained a written consent from the Department. Ethical and confidential procedures were guaranteed. An undertaking to provide upon request, the Department with feedback particularly the constructed HRD auditing process has also been agreed upon.

The researcher drafted an informed consent form which outlined the objectives of the research, its nature and what is expected from the research participants. The form *(Annexure A)* indicated to the prospective participants that the data obtained from them was utilized only for research purposes and nothing else. The information obtained has not been made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. The participants were informed that their anonymity is ensured and that the ethical guidelines were strictly enforced within the roles of the researcher (Kvale, 1996). The researcher ensured as best as possible that all decisions taken during the research process were in compliance with the existing rules governing the relationship between the researcher and the participants.

In adhering to the principle of voluntary participation, the participants were informed that they were not coerced into participating in the research. They have also been informed of their rights to privacy and consent in order to make them aware that they are not forced to participate nor give a particular response. Confidentiality was assured so that they could freely give honest responses. There was no devious means of obtaining information from the participants in this study.

Every researcher endeavours to ensure that the analysis they produce is of high quality and is not affected by any simple errors they may have made during the analysis and any biases they themselves might have about what they are researching. The researcher put in place to several checks to promote research trustworthiness, namely those to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With more than ten years of combined experience in the field of Human Resource Management and Development, the researcher had prolonged engagements which had the effect of making the interviewees comfortable with the researcher as a colleague. Mouton (2002) indicates the following, which the researcher also presented to the participants:

- The right to privacy (including the right to refuse to participate in the research).
- The right to anonymity and confidentiality.
- The right to full disclosure about the research (informed consent).
- The right not to be harmed in any manner (physically, psychologically or emotionally).

The researcher continually reminded the participants that as much as she respects the research participants, she had every intention to collect meaningful data.

1.8 Structure of the thesis

This study comprises of six Chapters.

In Chapter 2, the researcher presents the literature review focusing on HRD in South Africa. Contrasting arguments on the definition and purpose of HRD locally is discussed. The literature review on HRD audit process is also presented.

In Chapter 3, the research design, approach and how the research was carried out is presented and discussed. The sampling and data analysis processes are described.

In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the major findings of this research. Extracts from the interviews are included.

In Chapter 5, the findings are interpreted and synthesized. The findings are analyzed in terms of the research objectives and the research question is answered. The discussion of the findings is related to the literature review conducted.

In Chapter 6, the conclusion and recommendations of the study are presented entailing the review of the state of knowledge, the suggestions for future research and finally possible limitations of the study are identified.

1.9   Conclusion

This Chapter covered the crucial notions, perceptions and background to the problem of this study and showed the extent of the problem in the public sector particularly in the MDoE. The study is motivated by unpleasant compliance, financial and performance audit reports received by various Departments in the public sector, non-compliance to legislation and the fact that Departments are spending more money on human resources development interventions without any return on investment. Of importance is the internal auditing that is in place that does not seem to be effective nor assisting Departments to achieve their strategic objectives, hence the need to establish the perceptions of the stakeholders on HRD interventions and the development of the HRD auditing process. The next Chapter deals with the detailed literature review of HRD in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

HRD IN SOUTH AFRICA

2.1   Introduction

Although Chapter 1 outlined general HRD issues in South Africa and global trends, this Chapter mainly covers HRD in South Africa. The factors covered include the description of HRD, major element of HRD in South Africa and Mpumalanga Department of Education. The status of education in South Africa and in the Mpumalanga Department of Education is also outlined. An HRD audit process is also covered in this Chapter.

2.2   Defining Human Resource Development

Human resource development is emerging from its roots in training and development, becoming a sophisticated academic discipline and field of practice centered on learning and performance in organizations (Yorks, 2005). HRD in the Public Service is defined as those efforts undertaken by organizations to ensure that employees are well prepared to undertake their responsibilities and grow into viable careers, thereby adding value to the productivity and service of their organizations, the motivation and performance of their peers and the attainment of the overall vision of the developmental state (HRD Strategy, 2008).

Usually, the field of HRD was defined by practice, not from a theoretical frame or research. The emergence of HRD related journals has presented an opportunity to define the field on the basis of theory and practice (Jacobs, 2000). HRD can further be defined as the practice of enhancing the enabling capacity of individuals, groups, collectives, and organizations through the development and application of learning-based interventions for the purpose of optimizing human and organizational growth and effectiveness (Haldar, 2009). It is now resting in

an environment that is ever-changing due to many pressures, including internationalization of business, turbulent environments, government interventions, competition, deregulation, and the increasing rate of technological changes (Haldar, 2009).

The term human resource development was first introduced in 1969 by Leonard Nadler at the annual conference of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD). Nadler and Nadler (1990) define HRD as an organized learning experience in a definite time period to increase the possibility of improving job performance growth. HRD is conceptualized and defined as both an organizational role and field of professional practice. The fundamental purpose of HRD is to contribute to long term strategic performance and more immediate performance improvement through ensuring that organizational members have access to resources for developing their capacity for performance and for making meaning of their experience in the context of the organization's strategic needs and the requirements of their jobs.

In other words their focus is on individual learning rather than a team. It should be noted that training does not guarantee improvement in job performance because not only do skills learned during training affect performance levels, there are personal and organizational factors which contribute to performance improvement such as the ability of the individual, supportive supervision and work processes. Other definitions will focus on the development of learning capacity at the level of the individual, teams, and organization. And this will shift the focus of HRD from direct link to an indirect link to performance, implying that HRD practice creates a resource for the organization that may or may not be effectively utilized by its leaders.

Although there are clear differences and perspectives from different writers, the definitions have certain commonalities as well. Learning is clearly fundamental to the concept of HRD. Whether they focus on individual, team or the strategic or

job level performance, ultimately HRD is central on fostering learning. Also evident in these definitions is that learning is intended to enhance the efficacy of the learner in terms of his or her performance in the organizational setting and, ultimately, the organization's performance.

2.3 Human Resource Development in context

The previous section looked at the definition of HRD and it is obvious that various terms have been used by writers to define HRD. This section outlines HRD in context focusing on the purpose of HRD, the relationship between HRM and HRD, HRD and Total Quality Management, strategic HRD and the theoretical foundations of HRD.

2.3.1 The purpose of Human Resource Development

There are arguments regarding the purposes of HRD, regardless of the extensive theoretical debates concerning the nature of HRD. The purposes of HRD are said to influence the nature and extent of HRD activities being implemented (McLean & McLean, 2001). While Holton (2000) suggests that the purposes of HRD are centered on learning and performance perspectives, both benefiting the individual and the interests of shareholders; Hatcher (2000) argues that the HRD purpose centres on economic benefits, social benefits and the ethics of HRD. These points indirectly suggest that a reconciliation of the purposes of HRD centrally focus on training, development and learning within organizations for individual development to achieve business strategies and for the development of organizational competence (Gourlay, 2001). On the subject of globalization and new technology, the purpose of HRD is to meet regulatory requirements, improving quality and training for implementing new technology (Parker & Coleman, 1999; Rothwell & Kolb, 1999). This is summarized in Figure 2.1 below:

Figure 2.1 - Purposes of HRD

Source: Abdullah, 2009

It has been argued that the purpose of HRD is to develop an individual's career progression, rather than to encourage individual and organizational development (Desimone, Werner & Harris, 2002; Gilley, Eggland & Gilley, 2002). Another key purpose of HRD drawn out from the various definitions is performance improvement. It has been claimed that performance forms one of the four key functions of HRD, as it is an important extension of HRD theory (Marquardt & Engel, 1993; Swanson, 1995; Desimone, Werner & Harris, 2002; Gilley, Eggland & Gilley, 2002).

Torraco and Swanson (1995) and Brinkerhoff and Gill (1994) agree that linking learning and performance interventions and change initiatives to the organization's strategic business goals and objectives is critical to the success of HRD. The most consistent criticism of the effectiveness of training and development interventions is the failure of HRD professionals to measure validly the actual impact of the intervention on organizational performance (Bramley, 1996; Warr, Allan & Birdi, 1999).

Research studies indicate that achieving the ambitious goals inherent in the organizational vision pronouncements requires a serious thinking on human resource management issues as well as an articulation of the role of organizational values at all levels (Torraco & Swanson, 1995). Unfortunately, large majority of organizations have yet to recognize the strategic importance of HR and HRD people have yet be recognized as partners in the strategic planning process (Sikula, 2001).

Consequently, it is clear from the various positions of different writers and researchers that there is no consensus regarding the conceptual and theoretical purpose and functions of HRD. The purposes of HRD could be said to be changing and evolving in accordance with organizational strategies and goals. Besides, the concepts and purposes of HRD are suggested to be depending on the individual country's requirements and structure (McLean & McLean, 2001).

2.3.2 The relationship between HRM and HRD

For the purpose of this research, it is significant to define the relationship between human resource development and human resource management. Mankin (2009) argue that HRD and HRM need to be understood as integrated concepts although each has its own distinctive characteristics and role. HRD has its roots in training and development, which in turn has traditionally been one of several HRM functions that include recruitment, selection and compensation.

HRD practice has extended beyond relying largely on the classroom and structured teaching material to facilitating learning throughout the organization. HRM is broadest in its orientation and addresses all issues about people, and human resource development (HRD), which focuses on increasing individual and group productivity through learning. HRM emphasizes the utilization of existing people in their current jobs. HRD emphasizes the preparation of people for new roles, new jobs, and their development in the current roles and for unleashing the creative potential of human beings (Brown, 2003; Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005).

The guiding principle of HRM can be expressed as positioning the right people to achieve the highest possible performance in order to meet strategic goals. Successfully putting this principle in practice involves continually raising and then answering questions such as "What kinds of people do we need, that is, what abilities and motivations do we seek? How many people do we need? How do we best position them once they are employed? How do we motivate and retain them (Yorks, 2005)?

According to Yorks (2005) the guiding principle of HRD can be expressed as preparing and continually developing people and learning systems to achieve the highest possible performance in order to meet strategic goals. To successfully execute this principle in practice involves continually answering questions such as 'What kind of learning and development do members of the organization need? How do we allocate learning opportunities among employees? How do we recognize and utilize the tacit knowledge held by members of the organization? How do we manage the knowledge and the social and intellectual capital of the organization?

These HRM and HRD questions are highly interdependent. The answer to questions like "What kind of people do we need?" and "Can we successfully recruit such people?" influences what kind of training and development is required. Often retraining highly talented people depends on how we allocate

learning and development opportunities. Actually, coordination and synchronization of HRM and HRD activities are necessary, regardless of how an organization structures its functions (Yorks, 2005).

McLagan (1989) contends that the focus of HRD should be on improving while that of HRM should be on creating and maintaining. The relationship between HRD and HRM does not necessarily have to be reflected in organizational structures; HRD functions may be part of a larger HRM Department but it may also be a free-standing. What is important is that HRD and HRM strategies, policies, plans, and practices are horizontally aligned and not in conflict. Studies conducted in the US on high-performance work systems show that skills and training make a more significant contribution to organizational performance when combined with complementary HRM practices (Smith, 2006)
.

2.3.3 HRD and Total Quality Management

Total Quality Management (TQM) is one of the frameworks that introduced a concept of continuous improvement. According to Peters (1996) both TQM and HRD have come to be seen as good things, as ends in themselves rather than means to ends. He argued that a number of steps can be taken to restore some of the relevance to modern day TQM and HRD by refocusing TQM efforts to reflect the original intent of the quality assurance movement which is, conformance to a specification which exists to deliver reliability of service to customers, in line with stated and anticipated needs, in an efficient manner. On the other hand Schulman, *et al.* (1999) argues that the organizations with long-standing continuous improving programs such as TQM have an advantage of continuous improvement because continuous improvement is a natural process for them.

According to McAdams and O'Neill (1999) TQM consists of and is based on the following principles:

- TQM is strategically linked to the business goals.

- Customer understanding and participation are vital.

- Employee understanding and participation at all levels are required.

- Management commitment and consistency of purpose is required.

- The organization is perceived as a series of processes that incorporate customer relationships.

The principles of TQM which are indicated above are related to the HRD auditing process model. The principle of employee understanding and participation is crucial to the HRD auditing process model considering the challenges related to ineffective communication with stakeholders which is experienced during internal auditing.

2.4 Strategic Human Resource Development

Strategic HRD involves introducing, eliminating, modifying, directing and guiding processes and responsibilities in such a way that all individuals and teams are equipped with the skills, knowledge and competencies they require to undertake current and future tasks required by the organization. For strategic HRD to be accomplished, responsibilities for HRD at all levels need to be clarified. It is an organization-wide holistic approach and encompasses what takes place within a designated HRD functional area only in so far as the activities of the function contribute to the overall development process (Walton, 1999).

Many authors contend that HRD must become more strategic (Jeris, Johnson & Anthony, 2002; Grieves, 2003 & Garavan, 2007), that it is should be aligned to HRM (Smith, 2006) and that it must reflect more critically on, for example, ethical (Hatcher & Lee, 2003, Bierema & D'Abundo, 2003) impact, as well as its broader political (Vince, 2003) and historical–political (Hamblett & Thursfield, 2003) contexts.

Waltons (1999) indicates the importance of partnership in human resource development. All the stakeholders or partners have a critical role to play in human resource development. Senior managers have the responsibility for its overall establishment, linking HRD with other aspects of HRM in ways which clearly support current and future organizational requirements. Line managers they actively support subordinate learning with a particular emphasis to its application and utilization. Employees should commit themselves to their own continuing development and support management's attempt to relate this to enhanced organizational effectiveness. HRD specialists need to work with senior managers in establishing the policy framework and designing and implementing detailed proposals for learning against specified objectives (Walton, 1999).

2.5   Theoretical foundation of HRD

There is no single lens through which HRD is viewed. However, it goes without saying that there is a vital need for the development of good HRD theory. Historically, the development of HRD can be traced back from training and instructional design, to training and development, to employee development, to human resource development. Usually, the field of HRD was defined by practice, not from a theoretical frame or a set of research. Recently, the emergence of HRD related journals has presented on an opportunity to define the field on basis of theory and practice (Jacobs, 2000).

The theoretical foundation of HRD has been discussed at length since the late 1980s (Torraco, 2004) and although there has been much debate about the meaning and purpose of HRD in academic literature most HRD practitioners and managers remain unaware of these arguments. The HRD literature is replete with researchers and practitioners expounding the positive impact of a huge variety of training and development interventions on personal, unit and organizational-level change (Huselid, 1995; Martocchio & Baldwin, 1997; Salas & Canon-Bowers, 2001).

Practically, the focus of HRD was on the monitoring and development of individual knowledge in order to inform action. This strategy can be successful in the development of individuals' rational and intellectual capabilities however, it is unlikely to assist in the development of knowledge about the emotional and relational nature of learning and organizing. An approach to HRD that goes beyond the current focus on the development of individuals will serve an important purpose. It will help individuals and collectives to better understand the impact of unconscious processes on organizing and to explore how these can be harnessed in the service of creative institutional functioning (Woodall, Lee & Stewart, 2004).

The development of HRD theory has paralleled the development of both management theory and human resource management theory. HRD can make a significant contribution to organizational performance by developing organizational members' capability for strategic thinking and creating social spaces in the organization where strategic conversations can take place (Yorks, 2005).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher deemed it necessary to start by citing the three theories highlighted by Swanson (2008). The discipline of HRD, in order to understand, explain, and carry out its process and roles, relies on three core realms of theory which are the psychological theory, economic theory, and systems theory.

Psychological theory: Psychological theory captures the core human aspects of developing human resources as well as the socio-technical interplay of humans and systems.

Economic theory: Economic theory captures the core issues of the efficient and effective utilization of resources to meet productive goals in a competitive environment.

Systems theory: Systems theory captures the complex and dynamic interactions of environments, organizations, process, group, and individual variables operating at any point in time and over time.

These three component HRD theory realms and their integration are visually portrayed as a 3 - legged stool in Figure 2.2 below. The legs represent the component theory realms and the stool's platform represents the full integration of the three components into the unique theory of HRD. While the stool rests firmly on the floor within host organizations, an ethical rug serves as a filter through which the integrity of both HRD and the host organization can be maintained (Swanson, 2008).

Figure 2.2 - Theoretical foundations of HRD
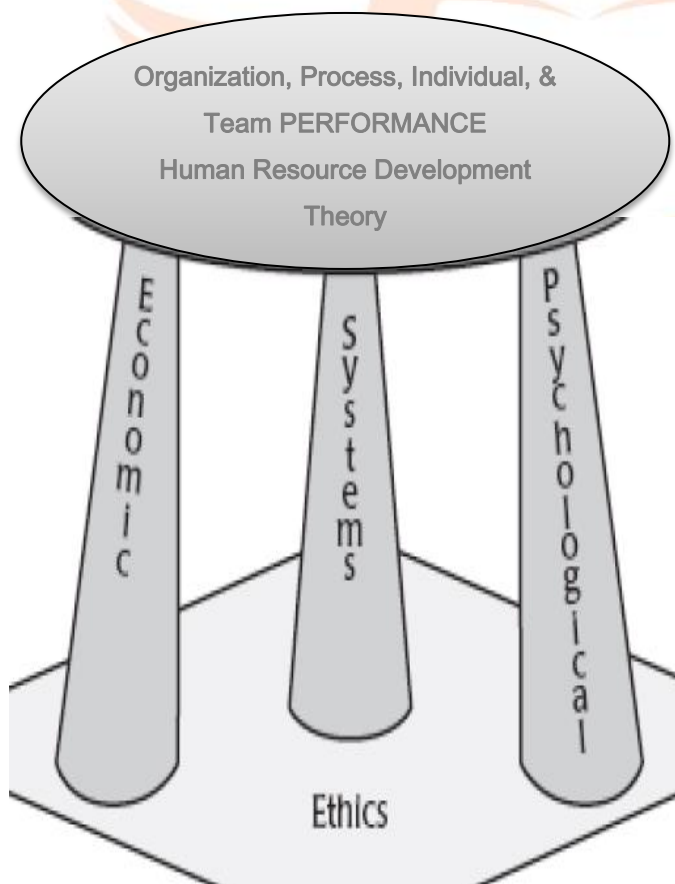
Source: Swanson (2008) – figure edited.

2.6   Human Resource Development in South African

The challenge is to find new ways of creating HRD which has to build learners with the capacity to learn and become self-managed. It is important to create learning culture, where a range of training, development and learning strategies are aligned with the organizational strategy. It refers to "a process of changing and organization, stakeholders outside it, groups inside it, and people employed by it, through planned learning so that they possess knowledge and skills needed for the future" (Nel, *et al.,* 2011, p. 481).

Most definitions refer to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and behaviors that improve an employee's ability to meet the changes of the job requirements. The problem in South Africa is to cope with a future that is not always like the past. It means to anticipate the skills and knowledge needed in the future, and not to react after the problem occur.

The progress for 2006 in International Reading Literacy Study indicated that most of the South African learners struggle to become literate, that is, to read and write proficiently, both in their home language and often in English which is the language of learning and teaching in all the other subjects. The other finding is that the South African grade 5 learners have not mastered reading skills and achieved the lowest scores in a literacy study of grade 4 and 5 conducted in 39 countries (Howie, *et al.,* 2007).

Arends and Phurutse (2009) argue that many countries, South Africa included, are confronting mounting problems of teacher supply and this raises critical questions about the retention strategies of the governments across the globe.
A skilled and well-developed workforce is at the heart of global competitiveness. Education, training and development is therefore seen as an important factor in meeting the country's economic and employer's strategic, business and operational goals. In particular, skills development is viewed as an important way

to enhance the performance capability of people in organizations. By understanding the purpose and challenges of people development efforts on a national level, managers and ETD practitioners will be able to determine skills development objectives and targets that will help to improve the performance capabilities of their organization and its employees (Coetzee, Botha, Kiley & Truman, 2007).

2.7   The challenges facing HRD in South Africa

The South African labour market is characterized by an oversupply of unskilled workers and a shortage of skilled workers. Population growth exceeds the growth in employment demands. This situation is made worse by the constant loss of jobs in the formal sector as the country's economy moves away from labour-intensive to capital-intensive operations that require highly skilled human resources (South Africa Business Guide, 2002- 2003).

The notion of skills crisis facing South Africa especially in the professional categories is one of the greatest challenges facing government's attempts at developing human resources in South Africa (Kraak, 2004). There is no doubt that the continual expansion of skills in South Africa requires educated citizens to occupy and maintain the key democratic institutions. A growing economy will benefit from such. Streek (1992) and Brown, Green and Lauder (2001) make it clear that the new economy requires broad multi-functional capabilities in excess of current demand.

South Africa is faced with skills gaps, an ageing but highly skilled workforce, increasingly complex technology and rising consumer expectations from service providers. Policies such as Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE), Industrial and Sectorial Charters, the Human Resource Development Strategy, the National Skills Development Strategy and skills development legislations offer opportunities for improving skills, or up-skilling. These policies

ensure that different industries enter value-added markets to stimulate demand for skills, employers act in their long term interest, and there are incentives for organizations to develop both high-level and basic skills (Coetzee, *et al.*, 2007).

Unfortunately, training in South Africa in both its external and internal labour market forms has a poor history, firstly because of apartheid government restrictions on the training of black workers, but secondly because of employer apathy in this regard. These structural and behavioral features still persist today (Kraak, 2004). In a review of five large scale studies of enterprise training in South Africa, Badroodien (2003) concludes that South Africa has a mean annual training rate of between 20 and 30 per cent of the employed workforce across the national economy. The Department of Labour has set up other success indicators of training and one of which is the measure of participation in the skills levy system and disbursement of training grants to firms that develop workplace skills plans.

In South Africa, the Skills Development Act introduced new structures, programmes and funding policies designed to increase investment in skills development and to improve the quality and relevance of education and training. There is a majority of black workers with relatively low educational levels. There are not enough black workers in certain high skill occupation. Training can assist the promotion and growth of black workers. However, despite the efforts by government policies and legislations, HRD is still a challenge to most employers in South Africa.

2.7.1 Raising the skills profile of the labour market

The South African government has committed itself to raise the skills profile of the labour market. Short-term measures will address immediate shortages, and longer-term solutions are put in place to address structural imbalances in the labour market. Important decisions taken by government in this regard include:

- Facilitating the placement of new entrants in the labour market through learnership, apprenticeships, bursaries, internships and new venture creation initiatives.

- Facilitating the recruitment of skilled foreign workers in fields with critical skills shortages.

- Ensuring the development of South Africans in fields with critical shortages.

- Providing career guidance and counseling to school leavers to assist them to pursue further studies in fields that meet the needs of the economy, and

- Speeding up the implementation of the National Human Resource Development Strategy by all government Departments (Coetzee, *et al.*, 2007).

2.7.2 Importance of uplifting skills

The skills upliftment and the enhancement of employee's applied competence in their jobs by improving their knowledge, skills abilities and attitudes through formal education, skills training and continuous development are crucial. A skilled worker is at the heart of global competitiveness.

In South Africa the combination of skills shortages and high employment levels create a high turnover of labour. In this context human resource development has a role to play in helping organizations to retain valuable, talented staff, to improve performance, to update their skills since technology changes all the time, to satisfy personal growth, to solve organizational problems such as absenteeism and poor service delivery, to promote/improve their employability.

2.8 The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)

The NSDS seeks to develop the skills of the South African workforce, to utilize the workplace as an active learning environment, to promote self-employment and to secure work opportunities for the new entrance into the labour market. Its objectives are as follows:

- To prioritize and communicate critical skills for sustainable growth, development and equity.
- To promote and accelerate equality training for all in the workplace.
- To promote employability and sustainable livelihoods through skills development.
- To assist designated groups, including new entrants to participate in accredited work, integrated learning and work-based programmes to acquire critical skills to enter the labour market and self-employment.
- To improve the quality and relevance of provision (National Skills Development Strategy, 2007).

2.9 South African Human Resource Development Strategy.

The HRD Strategy is a call for action because its primary purpose is to mobilize multi-stakeholder participation, and to encourage individuals and organizations to address the challenge of improving the human resources stock of our nation (Department of Education, 2008). Government's central national concern is to accelerate development so that there would be a balance between supply and demand with regard to human resources. HRD is about taking purposeful action to increase the aggregate levels of skills in the workforce, so that opportunities for individuals could be maximized and thereby benefit society as a whole.

HRD-SA is explicitly intended to contribute to the attainment of the following national goals:

- To urgently and substantively reduce the scourges of poverty and unemployment in South Africa.
- To promote justice and social cohesion through improved equity in the provision and outcomes of education and skills development programmes.
- To substantively improve national economic growth and development through improved competitiveness of the South African economy.

In pursuance of the above goals, this HRD strategy was designed to complement a range of purposeful development interventions to achieve the following:

- An improvement in South Africa's HDI and the country's global HDI ranking.
- An improvement in the measure and ranking of South Africa's economic competitiveness.
- A reduction in the Gini-coefficient (corresponding to a reduction in the inequality of wealth in the country).
- An improvement in the measure of social cohesion as measured through specific social surveys (Department of Education, 2009).

The researcher observed that the HRD strategy for the Public Service is silent about the internal audit process and its effectiveness in relation to Human Resource Development processes. As a result, it is not clear whether or not the audits conducted in the HRM sections which encompass HRD are assisting the component or the Department at large to achieve its strategic objectives. The researcher also discovered that the White Paper on Public Service Training and Education does not say anything about HRD auditing even though its objective centers on training and development of the public servants; hence, the researcher's intention to influence Departmental strategies and policies (HRD Strategy, 2006; White Paper on Public Service Training and Education, 1999). The Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999) makes provision for the setting aside of the training budget or skills levy at 1%, an effort therefore has to be made to ensure that more training interventions are implemented.

2.10 Education and Human Resource Development

Noorjehan and Nayak (2007) outline education as a social process responsible for changing individual's behavior and should be used as the foundation on which one would build a strong nation, self-sufficient in economy, non-corrupt in character and scientific in thinking.

The development of human resources is unequivocally the first pre-requisite for both individual success and collective national progress (Azhar & Batool, 2004). Human resource development recognizes the paramount need to utilize the human resources fully and relates education to the needs and aspirations of the people. If a country is to advance, the capacities of men and women, the human resources are to be developed extensively. Shah (2003) argues that education is universally accepted as the most critical element in the human development recipe. HRD is integrated with the economic growth of the nation as this growth bases completely on individual's creativity (Shami & Hussain, 2006).

The importance of education and human resource development cannot be overemphasized. Education helps to fight poverty and spur economic growth. There is no country which has ever achieved continuous and rapid economic growth without at least 40% of adults being able to read and write (Global Campaign for Education, 2010)

2.11 HRD systems

Mankin (2009) describes Training Needs Analysis (TNA) as a formal and systematic process for analyzing the learning and development needs of employees. Simmonds (2003, p. 42) states that, TNA is about gaining agreement on training solutions. It's not about the training Department assuming that they know all about the training needs of the employees and managers. It is paramount that the people are involved in the identification and analysis of

needs. TNA enables the HRD practitioner to identify where interventions are needed, who needs to be involved and what type of intervention is needed. This requires a collaborative approach between the HRD practitioner and key stakeholders. Garavan (2007) argues that working in partnership with the line managers is particularly important as they are in the best position to identify the learning needs of employees. Liker and Meier (2007) recommend interviewing of employees in order to identify the overall situation and shortcoming of the current systems.

No matter which approach is adopted, performance measurement and management can only be effective when employed within a framework of quality management and continuous improvement (Mankin, 2009). Wexley and Latham (2002) indicate that the respective roles of the line manager and employee are crucial for individual level TNA because an important source of information is the performance appraisal or review which can indicate whether a further more detailed diagnosis of individual's strengths and weakness is needed. However, care should be taken to understand the performance management system as it is, and how it actually operates (Buchner, 2007).

Hackett (2002) indicates that many performance appraisals provide an opportunity for employees to help identify their own training needs in relation to their present job. In order to prepare an organization for successful implementation of the system, the HRD practitioner needs to be aware of the organization's business strategy and how the new system is linked to specific business objectives (Mankin, 2009). For instance technical skills training as a result of an organization's decision to introduce new production equipment in order to manufacture a new product range. This is associated to what Sloman (1994) refers to as supply-led training.

Another type of training and development need identified by Sloman is demand-driven training of which is the one that rises as a result of an individual employee

or line manager identifying a performance gap or development need. It may be identified during the performance review discussion. This is the reason why line managers have to be hands-on regarding training and development because the way in which a performance appraisal is handled by the line manager has an important bearing on how training and development is perceived by employees (Mankin, 2009).

2.12 Organizational structure

Mankin (2009) indicates that adaptable and flexible organizational structures are one of the requirements of organizations. As an HRD intervention, Mankin argues that organizations should create and sustain new forms of organizational structure with cultures based on cooperation and collaboration.

Morgan, Levitt and Malek (2007) argue that strategy, structure and culture need to be aligned because they are the principal internal factors that influence HRD. Mankin (2009) argues that the role, responsibilities, and structure of HRD are influenced by a range of organizational factors which includes the organization's strategy.

2.13 Management styles

Mankin (2009), when outlining the impact of management style in SMEs that values and attitude of the owner- manager have a very direct impact on the whole organization whereas in large firms values and attitudes of corporate leader can have a more diluted effect; also sub-cultures often exist in large firms - difference between SMEs and larger firms in the provision of training.

2.14   HRD policies

Mankin (2009) argues that the implementation of HRD strategy is achieved through the implementation of HRD policies. A policy is a practical expression of an organization's commitment to HRD. Policies exist to enable others to make decisions (Mayo, 1998). The HRD policy should explain the purpose of HRD, clarify who is responsible for different aspects of HRD practice, explain how resources will be allocated and specify the success criteria. In short, the HRD policy should communicate an organization's HRD philosophy to all employees so that informed decisions can be made about HRD activities.

2.15   A Human Resource Development audit

An HRD audit is a comprehensive evaluation of the current human resource development strategies, structures, systems, styles, and skills in the context of an organization's business plans. It attempts to find out the future HRD needs of the company after assessing the current HRD activities and inputs available. It is comprehensive and starts with a thorough investigation of an organization's business plans and corporate strategies. It mostly becomes effective if carried out in an organization that possesses an effective strategic plan (Rao, 1999a; Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005).

It should answer the following questions:

- Where does the company want to be in ten years from now, three years from now and one year from now?

- What is the current skill base of HRD staff in the organization in relation to various roles and role requirements?

- What are the HRD subsystems available today to help the organization build its competency base for the present, immediate future and long term goals?

- What is the current level of effectiveness of these systems in developing people and ensuring that human competencies are available in inadequate levels in the organization?

- Is the organization's HRD structure adequate to manage HRD in the organization?

- Are top management and senior management styles of managing people in tune with the learning culture?

2.15.1 The emergence of an HRD audit

To evaluate the impact of HRD and establish accountability for HR efforts, the HRD audit emerged. To get the best from HR, alignment must exist between HR's functions, strategies, structures, systems and styles and those of the business. HR should be aligned both with the short-term programmes and long term organizational efforts. The HRD audit is an attempt to assess alignment and improve it. Basically, it is a comprehensive evaluation of the current human resource development strategies, structures, systems, styles, and skills in the context of an organization's business plans (Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005, Rao, 1999a). In South Africa, the Skills Development Act introduced new structures, and funding policies designed to increase investment in skills development and to improve the quality and relevance of education and training (Skills Development Act, 1998). Despite the efforts by government policies and legislations, HRD is still a challenge to most employers in South Africa.

Generally, an audit emerges as the enforcement arm of regulatory and management systems which prescribe frameworks of internal control and self-management for organizations (Ferlie, Lynn, & Pollit, 2005). Auditing is an accepted part of business management. As organizations look to maximize their investment in human resource development they will seek closer controls on spending. The importance of budgeting and cost-benefit analysis of personnel

activity, notably training and development will lead to a growing demand for new ways of documenting, costing and monitoring the work of the Department (Matthewman, 1993).

2.15.2 The purpose of an HRD audit

The primary purpose of human resource development auditing is to facilitate the management of training and development as the key organizational services to improve service delivery (Arens, Elder & Beasly, 2008). According to Haldar (2009) HRD auditing manifests its purpose and importance primarily in auditing the functions of the HRD division and the competencies possessed by personnel of the division. Internal and external HR auditors can conduct the audit although there are advantages and disadvantages. HRD auditing is cost effective and can give many insights into a company's affairs. HRD auditing is required to review periodically the HRD functions and the effectiveness of implementation of HRD processes. Like any other human resource function, training and development should be reviewed periodically for the growth of an organization, therefore a systematic and comprehensive audit of all HR function is essential. The audit findings will facilitate the renewal of the HRD systems in the organization (Haldar, 2009).

To get the best from human resources and improve service delivery, alignment must exist between human resource development services, strategies, structures, systems and styles and those of the organization both short-term and long term plans. The HRD audit is an attempt to assess alignment and improve it. However, it should be noted that having an HRD section/ Department does not guarantee effective HRD services. Effective HRD in an organization requires that:

- The top management of the organization recognizes the strategic advantage and the critical value addition provided by people.

- The role of HRD must be clear.

- Line managers understand, accept, and internalize their own role in developing people.

- A learning culture must be established and maintained in the organization.

- Appropriate HRD systems must be identified to suit the needs, requirements, and strategies of the corporation and are effectively implemented.

- The HRD systems must be periodically reviewed and aligned and realigned with the organization's goal.

- HR policies that support HRD must be formulated and implemented.

- The HRD unit must be staffed with competent people.

- The styles, beliefs and values of the top management must be aligned to promote a good learning and competency-building culture, and

- The HRD function and its approaches to implementing its strategies must be periodically reviewed.

The above mentioned principles are crucial to an effective functioning of an HRD unit. Organizations are unable to effectively adhere to these principles on their own. That is the reason why HRD audit should be conducted to ensure that the impact of HRD in an organization is evaluated. The HRD audit is a comprehensive evaluation of the current human resource development strategies, structures, systems, styles, and skills in the context of an organization's business plans. The HRD audit attempts to find out the future of HRD needs of the company after assessing the current HRD activities and inputs available (Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005).

To effectively manage human resources to fully realize their potential the organization must first be aware of their value. Conducting HRD audits will provide this insight raising awareness of the strengths and weaknesses particularly of the HRD unit and provide strategies to improve. This audit will highlight the redundant systems, procedures and violation of policies and the need for changes, allowing the organization to put its best resources for best use. It will also highlight inadequacies in HRD and curation practices suggesting policy change where necessary. Information obtained through HRD audit will assist in forward planning as it gives more realistic status of HRD components.

It is important to note that an HRD audit is not a problem solving exercise. It may not be able to provide any solutions to specific problems the organization is facing. It is not a tool for troubleshooting organizational performance problems. However, it may be able to throw light on the root causes of the problems. It will not give feedback about specific individuals. It will however, give feedback to organizational leaders and other stakeholders about the HRD Department, its structure, competency levels, leadership, and processes as well as the influence of HRD on the other systems (Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005).

2.15.3   Sustainability of HRD audit

The suggested steps indicated below have been modified from PricewaterhouseCoopers: Transforming Internal audit (2008). The researcher has modified them to be suitable for sustainability of HRD audit:

- Identification of stakeholder expectation of HRD audit.
- Collect data to discover the current state of the HRD unit.
- Link the strategic objectives of the organization to the scope of HRD audit.
- Identify the areas that were never previously audited.
- Eliminate the routine low-value audit.
- Identify ways of reducing costs.
- Identify inefficient processes.

- Develop an HRD audit plan considering all of the above.
- Review the plan with all stakeholders to gain support.
- Implement.

2.15.4   Who should conduct HRD audit?

Ideally the audit should be conducted by someone outside the HRD function but who is a specialist in HRD or a team of HRD practitioners and external auditors (Chalofsky & Reinhart, 1988). However, the researcher believes that a team of employees with experience of managing human resource development and training or with a qualification in HRD and Training management would be particularly suited to the role of an HRD auditor. Internal auditors are also suitable for this role. The main thing is for them to be familiar with the HRD systems and practices. Personal characteristics such as those suggested in International Standards on Auditing (ISA) and ISO 19011 (2002) which includes open-mindedness, diplomacy, perceptiveness and self-reliance are fundamental.

2.15.5   HRD audit and performance audit.

According to the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA) guide, a performance audit is an independent auditing process carried out to evaluate the measures instituted by management, or the lack thereof, to ensure that resources have been acquired economically and utilized efficiently and effectively. This process according to Prinsloo and Roos (2006) is necessary to enable the government to demonstrate that public accountability responsibilities have been fulfilled. Table 2.1 and Table 2.2 below outline the differences and the similarities between performance audit and HRD auditing.

Table 2.1 - The difference between performance auditing and HRD auditing

Performance Audit	HRD audit
To confirm independently that measures exist and are effective.	To evaluate the current HRD strategies, structure, systems, styles and skills in the context of the short and long term business plans of the organization.
To provide to management and other legislative bodies with information.	To provide management and other relevant stakeholders with information regarding HRD.
To bring possible areas for improvement to the attention of management.	To bring possible areas for improvement to the attention of management and stakeholders.
To encourage management to take the necessary corrective steps to improve its management measures.	To encourage management to take the necessary corrective steps to improve its management measures.
It can be carried out with respect to an entity or only a portion of an entity such as a Department, programme, activity, process, service rendered, management control system or organizational unit of a public sector entity (SAICA Guide:6).	It should be carried out with respect to HRD section or unit in the public sector or private sector.
Performance auditors should have a good grasp of their role with regard to the policies of the institution.	HRD auditors should have a good grasp of their role with regard to the policies of the institution.

Source: Own construction

Table 2.2 - Components in performance and HRD auditing.

Auditing component	Performance auditing	HRD auditing
Objective	To evaluate the management measure instituted to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.	To evaluate the current HRD strategies, structure, systems, Styles and skills in the context of the short and long term business plans of the organization.
Focus	Mainly programmes, projects, systems or activities	HRD section
Audit criteria	Usually more subjective and compiled by the auditor and agreed upon with the auditee. Represent good management practice. May vary from audit to audit	Given, minor amendments may be made by the HRD audit team and agree with the management. May not vary because it is in one Department.
Academic Requirements	Economics, political science, sociology, management science, auditing	HRD qualifications, however, auditing courses are encouraged.
Skills and abilities required	Analytical, communication, problem-solving, reading, writing, computer literacy, innovation, endurance	Analytical, communication, problem-solving, reading, writing, computer literacy, innovation, endurance

Source: Own construction

2.15.6   HRD audit methodology

The HRD audit methodology indicated below is adopted from Rothwell and Sullivan (2005).

- Firstly, a team of auditors visit the organizations and use various methodologies to assess the appropriateness and adequacy of the various HRD systems, strategies, structures, competencies culture and processes.

- Secondly, the team conducts a briefing to the top management and stakeholders, and an agenda and focus area for evaluation is agreed upon.

- Thirdly, they interview top management on strategic plans and organizational competencies required to meet the strategic objectives and those that exist currently.

- Fourthly, the HRD structure and systems in place to position the organization for future is also assessed.

- Lastly, suggestions to improve ways of achieving the future business goals are made. HRD audit is contextual and at the same time relies on the available knowledge of the potential of the HRD system to help the organization to realize its goals. The team of HRD auditors will call a meeting where all the systems that are identified to be nonfunctional are analyzed and reviewed.

The individual interviews focus on top managers and senior managers, union leaders, Departmental heads, strategic clients to capture their thinking about the organization's future plans, to obtain sensitive information and to gather information about management style and corporate culture. In small organization,

random selection of employees can be done. The interviews are also aimed at collecting information about the effectiveness of the existing systems, organizational structure and policies. The following open ended questions may be asked:

- What do you see as the future growth opportunities and business direction of the organization?
- What skills and competencies do members of this organization have that you are proud of?
- What skills and competencies do you need to run your business or to perform your role more effectively at present?
- What is the strength of your HRD function?
- What are the areas where your HRD function can do better?
- What is good about your HRD subsystems such as performance appraisal, career planning, job rotation, training, skills audit and induction?
- What changes do you suggest to strengthen HRD in your organization?
- What do you think are the ways in which line managers can perform more development roles?

Analysis of reports, records, manuals and published literature to know the organization's strength and weaknesses (annual reports and procedure manuals) is important, these includes analysis of training records and training programs to give insight into what was happening in the organization (Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005).

Rao (1999b) indicates that the HRD Audit methodology involves an evaluation of the HRD structure, systems, processes, competencies and culture. It includes the following:

- Questionnaire study of HRD systems and processes.

- Individual and group interviews with HRD staff, top management, line managers and other stakeholders to ascertain their perceptions of the HR systems, and processes and outline the gaps.

- The study of various documents relating to HRD systems; observation of the work culture and training in operation.

- The analysis of secondary data.

On the other hand Haldar (2009) argues about the following:

- HRD auditing manifests its purpose and importance primarily in auditing the functions of the HRD division and the competencies possessed by personnel of the division.

- HRD auditing is cost effective and can give many insights into a company's affairs.

- HRD auditing is required to review periodically the HRD functions and the effectiveness of implementation of HRD processes.

- Like any other human resource functions, training and development should be reviewed periodically for the growth of an organization, therefore a systematic and comprehensive audit of all HR functions is essential.

2.16 Education system in South Africa

In her study, Chisholm (2009) argues that in the first period, 1994 to 1999, a preference existed for redistributional solutions as a way of improving quality in schools instead of investing in teacher education or re-education. Finances for education were constrained, and the main priority lay in reorganizing and restructuring of education system to unify racially fragmented budgets, Department and processes. However, improvement can be effected in four main

areas: information systems, financing of teacher education, salaries and conditions of work for teachers, post-provisioning system linked to teacher appointment, recruitment and retention.

The intention to reverse the negative effects of apartheid education and provide for greater access, equity and quality has placed curriculum and teacher policy at the centre of educational transformation in South Africa. For without teachers who are both adequate in number and good at what they do, it will not be possible to realize the goals and ambitions of the society for a high level of education for all. Chisholm (2009) argues that in the first, post-apartheid phase, an approach to teacher supply and demand characterized by an emphasis on redistribution and efficiency rather than expansion and development manifested itself. Its effects were felt in the subsequent periods. Even though current initiatives take on teacher education and development, they continue to be overshadowed by this approach. Between 2004 and 2008, the DoE began to address teacher education as part of its broader focus on improving the quality of education (Chisholm, 2009).

The negative media publicity for any Department is demoralizing the learners' to aspire to become teachers. Cosser (2009) highlighted that poor grade 12 results pushed more students than wished to study education. Therefore, one can conclude that it means better teaching, favorable grade 12 results, appropriate career guidance and student support are all essential for improved participation in higher education.

The findings from the Centre for Development and Enterprise's (CDE's) study into education's role in skills development, the empowerment of black South Africans and economic growth published in October 2007, confirm that far-reaching reform is sorely needed in the areas of mathematics and science education. The fact that students are not able to pursue Mathematics and Science-related degrees at Universities is a significant problem. There is

therefore a need to dramatically improve Mathematics and Science performance, especially at secondary school level. The CDE also strongly urged that foreign skills be more actively recruited to fill the new government-approved quota of 2 000 foreign teachers. It added that new capacity was required in government to make the intervention work, and that the private sector needed to use its resources more strategically and in support of the overall programme (Simkins, Rule & Bernstein, 2007).

The research study conducted by Arends and Phurutse (2009) indicate that the education system in South Africa does not have formal structures, policies and strategies for teacher retention. Some schools in urban areas' by virtue of their proximity to resources easily attract teachers as opposed to rural provinces and schools that struggle to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

2.16.1   Improving the education system in South Africa

The Department of Basic Education, through the Action Plan 2014: Towards the realization of Schooling 2025, has set output goals and performance targets for Mathematics and Science to be achieved in all the phases of schooling by 2014. To achieve the set output goals as well as to reach the performance targets for Mathematics and Science would require that the entire system of education focus on the actual attributes of underperformance in Mathematics and Science.

A Mathematics and Science Improvement Strategy is being developed as a means towards advancing the achievement of minimum targets set in the Action Plan 2014: towards the realization of Schooling 2025. The strategy is based on the evidence based approach, which primarily requires that all the interventions should be a response to or informed by empirical evidence. The Annual National Assessments, National Senior Curriculum examinations, regional and international studies, as well as other currently available research findings

conducted in or outside the Department could inform the nature of interventions required (Concept Document: Education Indaba, April 2011).

Education analysts have for some time been calling for schemes to improve the quality of teachers and teaching in public schools. In most instances, teacher quality has never been substantively defined, and this raises the question whether it is not practically better to define teacher quality in terms of output such as learner achievement (Steyn 2000; Steyn, 1999). It is, however, encouraging noting that eight learnerships have been approved for funding under the auspices of the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA), two of which deal with teacher training. There is no clear indication that agreement has been reached on this important issue, and this makes it difficult to determine when all the teachers' qualification will be upgraded to REQV 13.

2.16.2   Education in the Mpumalanga province

During the 2011 provincial education Indaba, the following were highlighted as characterizing the education system in the province:

- **Social disadvantages**: Many parents/guardians are uneducated and/or undereducated and lack access to information.

- **Teachers**: Most of the teachers, especially in the FET band have poor subject knowledge and weak pedagogical practice.

- **Dysfunctional schools:** Most schools do not achieve acceptable outcomes because they are either badly managed and/or poorly supported.

- **Resources:** There is a lack of libraries, science laboratories, desks and computers in schools.

- **Financial Challenges**: The Department is facing huge financial challenges that resulted from accruals over the past years. The current personnel/goods and services split is such that the Department battles to provide the bare minimum facilities for schools to function optimally (Concept Document: Education Indaba, 2011).

It is acknowledged that the current teaching fraternity is not adequately trained on the curriculum as well as methodology teaching and assessment techniques. The underperforming schools are having severe managerial problems and this result in poor discipline and commitment from both learners and teachers.

The scenario in the Department of Education is that only between 30-40 % of teachers in Mathematics and Physical Science have studied content in these subjects; at least up to a junior degree level. The same percentage of curriculum implementers in the two subjects have done grade 12 content and a teaching diploma but are supporting grade 12 teachers, some with degrees in the subjects. Even the under-qualified teachers for these subjects are in short supply; some schools go without teachers for several months in a year.

2.16.3   Internal audit in the Mpumalanga Department of Education

Internal auditing conducted within the Human Resource Services sub-directorate in the MDoE where the researcher is working included the HRD sub-division as part of the HRM and this meant that the auditing that was done was not comprehensive. Below is Figure 2.3 highlighting the process of internal auditing for HRM in the MDoE. The figure below indicates the areas in HRM within MDoE where internal auditing was conducted. The figure displays the fact that internal audit was not focused on a specific division within HRM but rather general overview of which according to the researcher made it ineffective. In this study the HRD auditing process model developed focused on the comprehensive auditing process of HRD component.

Figure 2.3 -   Areas where internal auditing was conducted.

Source - Own construction

The way in which internal auditing was done within HRM, has been outlined in Figure 2.4 below. It has been discovered that in most of the divisions of HRM it was not done comprehensively. Internal auditing was conducted comprehensively in HR Benefits section and HR staffing section. In Human Resource Development and Employee Health and Wellness (EHWP) it was not done.

Figure 2.4 - HRM Sub-divisions indicating the way in which auditing was done
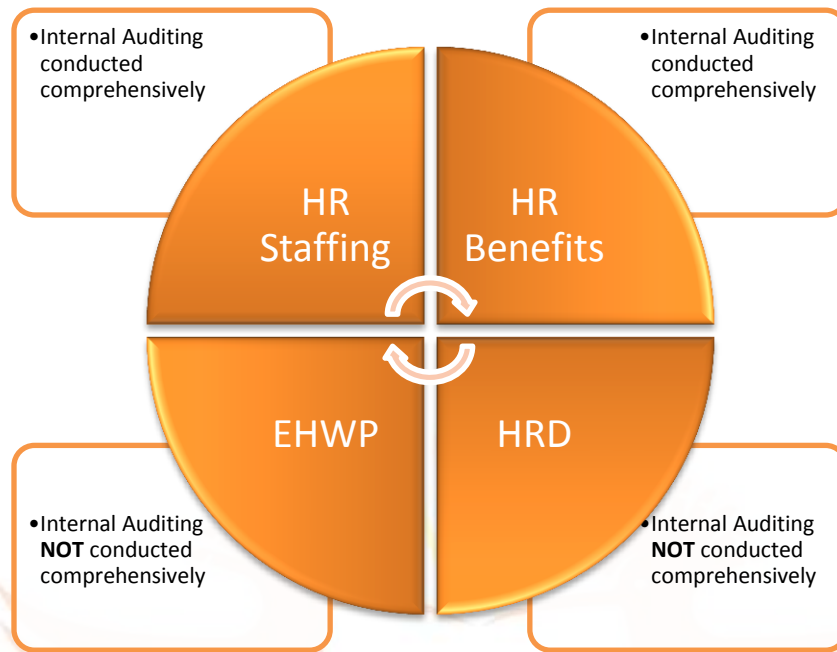
Source – Own construction

The internal auditor is an employee of the organization in which the audit is being carried out. Therefore, the internal auditor's degree of independence and objectivity within the unit of the audited organization is very much dependent upon his reporting relationship within the organization. The organization's approach towards internal auditing is the variable which determines dependency. The Sarbanes-Oxley Act of the United States of America of 2002 attempted to deal with and manage the internal auditor's independence by addressing non-audit services. Hence, the process of judging the effectiveness of the internal auditing function in an organization and the reliance that can be place on it is crucial (Locatelli, 2002; Sarbanes-Oxley Act, 2002).

The Institute of Internal Auditors defines the function of internal auditors as an advisory and client related activity. This consulting function is intended to add

value and improve the organization's governance and risk management. This function is achieved by identifying and assessing the risks of the organization and internal control processes. This is the consulting function by the internal auditor to top management. The internal auditor is basically linked to the risk management of the organization via the strategic functioning of the current day internal auditing function (McCall, 2003; Naggy & Cenker, 2002; PriceWaterhouse Coopers, 2003).

Examination and evaluation are key strategies of internal auditing. The audit needs to evaluate how business processes accomplish strategic objectives, and identifies ways to improve those processes. The investigations must gather, analyze and present information related to allegations of individual fiscal misconducts (PriceWaterhouse Coopers, 2003). An effective measure of internal audit performance is the ability to provide useful information to management for effective strategic planning and decision making ability (Frigo, 2002 & Rickard, 1994).

Internal audit Department budgets will flatten or decline and long-vacant positions will go unfilled as a result of the deepening worldwide economic downturn (PricewaterhouseCoopers: State of the Internal Audit Profession survey, 2009). As the economic contraction continues, internal audit Departments accustomed to nearly untouchable status in the post-Sarbanes-Oxley period now face major changes. It was indicated in the internal audit forward-looking report Internal Audit for 2012; internal audit leaders have begun to recognize the need to redefine the function's value proposition and seek to increase its value by learning to operate more efficiently, intelligently, and quickly. Concerns over declining budgets are a reminder that greater efficiencies within internal audit won't come a moment too soon.

King III advocates a risk based approach to internal audit. In order for internal audit to contribute to the attainment of strategic goals, the internal audit function

should be positioned at a level within the company to understand the strategic direction and goals of the company. It should develop a programme to test the internal controls vis-a-vis specific risks. The internal audit function should provide assurance with reference to the adequacy of controls to identify risks that may impair the realization of specific goals as well as opportunities that will promote the achievement of the company's strategic goals (King III report, 2010).

The survey conducted by PriceWaterhouse Coopers indicated that internal audit needs knew knowledge and management skills. There is a need to rethinking of the internal audit profession's sourcing strategies, along with a significant upgrade in knowledge management skills. As the profession scrambles to deal with emerging risks and new challenges, internal audit leaders must find effective ways to attract and retain top talent and increase business and operational knowledge among the ranks (PriceWaterhouse Coopers, 2010).

The nature of business risk has changed, particularly for global organizations. This means that successful internal audit Departments will be those that maintain alignment with the changing risk profile of their company and the evolving needs and expectations of their key stakeholders. Both 2012 report and our subsequent white paper on internal audit transformation delineate the reasons for changing risk profiles and the need for internal auditors to adapt.

2.17   Conclusion

Some basic concepts related to HRD in South Africa and MDoE have been outlined in this Chapter. Collectively, more needs to be done on HRD research, specifically on HRD auditing. The void that exists in knowledge is that much of what is written about HRD focuses more on strategic position of HRD within an organization, demonstrating how it is an integral part of Human Resource Management and the ethical dilemmas within HRD. With regard to audits most of

the literature is on HR audits rather than HRD auditing. However, the researcher utilized most of the elements from an HR audit and internal audit. Studies by Chen, Bian and Hom (2005), Bae and Rowley (2004), Ahmad and Raida (2003), Berge, et al. (2002), Swanson (2001) Rao, Rao and Yadav (2001) and Torracco and Swanson (1995) have been focusing on HRD effectiveness except for Rao (2000) who focused on the HRD auditing. HRD should be an independent unit within HRM rather than just a part of HRM as in most cases is not exclusively a prerogative of top management of the organization.

The concepts, frameworks and studies discussed in this Chapter display a number of crucial elements that could assist organizations to improve service delivery through HRD auditing. Lastly the challenges' facing the education system in South Africa and the Mpumalanga Department of Education were discussed. The literature reviewed highlighted the significance of the stakeholders in the organization.

Chapter 3 will cover the research design and methodology applied to determine stakeholders' perceptions of a HRD intervention.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1   Introduction

The previous Chapter focused on the theoretical scope of this study. This Chapter explains the research design followed. The choice of research design is made based on the research problem and research objectives outlined in Chapter 1. This Chapter deals with the general paradigm within which the researcher approached the topic and some of the complexities of the qualitative research approach chosen for this study. The sampling, research procedure and data treatment and analysis will be presented and discussed.

3.2   Research approach

Good research design is an iterative, not a linear process (Lampel, 2004). In order to obtain descriptive data of the stakeholders' perceptions of a HRD intervention, a qualitative research approach was followed. Henning (2004) and Schurink (2010) indicated that to ensure the integrity of a social research project, it is important that the philosophy of the researcher is clearly stated and forms the foundation for consistency in the investigation, analysis and interpretation of the research problem.

Literature in the social sciences refer to taxonomy of paradigms which had two, and recently three paradigms which are the positivist, the interpretive and the post-modernist, also referred to as the constructivist. These texts characterize the difference between the paradigms in ontological, epistemological and methodological terms (Bryman & Bell, 2003; Creswell, 2009; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The positivist approach assumes the existence of an objectively-

determinable reality where the role of the researcher is that of an outsider and the methods used are quantitative in nature. The interpretive approach is based on a belief that reality is a social phenomenon which comes about through meanings derived from human experiences, interactions and perceptions. Thus, as the researcher investigates this reality he/she is inevitably part of, it changes. The post-modernist/constructivist approach maintains that each individual has his or her own interpretation of the world, and thus has a unique reality; the researcher collaborated with the subject to discover this.

Creswell (2009) stated that researchers should unambiguously explicate their philosophical worldview. From this perspective, the researcher worked from constructivist influences. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008, p. 9) contend that "the central assumption of this paradigm [constructivism] is that reality is socially constructed, that individuals develop subjective meanings of their own personal experience, and that this gives a way to multiple meaning". The researcher chose a qualitative research approach because it offered flexibility and spontaneity. For example, as a qualitative researcher, the researcher was able to collect data using a semi-structured interview, with predetermined questions (Robson, 2002) yet still with "openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given and the stories told" (Kvale, 1996, p. 124). The flexibility in the research design is in keeping with the goal of qualitative research; to generate explanatory theory and create understanding. The research process allows the emergence of relational concepts and patterns, so the process is both interpretative and inductive (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003).

Several writers have identified what they consider to be the prominent characteristics of qualitative, or naturalistic, research (Bodgan & Biklen, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 1990 & Eisner, 1991). The list that follows represents a synthesis of these authors' descriptions of qualitative research:

- Patton (1990) states that qualitative research uses the natural setting as the source of data. The researcher attempts to observe, describe and interpret settings as they are, maintaining what Patton calls "empathic neutrality.

- The researcher acts as the human instrument of data collection.

- Qualitative research offers the researcher the opportunity to explore participants' values, beliefs, and perspectives from their vantage point (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

- In qualitative research, 'the researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data' (Creswell, 2003).

- Qualitative researchers predominantly use inductive data analysis.

- Qualitative research reports are descriptive, incorporating expressive language and the 'presence of voice in the text' (Eisner, 1991).

- Qualitative research has an interpretive character, aimed at discovering the meaning events have for the individuals who experience them and the interpretations of those meanings by the researcher.

- Qualitative researchers pay attention to the idiosyncratic as well as the pervasive, seeking the uniqueness of each case.

- Qualitative research has an emergent design, and researchers focus on this emerging process as well as the outcomes or product of the research.

- Qualitative research is judged using special criteria for trustworthiness.

The researcher identifies herself with the interpretivist paradigm and concluded that this paradigm will be appropriate to explore, interpret and describe the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention. The perception of an individual is highly subjective informed by culture, personality and cognitive ability. Their perceptions depend on the shifting realities. The other approaches would not give considerable access to the depth of meaning and not allow a complex understanding of the field.

The implications of choosing a qualitative approach is that "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (Merriam, 1998, p. 7) and that the presence of the researcher in the lives of the participants is fundamental (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Creswell (1998, p. 14) argues that in the interpretive social science, " the researcher is an instrument of data collection because he/she gathers words or pictures, analyze them inductively, focuses on the meaning of participants, and then describes a process that is expressive and persuasive in language". In this regard the researcher's objectivity is crucial. The other benefits of qualitative research include the researcher's responsiveness to context, ability to adopt techniques to the circumstances, possibility to include non-verbal data, space to explore anomalous aspects to the data. The negative aspects in this regard include the researcher imposing his or her point of view. It is important to state possible influences to which the researcher might be subject.

The researcher acknowledges that her background and experience in the field of human resource management and development might influence this study. She plays an insider role which impacts on the choice of data to be collected, on ease access to the research participants, on the interaction within the interviews and also on how data will be interpreted. The possible manifestations and effect of insider bias and a list of questions an interviewer can be asked in debriefing interviews are outlined by Onwuegbuzie, Leech and Collins (2008).

In order to allow the reader to evaluate to what extent the researcher's background might have influenced the results of this study; the researcher has attached **Annexure B** where the researcher briefly outlines her background in the field of human resource management and development**.** Wolcott (2010, p.36) indicates that "Our readers have a right to know about us. And they do not want to know whether we played in the high school band. They want to know what prompts our interest in the topics we investigate, to whom we are reporting, and what we personally stand to gain from our study".

Gilmore and Carson (2000) advocate a qualitative research approach within the interpretive research paradigm when conducting research. Furthermore, a study by Keefer and Stone (2009) about the perspective of HR practitioners on the gap between research and practice provide a clear description of utilization of qualitative research methodology. The research strategy employed in their study exemplifies the nature and advantages of qualitative research in exploring the phenomenon under study which was the HRD practitioners' perception about the usefulness of HRD research.

The researcher chose to use a qualitative research method because of the complexity of the research problem and the fact that the main research objective is to establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention. HRD is highly context dependent and therefore the power of qualitative methods to explore, interpret and describe these contexts needs to be acknowledged. The qualitative methodology is preferred by the researchers who have an orientation of the interpretive social science in that they observe the social reality subjectively through a detailed study of the text. "In the interpretive social science the researchers interact with the respondents in order to extract detailed information about their attitudes, opinions and feelings regarding their circumstance" (Neuman, 2000, p. 67).

3.3 Research strategy

The researcher found it a daunting task to locate a research study within the qualitative approach in that Tobin and Begley (2004) argue that qualitative research is not linear, as often as it is presented in methodological literature, it is dynamic and interactive. In their article Morse, *et al.* (2002) indicate that the researcher is constantly moving back and forth between design and implementation. Therefore, goodness becomes an overarching principle of qualitative inquiry and an interactive process that takes place throughout the study.

This study is explorative-descriptive and interpretive because the researcher explored, described and interpreted the participants' perceptions of the HRD intervention. The study includes contextual, exploratory, descriptive and interpretive approaches. Table 3.1 below outlines the strategy applied in this study.

Table 3.1 -   Research strategy and application

Strategy	Application of the study
Contextual	***Legal frameworks*** • The Constitution of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. • Public Finance Management Act, 1999. • National Skills Development Strategy. • National Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa. ***Time*** • The time when the Department was poorly performing.

	Context attachment • Mpumalanga Department of Education ***Intention*** • To establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention. • To construct the HRD audit process to enhance service delivery
Exploratory	• To establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention. • To construct the HRD auditing process for the Mpumalanga Department of Education
Interpretive	• To understand the perceptions of various stakeholders in their positions about HRD intervention.
Descriptive	• The strategic objectives of HRD in line with the Departmental ones are clarified. • The HRD audit process is developed**.**

Source: Own construction

3.3.1   Contextual

The context of research determines the choice of research design. The contextual approach is descriptive of uniqueness (Botes, 1995, p.15), in other words it describes the differences and distinguishing characteristics of a research study. The contextual framework applied in this study is indicated below.

- **Legal framework**

The constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996 stipulates that public administration should adhere to a number of principles which include that public administration must be accountable, efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted, a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted, and good HRM and career development practices to maximize human potential must be cultivated.

The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) of 1999 which promotes the objective of good financial management in order to maximize service delivery through the effective and efficient use of the limited resources. This legislation is considered to be one of the frameworks that are aimed at promoting accountability to different levels of management through the delegation of authority and responsibility. It also promotes the efficient, effective and economic usage of government resources that are considered to be limited and meant to address the unlimited needs of the community.

In dealing with poor service delivery, the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) and the National Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa was approved for addressing the major human resource capacity constraints currently hampering the affective and equitable delivery of public services.

- **Time**

During the time of conducting this study, MDoE was one of the poor performing provinces on grade 12 results. This was a concern to all stakeholders attached to the Department. During this time, as a series of meetings was called and turnaround strategies and action plans were developed to improve performance. The Education for All Country report for 2010 stated that even though the

investment in education resulted in greatly improved access to education in South Africa over the past 15 years, it has not as yet delivered an improvement in outcomes.

- **Intention**

The intention of this study is to establish the stakeholders' perceptions of the HRD intervention and to construct the HRD audit process in order to enhance service delivery for the MDoE.

3.3.2   Exploratory

This study is exploratory in nature because exploratory research is aimed at developing new ideas. Mouton (1996, p. 108) indicates that the research can be more flexible. In order to explore a relatively unknown terrain of HRD auditing, methods are used in this study to elicit the views and /or perceptions of the stakeholders involved and affected by the HRD interventions. Neuman (2000) supports an approach of viewing the exploratory research as a foundation block for which other studies can develop. In this regard, it is considered as the initial stage in a sequence of other studies. "The goal in exploratory studies is the exploration of a relatively unknown research area" (De Vos, Schurink & Strydom, 1998, p. 6).

3.3.3   Interpretive

Merriam (1988, p. 29) states that qualitative methods enable the researcher to "understand humans as they engage in action and interaction with the contexts of situations and settings". This makes this study to be interpretive because it intends to understand the perceptions of various stakeholders in their positions about HRD intervention.

Terre Blanche and Kelly (1999, p. 123) contends that interpretive research methods are "methods that try to describe and interpret people's feelings and experiences in human terms rather than through quantification and measurement". The interpretive methods are able to obtain first hand information when they collect data which contain people's subjective experiences.

3.3.4   Descriptive

In a sense this study is descriptive due to the fact that it intends to describe a phenomenon accurately within its specific context and when it is based on the data collected for this purpose (Naude, 1995). The stakeholders' perceptions of the HRD intervention were described in this study.

To answer some research questions, we cannot skim across the surface. We must dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon we are studying. In qualitative research, we do indeed dig deep: We collect numerous data and examine them from various angles to construct a rich meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 133).

The fundamental characteristics of qualitative research as highlighted by Marshall and Rossman (2010), Hatch (2002), Merriam (2002) and Nasser (2001) are presented in Figure 3.1 below. The nature of the research objectives in this study seemed to fit best the characteristics of a basic qualitative study and consequently this strategy was chosen.

Figure: 3.1 -   Characteristics of qualitative research

Relies on the researcher as key instrument in data collection

Interpretive character

Reporting is rich with quotations - thick description

involves an emergent and evolving design

Focuses on participants' perspective

Conducted in a natural setting

Involves using multiple methods
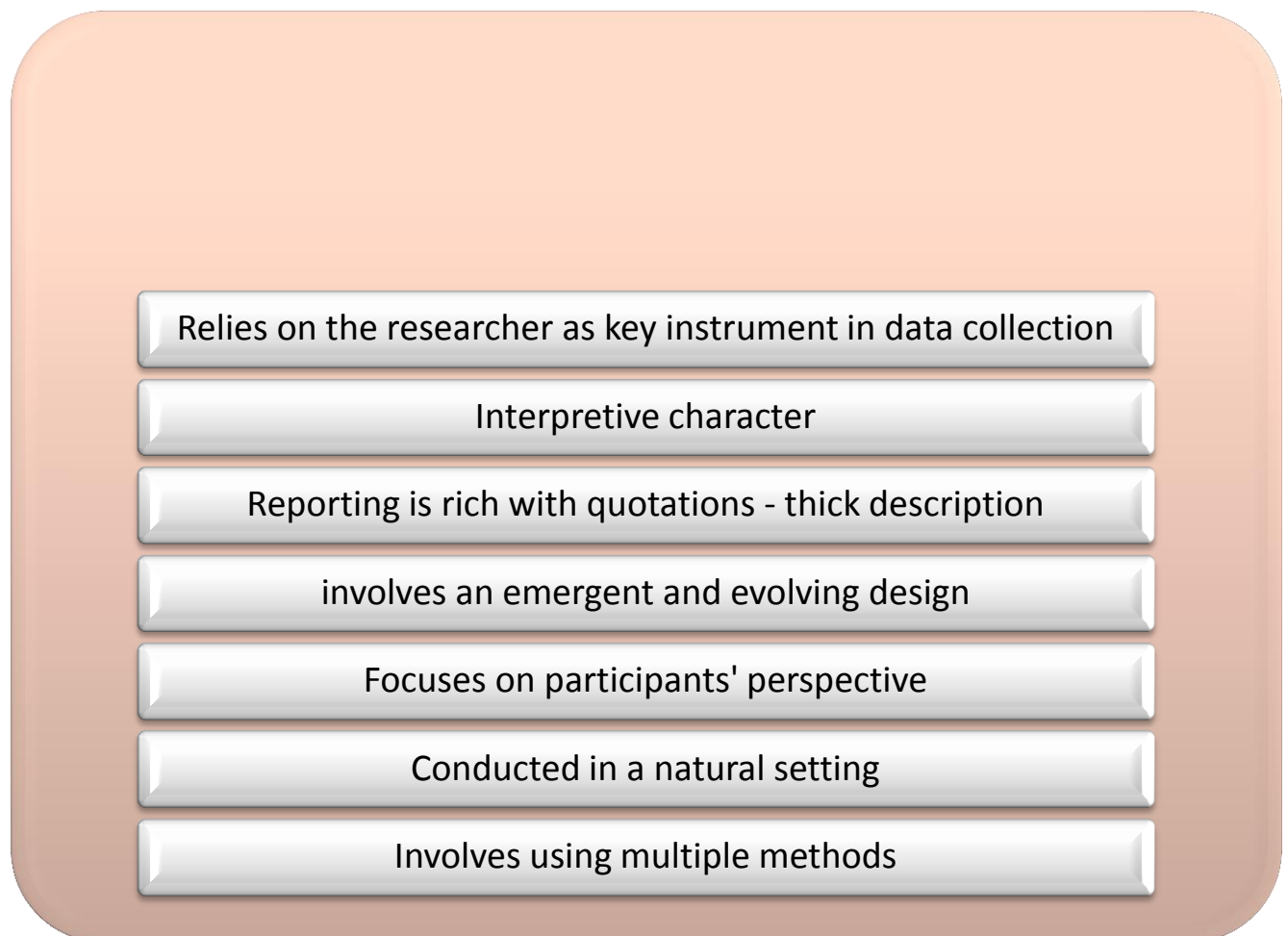
Source: Own construction

Researchers have various perspectives on the role of a literature survey in a qualitative study (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Patton, 2001). Qualitative researchers generally caution that existing theory and findings from other research studies may interfere with the researcher's grasp of the perspectives of research subjects. In order not to contaminate the meanings of the perspectives of the research subjects, qualitative researchers recommend that the researcher refrains from exposing her/himself to the literature and existing research findings until after she/he has collected the data and has at

least initially interpreted it (Groenewald, 2003). According to Patton (2001) the decision on when to conduct the literature review depends on the nature of the research problem, and the researcher must be cognizant of the trade-offs involved in making the decision. Strauss and Corbin (1998) perceive the use of literature as a basis of professional knowledge and referred to it as literature sensitivity and Dey (1993, p. 66) saw it as "accumulated knowledge".

In qualitative studies, in particular when the grounded theory method is used, researchers are strongly advised to defer the literature study until they have collected and analyzed the first batch of the research data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Glaser 1992). At the beginning of the study, the researcher is advised not to study any literature in the chosen field of study. This, Glaser warns, could introduce researcher bias by giving rise to a set of preconceived concepts, categories and properties from other researchers' work. Starting with a literature study will constrain the free discovery of theory and, hence, will defeat the main dictum of grounded theory approach (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 1990; Glaser, 1992; Charmaz, 2006; Gasson, 2003). It is important to note that Strauss and Corbin (1990) do not completely dissuade people from reading literature in the substantive area before they start data gathering. They, however, believe that some understanding of the research area through literature study will increase the theoretical sensitivity of the researcher when he or she is generating theory from the first data samples.

Strauss and Corbin (1990) also encourage the study of non-technical literature. They define non-technical literature as comprising of letters, reports, diaries, biographies, videotapes and various other materials. Non-technical literature, they argue, can be used as sources of primary data, supplementing the data collected through interviews and observation. However Glaser (1992) says that non-related literature can be used to sensitize the researcher theoretically and to improve writing style and presentation techniques.

In this research the researcher agrees with Strauss and Corbin (1998) and Dey (1993) by believing that it was important to obtain a critical view of topics relevant to the research problem in order to be able to ensure adequate exploration of the research problem and to put some preliminary structure to an analysis of the problem. Consequently, literature was reviewed before the research was conducted. The literature review conducted was discussed in Chapter 2. The perceptions expressed by the participants, and the data gathered from document analysis needed to be looked at theoretically to gain a true understanding of the phenomenon. Since the conceptualization of the study was more inductive than deductive (Mouton, 2001), data was analyzed through an inductive reasoning process.

Irrespective of whether the study adopted a qualitative, quantitative or a mixed method approach, reliability and validity should always be of primary consideration. Qualitative studies strive towards an understanding of people meanings (Schurink, 2005) and this emphasis falls into internal validity which is about producing accurate findings of the subject's world. There are no procedures that guarantee objectivity. Instead researchers should always try to find a balance between interpretive openness and rigour. Merriam (1998, p.151) contends that "rigour in qualitative research derives from the researcher's presence, the nature of the interaction between the researcher and participants, the triangulation of data, the interpretations, and rich, thick descriptions". "Rich, thick descriptions" as descriptions which give the reader a feel for the setting and convey a shared experience, providing many perspectives.

Below is how credibility, transferability and authenticity were promoted by the researcher during the interview process.

Credibility was promoted by the researcher through peer debriefing, where several drafts and notes from the coding process have been passed to the colleagues of the researcher and participants in the field for their review and

feedback. It enabled the researcher to make objective decisions and to consciously avoid influencing the outcome of the study. Furthermore, it had the effect of forcing the researcher to more thoroughly explain the whys and hows involved in the research itself. Two of the transcripts with their coded results, interpretations, and conclusions were sent back to each respective interviewee for member checking to promote further trustworthiness of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Transferability refers to the generalizability of inquiry. It is comparable with external validity and was promoted by the researcher through the substantial descriptions of the findings, which was presented in as much detail as space permitted. It is hoped that the HRD auditing process which has been constructed in this study might be customized and be utilized by various organizations in both public and private sectors.

Authenticity is regarded as a feature unique to naturalistic inquiry (Schwandt, 2001). The researcher has ensured authenticity and trustworthiness by keeping a comprehensive diary which was updated daily over the period of study.

Several checks were put in place to promote research trustworthiness, namely to establish credibility, transferability, authenticity and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The fact that the researcher is an employee of the Department of Education has enabled her to have extended engagement in the field, which had the effect of making the interviewees comfortable.

It is argued that the transference of terms across paradigms is inappropriate; however, if we reject the concepts of validity and reliability, we reject the concept of rigour. Rejection of rigour undermines acceptance of qualitative research as a systematic process that can contribute to the advancement of knowledge (Tobin & Begley, 2004). In this study the researcher made use of the terms validity and reliability. Like Morse (1999), the researcher believes the rejection of the term

validity and reliability may result in qualitative research being rejected as a science. Morse (1999) points out that if we reject scientific enquiry, we are undermining the belief that qualitative research is a scientific process that has a valued contribution to make to the advancement of knowledge. In this study the researcher ensured reliability and validity of data by becoming involved within the study and instrumental. The validity and reliability of this study depended on the ability, skill and effort of the researcher.

The central consideration concerning the process of data collection is that of reliability (Mouton & Marais, 1996). When gathering data, the researcher utilized two-staged design open- ended questions in order to ensure content validity for the questionnaire. According to Mouton (1996) the reliability of observation or data is influenced by four variables; namely, the researcher, the participants, the measuring instrument, and the research context or circumstances under which the research is conducted. In this study compliance to validity and reliability was attained through a detailed research approach, design and execution that were followed by the researcher to ensure that the study could be replicated and results in the same findings.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research as an alternative to traditional quantitatively oriented criteria. The qualitative criterion is depicted below:

Alternative criteria for judging Qualitative Research

- Credibility
- Transferability
- Dependability
- Confirmability

In addition to the above elements, the researcher has employed triangulation as one of the techniques for ensuring the quality of research. Bryman (2004) describes triangulation as the use of more than one method or source of data in the study of social phenomena. The researcher concurs with Potter (1996) who argued that conclusions derived from many different kinds of people across many different situations will be more convincing than those based on observations of one person in one setting.

Triangulation refers to the use of multiple sources and methods for collecting data (Creswell, 1998; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Merriam, 1998). Sources of data for triangulation in this study included the face to face interviews with participants from various categories within the MDoE and Departmental documents (report, circulars, directives, policies / legislations). Triangulation sheds light upon common themes found in different sources (Creswell, 1998) and strengthens dependability and credibility (Merriam, 1998). Member check involves sharing the researcher's interpretations of data obtained from various sources with the participants from whom they were gathered and determining if they feel that the results are credible (Creswell, 1998; Leedy & Ormrod, 2001; Merriam, 1998). Finally, rich, thick description involves writing out detailed descriptions of the participants and setting under study (Creswell, 1998; Merriam, 1998). The purpose in this regard was to address transferability and allow the reader to determine if the findings can be transferred to other contexts.

The researcher chose analysis of documents as an additional source of information that is invaluable to qualitative researchers. The documents which the researcher analyzed included official records, reports, circulars, policies / legislations as well as the published data used in a review of literature. In his study of technology teachers in training, Hansen (1995) analyzed journal entries and memos written by participants, in addition to interviews.

## 3.4	Research methodology

Somekh and Lewin (2005) contend that methodology is both the collection of rules by which a particular piece of research is undertaken and the principles, theories and values that underpin a particular approach to research while Walter (2006) indicates that methodology is the frame of reference for the research which is influenced by the paradigm in which our theoretical perspective is developed. The most common definitions suggest that methodology is the overall approach to research linked to the paradigm or theoretical framework while the method refers to systematic modes, procedures or tools used for collection and analysis of data. Therefore, research methodology is a general strategy followed in collecting and analysing data required to solve a research problem (Ary, 2003). It is the overall approach to the research process, from its theoretical underpinnings to the collection and analysis of data (Collis & Hussey, 2003).

In this study, semi-structured interviews method of data collection and scrutiny of documents were utilized. The researcher collected data using a semi structured interview, with predetermined questions and with openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given by the participants (Robson, 2002; Kvale, 1996). Patton (2001) describes interviews as a data collection technique which allows the researcher to enter into the other person's perspective. The main objective of this study is to establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD interventions therefore, interview is the best data collection technique chosen for this study. Patton (2001) further indicates that the quality of the data collected in an interview depends largely on the skills of the interviewer. The researcher utilized documents because they have useful data and the existence of the documents is independent of the research study and is not affected by the researcher (Merriam, 1998), unlike interviews.

The methodology used in this research was summarized into a framework to ensure that there was a logical relationship between each research objective, the

data collection method, the sampling method and data analysis method. Table 3.2 below displays how data was collected in this study.

Table 3.2 – Research framework

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	DATA COLLECTION METHOD	SAMPLE	DATA ANALYSIS METHOD	PHASE OF RESEARCH
To establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention	Face to face semi-structured interviews.	Purposeful sample of 20 employees with different ranks	Thematic analysis aimed at deriving the perception of the participants.	Phase 1
	Review of reports, circulars and policies / legislations.	Purposeful sampling of reports, circulars and policies / legislations	Topic analysis in relation to the research problem	Phase 2
To develop an HRD auditing process	Data collected from interviews and the literature review conducted.	None	Synthesis of thematic analysis.	

Source: Own construction

It is common in qualitative research for the process to evolve and change during the research study (Creswell, 2009). In this study minor changes were made. The number of participants was increased from 8 to 20 (see section 3.4.1 below). In interpretive research, " the number of participants does not determine the significance of the research but rather the information richness of the cases selected" (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 537) but multiple cases were selected since evidence from multiple cases is "often considered more compelling" (Yin, 2009, p. 53) and provide "a valid basis for understanding" (Levy & Powell, 2005, p. 7). Even though literature was reviewed before the start of data collection, further literature was referred to after data analysis in order to understand key elements that the researcher found in the data.

3.4.1   Sampling

Saunders *et al.* (2007, p. 226) argue that "the issue of sample size is ambiguous…there are no rules". The participants for phase one are presented in the next section followed by the presentation of phase 2 where reports, journals and policies / legislation were utilized as sources of data.

Phase 1 - Participants

The population is simply every possible case that could be included in a study. When the population is too large to undertake a census, then a representative group which is a sample needs to be selected. David and Sutton (2004) argue that as long as the sample is representative of the population, surveying only a fraction of the entire population can still yield results that would be found if the entire population was surveyed.

The population for this study was derived from the Mpumalanga Department of Education. The researcher initially planned to interview 8 participants – 2 managers, 3 internal auditors and 3 HRD Practitioners. However, as the

interview progressed it became clear that there is a need for additional participants to be interviewed. The researcher ended up interviewing 20 participants. The entire sample consisted of 3 managers, 3 internal auditors, 2 educators, 2 school principals, 2 circuit managers, 2 curriculum implementers, 2 unionists and 3 HRD practitioners from the regional offices of the Department and the provincial office. A member of parliament was also included as part of the sample. The researcher identified, approached and interviewed the research participants face to face.

Participants were selected according to purposeful and criterion-based sampling, while striving for maximum variation within those criteria choices (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Purposeful sampling is the dominant strategy in qualitative research. Purposeful sampling seeks information-rich cases which can be studied in depth. There are sixteen types of purposeful sampling. These include among others extreme or deviant case sampling; typical case sampling; maximum variation sampling; snowball or chain sampling; confirming or disconfirming case sampling; politically important case sampling; convenience sampling; and others (Patton, 1990, pp. 169-183). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the most useful strategy for the naturalistic approach is maximum variation sampling. This strategy aims at capturing and describing the central themes or principal outcomes that cut across a great deal of participant or program variation.

A purposeful (convenience) method of sampling was used in this study. Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that "one wants to discover, understand, gain insight; therefore one needs to select a sample from which one can learn the most" (Merriam, 1988 p. 48). The participants were selected from various categories of MDoE workforce whose opinions and ideas are particularly appropriate to the study.

The researcher made use of purposive sampling because it permitted her to select the interviewees whose qualities or experiences permit an understanding of the phenomena in question, and are therefore valuable. This is regarded as the strength of purposive sampling. It is for this reason purely, that the researcher has ended up interviewing 20 employees of MDoE. This sample size is quite in keeping with the nature of qualitative data. LioBondo-Wood and Haber (1998) argue that results based on a small sample (under 10) tend to be unstable so for this reason and other reasons the researcher ended up interviewing 20 participants.

One justification for using the non-probability purposive sampling is that it stems from the idea that the research process is one of discovery rather than testing of hypotheses. It is a strategy where Lincoln & Guba (1985) describe as 'emergent and sequential'. Almost like detective where the researcher follows a trail of clues, which leads the researcher in a particular direction until the questions have been answered and things can be explained (Robson, 1993). In selecting participants, the researchers were mindful of Miles and Huberman's (1994) four considerations: the setting (where the research will take place), the actors (who will be interviewed), the events (what the actors will be interviewed doing), and the process (the evolving nature of events undertaken by the actors within the setting).

The researcher realized that most of the employees of the MDoE met the criterion to be sampled as participants. She adopted a simple random sampling method for managers, HRD practitioners, Internal auditors and Circuit Managers because they were few. Neuman (2000, p. 203) states that "in simple random sampling, a researcher develops an accurate sampling frame, select elements from the sampling frame according to a mathematically random procedure, then locate the exact element that was selected for inclusion in the sample". The researcher wrote the names of the managers, HRD practitioners, internal auditors and Circuit Managers on pieces of paper and mixed them drawing a

sample. The school principals, unionists, educators were conveniently approached by the researcher during the MDoE gatherings and meetings. The MP was approached during the Budget Vote speech which took place on the 14th of May 2010 at Nelspruit.

Phase 2 – Reports, circulars and policies / legislations

The purpose of sampling reports, circulars and policies / legislations was to augment and verify the information given by the participants. In addition, these sources were scrutinized and utilized as additional data sources to support the themes, patterns and emerging concepts that were derived from the interviews. The researcher perused them some before and some after the interview to confirm what the participants have indicated. The period which they were checked ranged from 2000 to 2011 because the interviews were finalized in June 2011.

The documents sampled included the following:
- The Draft Internal audit strategy.
- The MDoE Strategic Plan
- The Annual Report 2009/2010 and 2010/2011.
- An arc file containing the Skills Development Act, Public Finance Management Act, bursary policy and the MDoE training policy.
- The HRD Strategy vision 2015
- The HRD strategy vision 2030
- An arch file containing Departmental Circulars
- An arc file containing Training Committee invitations to meetings, minutes and attendance registers.
- An arc file containing lists of employees identified to attend training workshops.
- An arc file containing information regarding bursary administration in the MDoE.

3.4.2 Data gathering method

"To answer some research questions, we cannot skim across the surface. We must dig deep to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon we are studying. In qualitative research, we do indeed dig deep; we collect numerous forms of data and examine them from various angels to construct a rich and meaningful picture of a complex, multifaceted situation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 133).

In this study data flowed primarily from the interviews conducted with research participants who were familiar with human resource development processes and internal auditing processes in the Mpumalanga Department of Education. HRD practitioners, school principals, circuit managers, curriculum implementers, educators, unionists and managers were able to provide information regarding HRD and internal audit from various perspectives, and internal auditors were able to provide information regarding internal auditing in HRD. The MP was able to provide information regarding HRD and internal auditing from a broader sense. They were all able to provide information on the solicited areas in the best way possible. All participants held post matric (grade 12) qualifications and had at least 3 years' experience in the specific field. Even though the internal auditors (participants) had experience in various fields, they were specifically interviewed for Human Resource Management audit. In terms of the grounded theory perspective, the participants' socio-demographic features, their positions in their respective organizations, the nature of their posts, and the number of years' experience in the particular field is regarded as significant because it influences and shapes the participants' perspective.

Data for phase 1 was gathered by the researcher through semi-structured interviews. The face to face interviews were conducted between September 2010 and June 2011 with the twenty two interviewees. This study acknowledges the strengths of the interviews and agrees with Olsen (1994) who indicated that if

you want to know something about people's activities, the best way of finding out is to ask them.

Data-gathering is a subtle process that needs to be properly managed. In reality, the quality of research results is directly dependent on the data-gathering process used. There are several data collection techniques for qualitative research but, for Grounded Theory purposes, the researcher deemed it necessary to give more weight to field notes, interviews, and documents. Charmaz (2006) advocates for a data-gathering method that would allow researchers to view the researched phenomena in the same way as participants in the research area see it. These data gathering techniques can be changed during the research process to suit events occurring in the field. Data-collection methods should be chosen in such a way that the appropriate data that effectively answer the research questions can be obtained. As the process of data collection progressed, the researcher transcribed, code and analyze specific portions of the data, a process called theoretical sampling. Theoretical sampling is done in an attempt to reach theoretical saturation and density in the generated theory (Glaser, 1992).

The researchers constantly modified the data-gathering process as and when the study progressed (Trochim, 2010). This allowed the researcher to direct and redirect the interview questions to get relevant data that could answer the research questions. This was in response to the changing environment and the understanding of the researcher. In fact, the researcher came to have a distinctive perspective of the research problem as the research progressed. Data-gathering is a very delicate process that needs to be managed. In reality, the quality of research results is directly dependent on the data-gathering process used. There are several data collection techniques for qualitative research but, for this research, it is important to give more weight to field notes, interviews and document sampling.

Collis and Hussey (2003) indicate that there is a variety of ways in which one can collect data for research. The nature of data dictates the methodology. If data is verbal, the methodology is qualitative and if it is numerical, the methodology is quantitative (Leedy, 1993). The researchers have several methods of collecting data. The methods range from interviews to direct observation for the analysis of documents and personal experience (Dezin & Lincoln, 2005, De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2005). In this study, the researcher applied qualitative procedures. The researcher collected data using semi structured interview, with predetermined questions and with openness to changes of sequence and forms of questions in order to follow up the answers given by the participants (Robson, 2002; Kvale, 1996).

Qualitative research offers the researcher an opportunity to explore participants' values, beliefs, and perspectives from their vantage point (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In this study, the researcher chose the qualitative approach because it offers flexibility and spontaneity. The flexibility in this regard is to be in line with a goal of qualitative research of generating explanatory theory and to create understanding. The research process allows for the emergence of relational concepts and patterns, so the process is both interpretative and inductive (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The researcher collected open-ended, emerging data with the primary aim of developing themes from the data (Creswell, 2003).

After the initial 8 interviews, the door was opened for other participants. The people interviewed included educators, school principals, circuit managers, curriculum implementers and unionists. This is a recommended approach to data-gathering which started with respondents with a general, all-round understanding of the area under study (Mavetera & Kroeze, 2009). This technique helped the researcher to have a larger base of categories of concepts that can be focused on at later stages. As the basic framework of the theory is generated, participants from different areas within MDoE were interviewed to increase the theoretical saturation of the generated theory.

The interviews were semi-structured where a questionnaire was prepares from the literature review conducted. The interview questionnaire was designed to be exploratory and non-directive and the manner in which questions were asked varied depending on the field of expertise of the interviewee. In this study, semi-structured interviews asking open-ended questions was used to allow the participants to communicate their perceptions about the HRD intervention their own words without restrictions. The semi- to non-structured interviews gave participants room to speak freely and also allowed the interviewer to follow participants' leads into novel and unexpected areas as the conversations progressed. The interviews took place at the participants' offices and averaged about 45 minutes to 1 hour depending on the factors such as brevity of responses and depth of reflection by the interviewee. Data was also extracted from Departmental documents. The researcher's intention to use additional data sources was to support the themes, patterns and emerging concepts that were derived from the interviews. Data was also gathered by means of note-taking by the researcher (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006), as well as tape recording.

The research problem was explained to each interviewee to enable them to express their perceptions freely in their own words and to answer specific question which were on the interview questionnaire. The interview questionnaire is attached as **Annexure C.** The order of questions varied to suit the flow of responses from the interviewee and to avoid duplications where the interviewee had already answered or discussed the subject under another question.

The researcher took an insider role, and therefore the interviews became highly interactive discussions in many cases rather than a simple non-directive interview. The researcher sometimes challenged the interviewee on his or her responses and in other cases adopted a supportive, encouraging role, both stances aiming at extending the interviewee's reflections. An emergent strategy of data collection was also used to some extent, in that where early interviews

had yielded some emerging themes; these themes were tested in the later interviews.

Trustworthiness of data was addressed through personal knowledge of the stature of the participants. Data was treated as valid for each individual interviewee and analyzed accordingly. The researcher's depth of experience in the field of human resource management and development also allowed for follow-up questioning during the interviews where an answer was unclear or appeared to be off the point.

3.4.3   Research procedure

In this study, participants were contacted by email and by telephone to request their participation and interviews were set up at the participants' workplace. Most of the participants were available for the interviews during working hours, lunch time and after working homes. Marshall and Rossman (2006) have suggested that the researcher should carefully consider the rationale for why a specific setting is appropriate for the conduct of the study, considering what characteristics are particularly unique and compelling that will inform the study. In this study, the researcher chose the participants' workplaces in order to afford them the benefit of remaining in their work setting to speak if they so choose, and be able to reference work-related resources that can assist during the interview. Only one candidate could not be available for interview during office hours because of work related matters. The interview was rescheduled and the researcher interviewed her at her home.

Access to the research setting was undertaken by obtaining permission from highest levels of authority. This authority was vested in individuals who were able and willing to make the research setting accessible to the researcher and are regarded as gatekeepers by Bogdan and Biklen (2003). Data was also extracted from Departmental documents. The researcher's intention to use additional data

sources was to support the themes, patterns and emerging concepts that were derived from the interviews. Data was also gathered by means of note-taking by the researcher (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006), as well as tape recording.

A basic decision going into the interview process is how to record interview data. Whether one relies on written notes or a tape recorder, appears to be a matter of personal preference. For instance, Patton (1990, p. 348) says that a tape recorder is "indispensable" while Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 241) "do not recommend recording except for unusual reasons". They base their recommendation on the intrusiveness of recording devices and the possibility of technical failure. Recordings have the advantage of capturing data more faithfully than hurriedly written notes might, and can make it easier for the researcher to focus on the interview. It also enables more information to be gathered than written interviews. Thus, the researcher used tape recorder and field notes to record the interview data. The participants were reassured of confidentiality of their responses in order to ensure a meaningful outcome of the study. Permission to audio-record the interviews were given by all the interviewees and supported by notes in case of equipment failure (Myers, 2009).

The goal of any qualitative research interview is to see the research topic from the perspective of the interviewee and to understand how and why he or she comes to have this particular perspective". As a result, qualitative research interviews need to have a low degree of structure imposed by the interviewer, a preponderance of open questions, a focus on specific situations and action sequences in the world of the interviewee rather than abstractions and general opinions" (Cassell & Symon, 1994, pp. 14 -15).

The researcher adopted the following excellent advice as offered by Bodgan and Biklen (1998):

- Pledging to keep your data physically well organised, develop a plan on how you will achieve it and ensure that you stick to your plan.

- Creating a back-up system. It is important to have hard copies of all one's recorded data put in a manual filing system to ensure that you do not lose valuable and often irreplaceable data should your computer become infected with a virus or be dysfunctional for some other reason.

- Safeguarding document. Qualitative researchers often make use of documents that contain confidential information; therefore they should ensure that their data is safely stored.

The researcher stored the transcriptions of the interviews in her office in a cabinet which is always locked and she is the only one having access to it and at home in a lockable cabinet. This safeguarded the anonymity of all the research participants. Field notes and transcriptions of taped interviews are considered to be the traditional means of recording data (Schurink, 2004a), and the researcher made use of transcribed taped interviews and field notes in this study.

It is important to transcribe the sections of your taped recordings that specifically address the concerns of the research. Furthermore, the very first interview was transcribed to obtain experience of what to transcribe in later interviews (Bodgan & Biklen, 2003). In this study the interviews were recorded with the consent of all participants and the tapes were sent to professional transcriber for typing. This was done in order to establish the trustworthiness of the transcripts as a fundamental component of rigor in qualitative research. However due to technical challenges, the researcher ended up transcribing the interviews on her own. The transcriber did not meet the deadlines including the grace period which was agreed upon with the researcher. The transcriber secured a new employment and indicated that she cannot carry out the task of transcribing the tape recorded interviews any longer. The researcher then printed hard copies for safe keeping

and also kept the soft copies safe. The tapes and hard copies were clearly numbered and stored in two separate locations (in the office at work and at home) in lockable cabinets to ensure sequence in which the interviews took place and for security reasons.

According to De Vos, *et al.* (2005), field notes are made by qualitative researchers of everything they see or hear. Schurink (2004b) believes that the successful outcome of a participant observation study in particular, but also other forms of qualitative research, are dependent on detailed, accurate and extensive field notes. In this regard the researcher has obtained meaningful information about HRD. The researcher has used both descriptive and reflexive method in collecting field notes in this study.

3.4.4 Data analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is a continuous, evolving and nonlinear process. All the data from the interviews and the Departmental documents were analyzed using qualitative data analysis method. Creswell (2009, p.175) stated that qualitative researchers use inductive data analysis where they "build their patterns, categories and themes from the bottom up by organizing data into increasingly more abstract units of information". Furthermore, Patton (2001, p. 433) also argue that "qualitative analysis ultimately depends on the analytical intellect and style of the analyst" and that even though many guidelines exists for analyzing qualitative data, applying those guidelines takes judgment and creativity. Therefore, the researcher must report the analytical processes as fully as possible.

In this study, the researcher utilized thematic analysis which is also referred to as content analysis by Henning (2004). Content analysis is also regarded as a flexible method for analyzing text data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). According to Hsieh and Shannon (2005, p. 1278), qualitative content analysis refers to "a

research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns". Mayring (2000, p. 2) defines it as "an approach of empirical, methodological controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, following content analytic rules and step by step models, without rash quantification". Patton (2002, p. 453) argues that qualitative content analysis refers to "any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings". These definitions illustrate that qualitative content analysis emphasizes a cohesive view of transcripts and their specific contexts. Unlike quantitative data analysis, qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words or extracting objective content from texts to examine meanings, themes and patterns that may be manifest or latent in a particular text. It allows researchers to understand social reality in a subjective but scientific manner.

The researcher agrees with Iacono, Brown and Holtham (2009) that qualitative analysis is conducted because of the observation that, given the human capacity to talk, the object of understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the actors is largely lost when textual data are quantified. This is the rationale for choosing qualitative analysis of data. Through content analysis, the researcher was able to classify all the material derived from the interviews and classify it into categories. From the coding procedures and analysis of the results, the commonalities and differences were found by comparing the text passages.

Qualitative content analysis enabled the researcher to analyze data during the early stages of data collection. What is interesting is that the early immersion allowed the researcher to move back and forth between concept development and data collection. Miles and Huberman (1994) states that the early involvement of the researcher in content analysis assists in giving direction to subsequent data collection toward sources that are more useful for addressing the research questions. In data analysis, it is important to differentiate between terms used by

the respondents and the technical terms that the researcher associates with the phenomena. According to Gasson (2003), this will reduce the bias that could be introduced into the analysis by the researcher's preconceptions.

The researcher, inspired by (Tesch, 1990) and also considering the research question of this study followed the following steps for content analysis:

Step 1:   Preparing the data

According to Patton (2002), the choice of the content analysis must be justified by what the researcher wants to know. The main objective of this study was to establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention; based on fact that that the interviews were transcribed by the researcher after realizing that the professional transcriber was failing to meet the deadline because of new employment; the researcher prepared the data on her own. When transcribing interviews, the following questions arose as indicated by Schilling (2006).

- Should all the questions of the interviewer or only the main questions from the interview guide be transcribed?

- Should the verbalizations be transcribed literally or only in a summary?

- Should observations during the interview (for example, sounds, pauses, and other audible behaviors) be transcribed or not?

The researcher acknowledged the fact that a complete transcript is the most useful and valuable, but because of the time factor, the sounds, pauses and other audible behaviors were not fully transcribed. The questions of the interviewer were not fully transcribed and the verbalization was literally transcribed.

Step 2:   Defining the unit of analysis

Weber (1990) indicated that defining the coding unit is one of the researcher's most fundamental and significant decisions. It refers to the basic unit of text to be classified during content analysis. Qualitative content analysis usually uses individual themes as the unit for analysis. An instance of a theme might be expressed in a single word, a phrase, a sentence, a paragraph, or an entire document. When using theme as the coding unit, the researcher was primarily looking for the expressions of an idea (Minichiello et al., 1990). Hence, the researcher assigned a code to a text chunk of any size, as long as that chunk represents a single theme or issue of relevance to your research question. Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) defines a theme as "a level of patterned response or meaning within the data set". In this regard the researcher captured anything important in relation to the research objectives.

Step 3:   Developing categories and a coding scheme

Categories and a coding scheme can be derived from three sources: the data, previous related studies, and theories. Coding schemes can be developed both inductively and deductively (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, the researcher developed categories and generated codes from primary and secondary data. The researcher generated codes from the literature review conducted.

Qualitative content analysis allowed the researcher to assign a unit of text to more than one category simultaneously (Tesch, 1990). Even so, the categories in the coding scheme were defined in a way that they are internally as homogeneous as possible and externally as heterogeneous as possible (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to ensure the consistency of coding, especially because the multiple coders were involved, the researcher developed a coding manual,

which consisted of category names and definitions for assigning codes, and examples (Weber, 1990).

Step 4:   Testing coding scheme on a sample of text

The best test of the clarity and consistency of the category definitions has been to code a sample of data. After the sample is coded, the coding consistency was checked, through an assessment of inter-coder agreement. If the level of consistency is low, the coding rules must be revised. Doubts and problems concerning the definitions of categories, coding rules, or categorization of specific cases need to be discussed and resolved within the research team (Schilling, 2006). Coding sample text, checking coding consistency, and revising coding rules is an iterative process and should continue until sufficient coding consistency is achieved (Weber, 1990). The researcher discussed the coding categories with the promoter prior coding the entire text.

Step 5:   Coding all the text

During the coding process, the researcher checked the coding repeatedly, to prevent rootless into an idiosyncratic sense of what the codes mean (Schilling, 2006). Because coding proceeded while new data continued to be collected, the new themes and concepts emerged and needed to be added to the coding manual.

Step 6:   Assessing coding consistency

After coding the entire data set, the researcher checked and rechecked the consistency of the coding. It is not safe to assume that, if a sample was coded in a consistent and reliable manner, the coding of the whole corpus of text is also consistent. Human coders are subject to fatigue and are likely to make more mistakes as the coding proceeds. New codes may have been added since the

original consistency check. Also, the coders' understanding of the categories and coding rules may change subtly over the time, which may lead to greater inconsistency (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Weber, 1990). For all these reasons, the researcher needed to recheck the coding consistency.

Step 7: Drawing conclusions from the coded data

This step involved making sense of the themes or categories identified, and their properties. At this stage, the researcher made inferences and present the reconstructions of meanings derived from the data. The activities involved exploring the properties and dimensions of categories, identifying relationships between categories, uncovering patterns, and testing categories against the full range of data (Bradley, 1993). This is a critical step in the analysis process, and its success relies almost wholly on your reasoning abilities.

Step 8: Reporting method and findings

For the study to be replicable, the researcher needs to monitor and report the researcher's analytical procedures and processes as completely and truthfully as possible (Patton, 2002). The researcher will report her decisions and practices concerning the coding process, as well as the methods used to establish the trustworthiness of this study.

Qualitative content analysis uncovers patterns, themes, and categories important to a social reality. Presenting research findings from qualitative content analysis is challenging. Although it is a common practice to use typical quotations to justify conclusions (Schilling, 2006), there may be a need to incorporate other options for data display, including matrices, graphs, charts, and conceptual networks (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The form and extent of reporting finally depend on the specific research goals (Patton, 2002).

When presenting qualitative content analysis results, the researcher should strive for a balance between description and interpretation. Description gives your readers background and context and consequently needs to be rich and thick (Denzin, 1989). Qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive, and interpretation represents the researcher's personal and theoretical understanding of the phenomenon under study. An interesting and readable report "provides sufficient description to allow the reader to understand the basis for an interpretation, and sufficient interpretation to allow the reader to understand the description" (Patton, 2002, p. 503-504).

It is essential to report that even though the researcher followed the steps outlined by Tesch (1990), she also adopted contingent approach to theme identification following what Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 82) described as a "theme" symbolizing "a level of patterned response or meaning within a data set", capturing something important in relation to the research outline:

- Firstly, some themes were identified in a data-driven way, that is, they arose from interviewees' answers to questions.

- Secondly, some were identified from a theoretical framework derived from literature review.

- Thirdly, some were identified at an explicit or semantic level, that is, directly from what the interviewee actually said.

- Fourthly, some were identified at a latent level because they only became apparent from an examination of underlying assumptions held by the interviewee.

The researcher interviewed each participant, explored and noted issues to explore with the following participants. This allowed the researcher to compare which of the early ideas were or were not later confirmed and also allowed a comparison of perceptions of various stakeholders.

Once the data had been gathered, the interview transcripts were coded firstly by grouping answers to each question onto an Excel sheet and then reviewing the range of answers under each column and finding other commonalities, each of which was then coded and given a column of its own. For example, of issues raised about HRD systems and internal controls were listed and then grouped into themes. Sometimes these groups were re-combined into a category and in other cases were split further.

According to Patton (2001), data description must be separated from data interpretation. In this regard, data were grouped into issues before attempts were made to interpret them. Since each interviewee 's response was deemed to be valid and with equal weight, the range of meanings made in relation to each question topic had to be reviewed to attempt to identify factors which might be giving rise to the meanings made and then an attempt was made to construct an explanation which encompassed all meanings. In other cases, the questions and answers gave rise to straightforward information which could be arranged and grouped into structured frameworks with little difficulty. In some cases some ideas were complex and required considerable thought and insight. In these cases, answers were analyzed in relation to various other answers and demographics to see if there was a pattern of co-variance.

Some of the findings prompted a further examination into possible theories and elements which were not studied in the literature review. In these cases, once an understanding of these theories had been grasped, the data was again reviewed by the researcher to see to what extent it fitted these theories.

Merriam (1998) indicates that the aim of the study is to make the researcher's conclusion convincing, that is, it must make sense, and the researcher does this by including appropriate amount of detail, of quotations and descriptions to paint the whole picture of the topic. As the qualitative data was processed, the focus narrowed to produce the answers to the research questions. However, as discussed by Creswell (2009), it is important in qualitative research to develop a complex, holistic picture of the issue because there may be many facets to the issue under study. Therefore that analysis of the data and major findings are outlined in Chapter 4 and interpretation of the major findings is in Chapter 5.

3.5   Conclusion

In this Chapter, the researcher presented a detailed description of the design, approach and methodology used in this study, so that if necessary, it could be replicated. The research questions were exploratory in nature in that the main objective of this study was to establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD interventions, and this led the researcher to choose an interpretive research paradigm, using qualitative methods. The exploratory nature of the research questions dictated the research design to evolve within a basic research design framework described in this Chapter. The details of sampling participants, data collection, data analysis and research procedure were described. The major findings will and be presented in the next Chapter.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF MAJOR FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter presents the major findings of the research study, derived from following the research methodology described in the previous Chapter. The main objective of this research was to establish the stakeholders' perception about the HRD intervention. The findings are presented predominantly in summaries of interview responses, with extracts from the interviews as illustrations where appropriate. The extracts are grouped together for ease presentation and to allow space to give sufficient quotations to represent a range of views. This research gathered an enormous amount of data, some of which were not directly related to the research questions, although of general interest in the field of HRD. For the sake of clarity and brevity, major findings presented in this Chapter, focus on data which is more directly related to the research questions.

4.2 Major findings

The interviews yielded considerable information about the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention. See **Annexure D** for additional details of the participants. They are referred to as P1, P2 and so on for the sake of confidentiality.

Many participants were able to articulate that the HRD interventions in place are not positively contributing to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the MDoE. Straus and Corbin (1990) indicate the importance of rendering the voice of the informants into the results and findings of research. As a result, commentary is provided in this Chapter on the process of the research in order to

understand the nature of the major findings. The main results that have been obtained are described and summarized, using tables and figures. The main trends and patterns in the data are also discussed with reference to the research questions. The application of credibility strategies and demographic details of the data are discussed.

The researcher selected the participants indicated in Table 4.1 below because they have been involved in one way or another in the HRD activities and their perceptions would be significant for this research. They were expected to have at least three years' experience in the government sector particularly the Department of education and be currently employed in the MDoE. The researcher made the assumption that the participants with a minimum of three years of experience would have had the opportunity for exposure to HRD interventions in the workplace. The three years' experience was with the exception of the Internal Auditors because they were targeted for their experience in internal auditing and not solely HRD interventions. The individuals were selected from various categories and various regions of the MDoE to enhance the diversity of the group, with the main criterion being that their experience was within an education field context. The interviews took place at their place of work during their lunch hour time and others after hours.

Table 4.1 - Profile of the participants

Category	Field	More than 3years Experience	Qualification
3 Managers	HRM &D	Yes	*
3 HRD Practitioners	HRD	Yes	*
3 Internal Auditors	IA	No	*
2 Educators	Teaching	Yes	Diploma Masters

2 Curriculum Implementers	Further Education & Training Band	Yes	Masters Degree
2 School Principals	School Management	Yes	Masters Degree
2 Circuit Managers	Education Management	Yes	Degree Diploma
2 Unionists	Organized Labour	Yes	Diploma Grade 12
1 Member of Parliament	Former Circuit Manager	Yes	Masters

The profile of the participants was not fully indicated because the researcher wanted to keep the identity of the participants anonymous. The profile of the candidates interviewed was 3 managers, 3 HRD practitioners, 3 internal auditors, 2 educators, 2 curriculum implementers, 2 school principals, 2 circuit managers, 2 unionists. All of them were in the employ of the provincial Department of education for at least 12 months. The MP had previously served in the MDoE, a head of Department, school principal and a circuit manager. The qualifications of some of the participants like the managers and practitioners were kept anonymous for the reasons of confidentiality because they can easily be identifiable as provincial Department of education has only 4 regions. Figure 4.1 below presents the educational qualifications of the participants. It indicates that 5 (25%) of the participants for this study hold a diploma as their highest qualification, 6 (30%) of the participants hold a master's degree as their highest educational qualification, 8 (40%) of the participants hold a degree and only 1 (5%) hold a grade 12 certificate as the highest educational qualification.

Figure 4.1 – The educational qualifications of the participants

Educational Qualifications

- Grade 12 = 5%
- Diploma = 25%
- Degree = 40%
- Masters = 30%
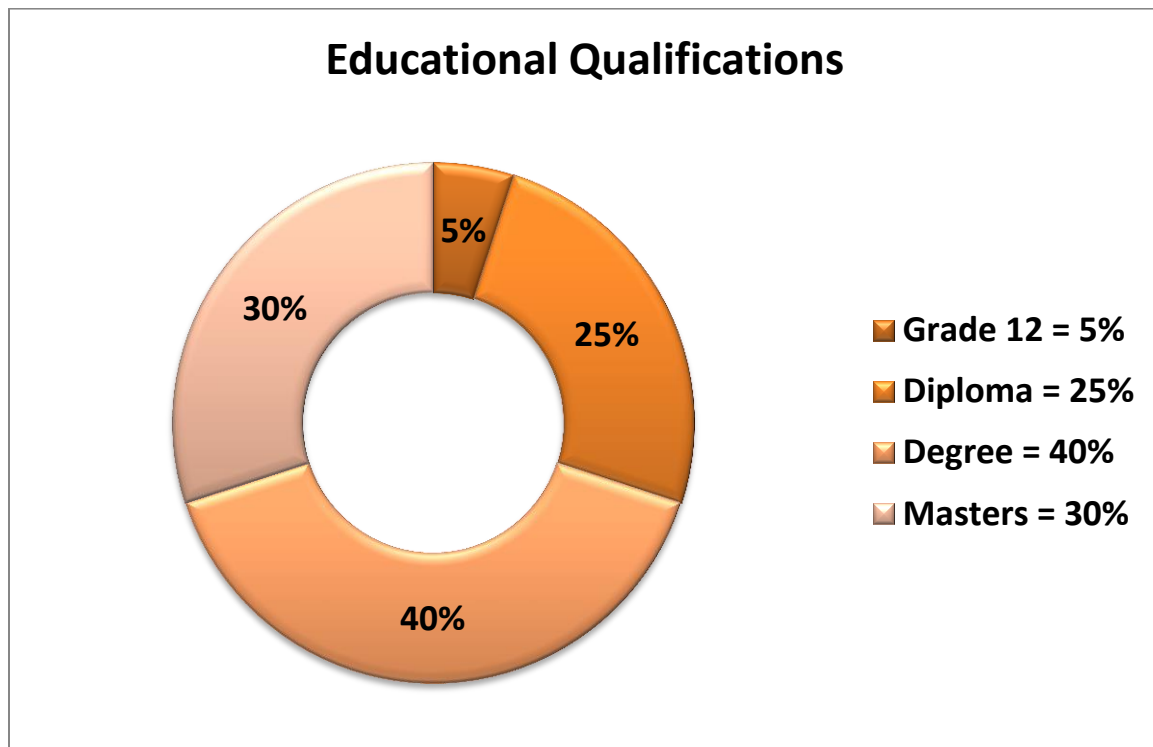
Source: Own construction

4.2.1 Research objective 1: To establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention.

In order to establish the stakeholders' perception the interview questionnaire (Attached as Annexure C) covered various contextual aspects even though most of them emerged as and when the interviews progressed. The main themes are outlined in the tables below as headings. Some of the interview responses are presented as excerpts and the researcher's comments are also outlined in each table.

Table 4.2 - Departmental mission, vision and HRD objectives

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P1	Hmm… the mission of this Department is to improve the quality of life of the South Africans by providing quality education to the learners. …HRD section is working towards achieving the strategic objectives because it is training the teachers or employees to carry out their duties of providing quality education to learners. The problem is that there are many challenges that make us not to reach our vision.	The participants' responses displayed an understanding of the vision and mission of MDoE as well as the objectives of HRD. They also highlighted the fact that the vision, mission and HRD objectives are not accomplished.
P10	I might not clearly articulate it as documented but what I know is that it is to educate the learners for a better tomorrow… for HRD is to equip us with other skills so that we can educate the learners better… This Department is not achieving because the pass rate is still very low.	
P14	…is to offer high quality education… HRD is a support function aiming at capacitating the internal human resources to reach the strategic goals of the Department. They go hand in hand but there is a problem of this Department of the inability to reach the strategic goals because of lack of commitment	
P18	I know the vision of the Department is to provide the best quality education for a better life for all…I know it but others don't know because it is not displayed or written in various native languages like isiSwazi, Xitsonga and Northern Sotho. This goes further because there are offices where the name of the Department for identification is not there, let alone the vision and mission statement. Many people know the vision by common sense	

Table 4.3 - Transparency in HRD.

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P19	Many things take place in the Department and the masses are not informed. We need to be open to one another. In the Department there are times when they recruit and grant bursaries without involvement of us stakeholders, important stakeholders for that matter. Management must learn to practice what they preach; Batho pele principles are always preached but not practiced.	The participants aired their concerns differently regarding transparency in the MDoE.
P16	Transparency is one of the values of this Department but you will be surprised when you hear that your educator is nominated to attend training somewhere without your involvement, in some cases the very employees nominated are not interested.	
P14	Transparency is not there in our Department. You can know the amount of your budget today and tomorrow that money you had is no more without informing you the responsible manager. The budget will be moved to other functions.	
P4	In actual fact the transparency of our Department is questionable…in most cases things happen at the government complex (referring to the provincial office), what would come to you as a practitioner will be the decision or the output for you to implement, when unions ask you then you don't have answers	
P20	Those who are not transparent are those who practice corruption of which in this Department something must be done	
P9	I say there is transparency our Department because when decisions are taken consultation takes place unless if it is a non- negotiable. Inputs from various divisions are sought; the managers at regional, circuit and institution might not be distributing information correctly.	
P6	Management still generally hides information, we are not supported at Head Office... the same takes place at regions, this is because Senior Management doesn't communicate	

Table 4. 4 - Organizational structure.

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P15	This Department is having a good org structure with sufficient posts to meet its objectives. But it is useless because at circuit level posts are not filled as and when employees terminate their services. It is frustrating the entire workforce and even us managers. I am assisted by experiential learners for administrative duties. Instead of them learning, they actually work unsupervised because of shortage of staff.	The participants share a similar concern that the posts available in the organizational structure are not filled.
P12	I can say this Department is good in developing but the problem is implementation. The structure was well developed and has got enough posts; it's just that they are not filled. When you ask … you are told that there is no budget to cater for the filling of the posts…	
P3	HRD is not prioritized… the structure is adequate and the only setback is that posts are not filled…. caused by lack of funds or the moratorium or the austerity measures that are effected….if the highly qualified and suitable people can fill those vacant posts, HRD can be ready for future needs but as for now I will say it is not ready.	

Table 4.5 - Effectiveness of HRD unit

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P15	Mmm…the way I see it, HRD is experiencing shortage of staff but vacant posts are there and this is the cause of many complaints from staff about favouritism, lack of proper records about who was trained and so on. The important thing which we should all know is that if people are overloaded they cannot perform very well…	Some participants say that the HRD unit is ineffective due to the shortage of staff / post not filled,
P2	HRD seem to be ineffective because there are managers who arrange training without informing HRD practitioners. Some of the incidences happen because the roles and responsibilities of line	

	managers are not clearly outlined and this causes HRD to appear as ineffective. I also believe that the high vacancy rate is the cause of high work overload.	others say it is due to HRD staff incompetency, and are saying despite the shortage, HRD is effective.
P19	High vacancy rate of this Department has been a concern for decades. It is discussed from the chamber. Everybody knows. I don't know for how many times this matter has been raised. The employer always gives a reason of insufficient funds. When it is like this how do we then expect HRD to function well? In our region there was only one person for a long time working alone in HRD, it is only now that another one came in. That is why I can say HRD unit is not effective.	
P10	HRD unit is not effective. The training officers are just occupying posts, they are not having skills and competencies to render HRD services.	
P17	What do you expect when you place a person without capacity in a post? Definitely you will get negative results. These people are expected to capacitate us, but they need capacity building themselves.	
P3	I would say HRD unit is effective regardless of that most of the units are under staffed.	
P9	This Department is progressing because HRD is playing its role when it comes to human resource development. Officials are sent for training, employees are inducted and orientated, and bursaries are allocated above all ministerial priorities are implemented. What more can you ask for?	

Table 4.6 - HRD staff competencies

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P19	According to me the Department is failing because most of schools there is no management. Some of the people hired are not competent. They were hired because of nepotism; mmm…they are their friends and relatives… Eeeehh…let me say the HRD staff is good in other areas but is lacking in others. I mean there are things that they do well for example the public service induction programme they are doing is accommodating everyone. Again, I know the Department is aware and as a result the Department get trainers from outside to come and train the workforce for other programmes which HRD practitioners cannot render.	The participants indicated that the HRD staff is competent to render Departmental / in-service training programmes only.
P3	They (the HRD staff) are competent to can render training such as in-service training. Some HRD practitioners were sent for train the trainer workshops, assessor and even moderators. This is the best the Department can do. There are interventions programmes which practitioners cannot be able to train that is why external service providers are invited to render training on accredited courses. Some are qualified but others are not.	
P5	Not all HRD staff is trained as trainers…but some were trained by SAMDI now called PALAMA. Those are qualified and competent. I do not have the exact number... Yes, the HRD practitioners are suitably qualified….	
P9	I can say they are fine… they are competent enough to do what is expected of them. I know they have conducted public service induction workshop remarkably so. My staff came back from the workshop happy. They were actually even boasting about what they have learned.	
P4	…these people (HRD staff) are competent. They are qualified….	

Table 4.7 - Participation of HRD practitioners in strategic planning.

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P3	… as long as you are not a manager you will not be invited to a strategic planning meeting. This negatively affects us as production workers within HRD… we feel undermined. The problem is that the Department does not realize the value of HRD unit because without appropriate training and development of employees you cannot achieve the strategic objectives.	HRD practitioners are not participating during the strategic planning process.
P4	To be honest, I was never invited to a strategic planning meeting or any other serious meeting for that matter unless when my manager is not around. Mind you, the manager is managing other HRM sections as well and the knowledge of HRD is limited unlike if it is me attending because I am hands on. Mmmm… sometime I think that in this Department if you are not occupying a manager position you are not important.	
P14	…considering the importance of HRD as a unit, the practitioners should form part of the team that discuss and develop the strategic plan. According to me HRD is very much important for strategic planning.	
P6	There is no need to include HRD practitioners for strat plan, the important thing is to have the unit represented.	
P13	If we are to single out HRD practitioners, we will be wrong because the practitioners in other sections will want to be part of it.	
P1	The manager represents the unit which means that is enough.	
P18	We must be fair and treat people equally guard against favouritism, how do they differ with others?	
P9	It won't be a crime to take them along, if they deem it necessary. Maybe it will change the focus and priorities of the Department considering that they significantly contribute to the core function of the Department.	

Table 4.8 -   Organizational culture

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P4	Huh… the culture is not good. A person from outside, let me say private sector may not want to join us because of things like bad publicity on the newspapers, the lack of stability because top management is always changing, mmm…there are many things like the bad grade 12 results shows that something is wrong somewhere, stealing of exam papers, dishonesty, and many more actually the values of the Department are not adhered to. When coming to a culture of lifelong learning and development … mmm… many people want the Department to grant them bursaries before they could register which is not possible…	The participants indicated that the culture in MDoE is not good nor encouraging learning and development.
P6	HRD and management need to introduce a culture of continuous learning and development. Once that culture becomes effective in the Department, employees will know that training is for their own benefit as well.	
P19	The culture in the Department is not good because we do not have management. Let me say it again, there is no management in this region and if there is no management what can you expect? Obviously poor results. Take note, we do have school principals who are earning while they are not working. They have got businesses and they run the business during school hours.	
P16	We have a workforce that is branded by laziness and this laziness has infected some learners that is why they fail and it is ok with them failing.	

Table 4.9 -   Management style

Participant	Extract	Comments
P7	…in any organization, the style of management has an impact on the employees. Their happiness depends on the style of management. Whether they would want to terminate or accept counter offers depend on the style of management. In our Department I will say most of our employees are not satisfied or happy because of how the managers are managing them.	The management style affects employees performance, behavior, culture, values, and attitudes which in turn affect HRD practices.
P3	I would classify the management support on HRD issues to be 50% in that identification of training interventions is not properly done. There are people who get preferential treatment and the manager prefers to send them all the time for training. In addition to what I have just said some officials terminate their services by resigning or transferring out because of the way they are managed. Also let me say that the continuous change in leadership brings confusion at the ground. People work like they do not have a direction. The way employees are managed affect our section because we capacitate a person and that person goes back to the manager. If not given a chance to exercise what he or she learned, he or she then forgets about it and wait for the next training.	
P15	We are doing our best to manage and apply necessary corrective disciplinary measures to misconduct cases. We just need to be focused and everybody to play his own role.	
P19	How the masses are managed simply shows that there is no management. You can't have a sober manager who calls a person in the last minute like today for tomorrow workshop of about a week away from the poor educator's family kinds and husband for that matter. We also have managers who think they are clever yet they are immature managing our employees like robots, that is why we always have labour unrest which are not necessary and could be avoided if good and sober minded managers can be brought in.	
P2	Actually there are managers who are practicing liaises-fair style of management ,,,, in school X the principal is afraid of teachers and	

| | he doesn't manage at all and their employees work as they wish and there are no control measures or monitoring as a result of that the school does not perform well. ,,, but generally our top management autocratic management style which still makes some employees to be defiant. And those who cannot stand it take transfers to other Departments or institutions and others resort to unnecessary industrial action. | |

Table 4.10   -   Performance management and development system

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P3	…. the managers are afraid of appearing unpopular to some employees. They just give scores that qualifies some preferred special employees to get incentives even though they don't deserve… what a person is trained on is not always what is identified as a need in the PMDS	Performance management and development system is not implemented properly.
P10	….it is demoralizing to see that Manager X is rating official Y very high even though everyone knows that she does not deserve it. You find the person like me who is coming to work every day and recommended positive by clients is given lower ratings. I ask myself whether it is worth it to be committed and wok hard because you do not get performance bonus.	
P19	PMDS is a problem in this Department. if it was for me I would say we need to have a new system of managing performance. This one is not working. It is easily manipulated. Supervisors and managers are subjective when they implement it.	
P13	This one is a big challenge because my understanding is that it is about performance but people think of it as about money then people fight about it and strikes and so on.	
P8	The system is a good one. People are misusing it, they don't understand its principles and objectives. Starting from senior managers down to a cleaner. Remember, when you talk about PMDS you also talk about development which is training but hey… they are handled as two different things. That's where Mpumalanga	

	education Department lost it.	
P1	It is not all the time that you will find employees are trained according to their PDPs. Sometimes they are not linked or you find that what is on the skills audit differs with what is on the PDP.	

Table 4.11 - Legislations/ policies

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P14	There are some policies and procedures or directives that are not available, for example, skills audit and when other managers or unions ask you the procedure in black and white you become an idiot…. at times the higher authorities are not following the policies themselves and it frustrates all of us.	Some of the policies are available but not implemented
P17	…policies are not implemented because people don't want to comply. Sometimes they don't know what to do or how to do it. Others need training.	
P14	…mmm…the Department partially complies with the Skills Development Act. There is no monitoring of policy implementation	
P19	Policies are available to align the work of government, and for common understanding and interpretation. But in this Department policies are not correctly implemented. Monitoring and evaluation of the progress achieved in an effort to enforce policies in not done. As I said before, the reason is that there if there is no management.	
P9	…we all know that no matter what, policies must be implemented because they serve as a guiding tool for specific job or programme. Therefore, its implementation is non-negotiable. The same applies to its monitoring and evaluation. As managers we all know that. It is a challenge when other factors like shortage of staff affects policy implementation. I mean for things like segregation of duties. In our Department it is true some of the policies are not implemented and people do not conform not because of negligence but because of the circumstances like shortage of staff…	

Table 4.12 - Communication

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P3	Communication is a problem in the Department, from top to bottom. I mean the head office use to call educators for training without informing us by issuing a Departmental circular or memo and you find that we have already organized training at our level.	Communication is a problem in MDoE.
P15	There are no clear communication channels between managers and employees about HRD activities; you only hear that this employee went for training. No circular, if the circular comes, it is during the last minutes. This is a problem from the top management to us. That is why people are not happy with HRD activities because irrelevant people are trained because they are just picked by the supervisor to attend. What is funny is that those people who attend don't give report back or show off with their results that they have learned by improving performance	
P5	Disputes not properly resolved due to poor communication	
P2	This is a serious problem which we need to pay much attention to. Whether it is from the supervisor to the supervisee, from the principal to the teacher, the circuit manager to school principal, from the region and even from the head office. Most of the time information start by reaching unions before it comes to you the manager. Sometimes you find your superior communicating direct with you subordinate while you are there. We all need to improve	
P12	Training workshops are not fully attended because the information does not reach people in time	
P18	There won't be improvement of the services provided to clients if there is no communication. Communication is a long standing issue in this Department. As organized labour we raised it and even many disputes could have been avoided if communication was effective.	

Table 4.13   -   HRD systems

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P14	To be straight to the point, the HRD systems that are in place are not effective. Look at the skills audit process we do it every year but there is no improvement. This means that we must change it and find a way of assessing the needs differently. The problem is, we do the same things every year without change or improvement….The PMDS system is there but not integrated to HRD and not implemented accordingly. At least induction training is also there and is becoming better because of the new MIP (Mass Induction Programme) rollout.	The HRD systems in the MDoE are not integrated
P17	…the fact is that when a system is in place, it is used routinely every year, no one checks whether it is assisting or not, no one audits if it is yielding positive results or not. It's like it is becoming a culture. …like the skills audit for example, it was there since I can remember, we complete the forms every year but when training comes you are trained for something else	
P4	Really we need to improve. Discontinue others or introduce systems that will effectively contribute to the core function of this Department. it is true what we get from skills audit as gaps differ from what is in the personal development plan of the performance management and development system.	
P18	Looking at the current situation in the Department, there is a need for the Department to change, wake up and start to respond differently to the existing challenges by returning to basics that will ensure functional systems and the best results.	

Table 4.14   -   Unions

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P3	The Department has no problem of brining unions are on board about all the HRD activities. They are appointed in the Departmental training committee. The problem is that not all of them attend the training committee meetings as scheduled. The other challenge is that in most cases despite the Department's effort to involve them to participate in bursary nominations, interns recruitment etc. they do not avail themselves sometimes and at a later stage start to make accusations of unfair discriminations and nepotism….. to show that the Department is committed to involve them in all activities and to ensure that they are knowledgeable, a training on HRD processes was conducted and most of them attended.	MDoE is involving unions in HRD activities
P7	I can say the organized labour supports HRD activities because they are employees, and they are members of the training committee at the head office. They in most cases raise concern about the budget matters and question the criteria and the way in which employees are sent for training.	
P5	Unions are involved in HRD matters because we have training committees and unions are part of it, I would say yes, unions are exposed. Even though out of the four recognized unions only one is problematic, that is why in some instance training were disrupted by unions claiming that they do not know anything about that particular training.	

Table 4.15   -   Funding and resources

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P4	The budget is not enough for both training activities and other resources. HRD is not prioritized because during the year when new programmes or projects come for implementation, HRD budget is taken to cater for the unfunded mandates	The budget is insufficient
P15	HR should ask for enough funds to train all employees according to their needs	
P16	The money is not there, they only say money on paper but when you have to use it is not available you are not given permission.	
P13	You may find that money is available on paper but in reality that budget is already exhausted. How can you then buy equipments if there is no money? We have institutions that do not even have a laptop.	

Table 4.16 -   Monitoring and evaluation

Participant	Excerpts	Comments
P3	At the school level other managers don't want their people to be trained because they say they don't see the difference after training.	Monitoring and evaluation is not taking place in the MDoE
P16	It is demoralizing to see that the same people are sent for training in many areas while others never attended even one… you find that they go to training for areas which are not for them… when they are trained, they don't share with those who remained on duty.	
P19	HR should develop employees in line with the work that they perform, not to request the supervisor to send a person.	
P1	There is no longer the culture of continuous learning because of lack of budget to send people for training while there are red tapes that are in place.	
P12	the problem with our people nowadays is that there are those who despite the Department having spent a lot of money on them for training, there is no sign of improvement	

4.2.2   Research objective 2: To construct an HRD audit process

Various elements and viewpoints were raised by the participants particularly those who are at management level. These formed the basis for the construction of the HRD audit process. Table 4.17 displayed the identified topics leading to the HRD auditing process.

Table 4.17 -   Key elements of HRD audit process

Topic	Participant	Interview excerpts
Communication	P18	Get your house in order. Show us communication strategy or policy which is approved, the one which is not a desktop thing then you can talk to us about communication channels.
	P16	Our Department needs to improve communication. We have instances where we are blamed down here as production workers while decisions and circulars are issued from the head office.
	P17	I think it is about time we say no to being tossed to and from every time by a manager sited in a higher office who just decide to issue a list of officials today who are supposed to go for training at Stellenbosch a day after tomorrow.
	P15	When auditors are coming, I think it is Ubuntu to at least be informed as a circuit manager that expect visitors on such and such a date, not that you just see by then at your door step while already you have planned you day or week.

		Remember, they look at you to organize them and office or boardroom, and provide them with the files they will need for the audit, really it is unfair.
	P9	We must learn to be cooperative and be flexible, there will be times when a manager's leadership skills are tested to see how far can you go an extra mile to ensure that the Department doesn't incur fruitless expenditure, even if the directive came to you in the last minute.
Cooperation and leadership	P16	If our principals up there at the provincial office can show that it appreciates us as head masters at school level by consulting us or at least informing us in advance it will encourage us to work and manage our schools properly
	P12	This Department needs to acknowledge all stakeholders as equally important and work well with them all.
	P18	Get the Department in order from the very senior management at the province first.
	P10	Lead by example, zero tolerance to nepotism, fraud and corruption then we can say we have good leadership.
Stakeholder participation	P16	What makes our Department to fail is that not everyone is regarded as a stakeholder. If our management can consult with unions that is it, maybe because they are afraid of them I don't know, you can be a line manager but you hear the latest developments of your employer from

		the shop-stewards, that is why it is difficult for us to manage them.
	P19	No Department can go forward or succeed while it is leaving the stakeholders behind. You see we are the main stakeholders representing the masses so this Department needs us, organized labour must be consulted in everything the Department does so that we can support
	P3	Stakeholder involvement is a must it is one of the values of our Departments. It helps to achieve our mission and vision.
Legislations / policy review	P5	Some policies which are used now are very old and were never reviewed
	P13	The Department doesn't take us serious, when they develop policies, when it is still a draft they send it to institution in the last minute and we urgently make inputs, I tell you wont see a sign that your input was considered
	P7	I can say we need a platform where everyone will feel important, be happy for contributing to policy development or review.
Integration of systems	P4	The truth is systems in our Department are not talking to each other
	P2	We do PMDS for money only, well some of the colleagues are not willing to do it why, this system is a waste of time- you write what you want to be developed on, HRD will not have that information so that they can use it to send you for courses

	P8	HRD would issue skills audit forms every year, it will be a miracle when one is trained according to the information written on the skills audit
Review of organizational structure	P14	This staff establishment has been so useless, what is the use of having posts that are not filled
	P15	When you request for a creation of post you are told the powers lies with the MEC, in our sections we needed clerks but no posts
	P5	….vacancies are many, the organizational structure should be changed or reviewed to add posts in other units and reduce in another.
Implementation of auditor's report	P8	We make recommendations, thereafter it is approved by the executive authority no literal checking of the implementation.
	P16	I personally was queried regarding that but only to find that I never laid my eyes on the auditors report in the first place
	P1	It is not that we don't want to implement what auditors recommend, we are not in a position to because of shortage of staff. When they recommend for example segregation of duties and we realized the no staff to work as recommended then what to do?
Monitoring and evaluation	P18	No monitoring
	P12	This I am speaking as curriculum implementers, in some institutions when you arrive you realize that you are not welcomed by the attitude you

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		get from the school principal down to the educator.
	P4	In other areas there is, in others there isn't

4.3   Conclusion

The findings of this research have been presented in this Chapter. Various aspects of the topic were explored; the perceptions of various stakeholders on HRD interventions were outlined in relation to the research question. It became clear that in MDoE, the systems, structures, styles and policies are not comprehensively evaluated and these lead to poor performance in the Department. Some participants especially the HRD practitioners and internal auditors have clear views on how performance of MDoE can be improved. Some of the useful aspects raised by managers have been identified as critical for the construction of the HRD audit process. These findings will be further discussed and interpreted in the next Chapter in relation to the literature surveyed in Chapter 2 of this study. The outcome of the discussion and interpretation will lead to the presentation of the proposed HRD audit process.

CHAPTER 5

INTERPRETATION AND SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

5.1   Introduction

The major research findings of this study were discussed and presented in the previous Chapter. The research objective was addressed along with the related topics that emerged. Evidence to prove that the MDoE was performing poorly was also presented and the excerpts from the research participants' responses were also presented and analyzed indicating that the HRD intervention has no impact on service delivery.

This Chapter presents an interpretation and synthesis of the research findings and integrated the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Finally the proposed HRD audit process is presented.

5.2   Empirical findings and theoretical evidence

5.2.1   The vision, mission and HRD objectives

All the participants were able to in one way or another articulate the vision of the MDoE, even though the wording was not the same, the core of the MDoE is known. They were also able to relate the vision and mission to the HRD objectives. The researcher made an assumption that the vision of the MDoE is shared by all stakeholders but the issue of whether or not the MDoE is realizing its vision is a concern to many. A shared vision is the one that is clearly understood at all levels of the organization. A vision can be considered a shared vision if it has meaning for employees. All public institutions have vision and mission statements, but many employees are not committed to it because it is

not part of the organizational culture and as such, has no significance for them. Further, constant changes in leadership often result in new strategy and direction which affects commitment, standards and achievement of goals (Public Service Commission, 2007).

A well-developed strategy is the one which effectively expresses the mission statement and meets the needs of all stakeholders. Public Departments cannot accomplish their strategic plans if leaders do not know where they want to be after a period of time or what kind of organization they want to create. A strategic plan which does not reflect environmental realities like inadequate resources or the vision of the institution cannot proactively respond to public needs. Further, the lack of will by public leaders to implement strategies has contributed to poor service delivery. A case in point is the numerous cases of corruption in the tendering process by various government Departments (Dorasamy, 2010).

Managers and employees are occasionally searching for a purpose and sense of identity. There are moments where they want more than just pay, safety and opportunities to develop their skills. They want a sense of mission. In fact there are a number of functions that a mission may have in any organization. The internal and external function includes the following:

- To inspire and motivate managers and employees to higher levels of performance.
- To guide resource allocation in a consistent manner.
- To help balance the competing and often the conflicting interest of various organizational stakeholders.
- To improve a sense of direction.
- To promote shared values amongst employees.
- To refocus an organization during crisis.
- To improve corporate performance.

Mission, according to the Ashridge mission model (Campbell & Tawady 1990), includes an inspirational definition of what the organization is there for and the organization's strategy. It also includes its policies and behavioral standards, which define how managers and employees should behave; and the beliefs that constitute the organization's culture and underpin its management style. In the researcher's several years of working in the public service it was very rare, if ever, to come across a Department with anything approaching a mission statement of this type. It is obvious, however, that organizations with clear missions are clearer about who they are (or are not) and are therefore more realistic about their desired image. The Ashridge Mission model indicated below as Figure 5.1 helps to highlight areas of tension and potential improvement. Organizations should not fall prey to over-simplified missions.

Figure 5.1 -   Ashridge model
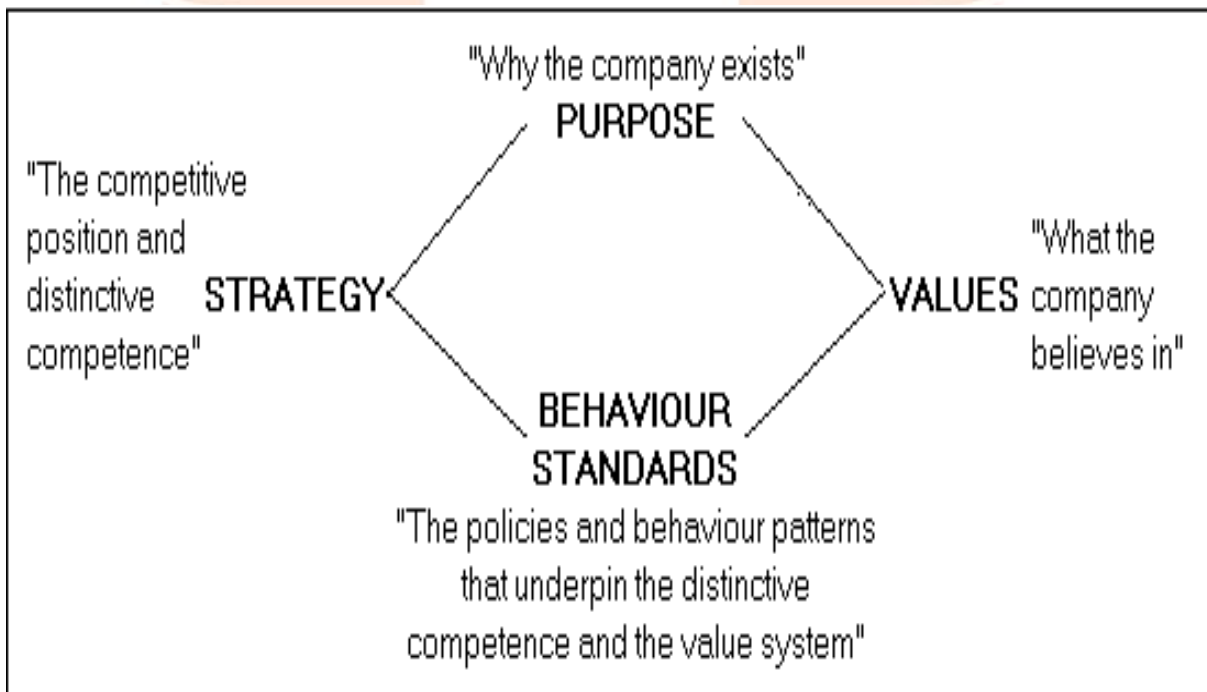
The MDoE 's vision and mission statement was available but not published in the various native languages, which means that other stakeholders who are not familiar with English may not understand what it is all about. This is what has been raised by a participant (P18) and also added that the vision and mission statement is not displayed in many strategic points.

This goes further because there are offices where the name of the Department for identification is not there, let alone the vision and mission statement. Many people know the vision by common sense.

When applying the Ashridge model to the Department of Education one would argue that not all the key elements are reflected in the MDoE's vision and mission statement. The purpose and values are clearly specified but the behavior standard and strategy needs to be revisited.

The proposed HRD auditing process could assist in determining whether the organizational structure, policies and systems that are in place in the MDoE are geared toward realizing the vision and mission of the Department. It will be assisting in realigning of the HRD practices in place.

5.2.2   *Transparency*

The participants indicated that there is no transparency in the MDoE. Out of 20 participants interviewed, 4 participants (20%) said that there is transparency in the MDoE. One participant (P20) indicated that in most cases where there is no transparency, there is corruption. Minister for the Public Service and Administration, Masenyani Richard Baloyi when calling corruption by its proper names (Service Delivery Review, 2011) indicated that the Transparency International 2010 Corruption Perception Index ranks South Africa 54th out of 178 countries. In the same index, South Africa is ranked 5th on the African continent, with Botswana occupying 1st position in Africa and 33rd position in the

world. Furthermore, according to the survey, the score below 5 indicates that we have a growing corruption problem.

Governments should embrace a new culture of participation, accountability and transparency. All stakeholders must be involved in the policy development process for support and ease of implementation (Van Dyk-Robertson & Abdullah, 2009).

5.2.3 Organizational structure

All the participants agreed that posts are available at MDoE but they are not filled due to unavailability of funds. Organizational structure is defined as a formal system of task and reporting relationship that controls, coordinates and motivates employees so that they cooperate to achieve organizational goals (Underdown, 2003). Structures and systems must reinforce the vision of the organization. Many Departments have rigid structures and systems with little flexibility to adapt to environmental realities. This distorts the alignment between structures and a shared vision. The Departmental organizational structures are required to be closely aligned to strategic service delivery goals, with enough flexibility for adjustment according to changing circumstances and priorities. This, in turn, implies a fundamental shift in the roles and responsibilities of human resource practitioners and components in that they need to provide Departmental management and line managers with professional advice and guidance on human resource management and development matters, and for ensuring that human resource management and development systems and procedures support the achievement of the strategic objectives of their Departments (Mintzburg, 1990).

Organizational structure is about the formal specification of different roles for organizational members, or tasks for groups, to ensure that the activities of the organization are carried out. Structural arrangements influence the efficiency of

work, the motivation of individuals, information flows and control systems and can help shape the future of the organization (Chenhall, 2003).

It may be argued that once particular structures are in place then decisions will be influenced by the opportunities afforded managers from authority granted to them and, perhaps, the political interests of those individuals. Thus, strategy might follow structure (Donaldson, 1987). Often the structural arrangements have important implications for information flows that may shape or bias the future directions of the organization (Bower, 1970).Organizational structure should be centered on the goals and objectives of the organization. Underdown (2003) states that once an organization decides how it wants its members to behave, what attitudes it wants to encourage, and what attitudes it wants to encourage, and what it wants its members to accomplish, it can then design its structure and encourage the development of cultural values and norms to achieve its goals.

5.2.4 Effectiveness of HRD

Seven participants (35%) indicated that HRD is not effective because most of the posts are not filled. The high vacancy rate within HRD makes the existing staff to be overloaded. Six participants (30%) say HRD is not effective because of incompetency of the HRD practitioners. The remaining seven participants (35%) say HRD is effective despite the shortage of staff.

In MDoE the HRD division at every region is headed by an Assistant Director who reports to the Deputy Director: HR Services. The Assistant Director has seven employees who should report to him/her. Out of all the 8 HRD posts in Bushbuckridge region for example only 2 posts were filled. The Assistant Director post and the other four posts were vacant. These negatively affect service delivery and would appear as if HRD is ineffective.

Generally the MDoE's organizational structure is inappropriate and needs to be reviewed. The structure seems to be generic and does not support the specific service needs of the Department and most of the HRD functions are centralized at the provincial office whereas the point of need is at the District offices and the Circuit offices. One of the key activities highlighted in the DPSA strategic plan for 2010- 2014 is to design a blueprint for organizational structures within the education sector. The aim is to achieve the government's key priority Outcome 1 of quality basic education.

5.2.5   HRD Staff competencies

Seven participants (35%) indicated that HRD practitioners are competent. All of the remaining participants (65%) indicated that the competency of the HRD staff is questionable.

The HRD strategy suggests four interventions, each representing a set of strategic initiatives which will further strengthen human resource development in the Public Service. Of these interventions, the following three will seek to improve the skills of human resource practitioners (Public Service HRD Strategy Vision 2015).

- ***Intervention 1:   Building the capacity of human resource practitioners.***

This intervention will set the foundation for a new era of capacity development where learning environments are created for HR practitioners to develop themselves. It will focus on areas such as leadership development and management strategies, e-learning, the promotion of learnerships, internships and traineeships and the fostering of partnerships with institutions for higher and further education.

- *Intervention 2:   Organizational support initiatives.*

The intervention is based on the premise that developmental activities depends on the extent to which pertinent organizational support structures are in place. It will focus on establishing targeted capacity development for individual employees that are linked to their personal development plans. Attention will also be given to align human resource development with the operational objectives of Departments and to ensure the proper management of information concerning capacity development initiatives.

- *Intervention 3:   Governance initiatives.*

This intervention embodies a number of strategic initiatives to add value in terms of oversight, strategic support and the promotion of professionalism in human resource development. These initiatives include the management of human resource development policies and planning, fostering effective monitoring and the promotion of learning networks.

The above mentioned interventions as outlined by the HRD Strategy are appropriate to capacitating HRD practitioners. However, in the Mpumalanga Department of Education efforts were done to implement the strategy but the challenge has been the budgetary constraints and the integrated planning of HRD activities.

5.2.6   Participation of the HRD practitioners in strategic planning.

Four participants (20%) agreed that HRD practitioners should form part of strategic planning whereas 16 participants (80%) are saying they do not see the need because managers are attending strategic planning. HRD staff is not prioritized in the Department. Some participants feel like they are looked down

upon and not invited for strategic planning sessions because they are not occupying high positions at management level.

Ehrlich (1997) indicates that a fundamental requirement of HRD is to add value to the organization. There are evidences to suggest that successful organizations, such as those receiving Malcolm Baldrige quality awards, have many innovative HRD practices (Zairi, 1998). Torraco and Swanson (1995) and Brinkerhoff and Gill (1994) agreed that linking learning and performance interventions and changing initiatives to the organization's strategic business goals and objectives is critical to the success of HRD.

Studies have indicated that achieving the ambitious goals inherent in the organizational vision pronouncements requires a serious thinking on human resource management issues as well as an articulation of the role of organizational values at all levels (Torraco & Swanson, 1995; Lawler & Mohrman, 1996). Unfortunately, a large majority of organizations have yet to recognize the strategic importance of HR and HRD people have yet to be recognized as partners in the strategic planning process (Sikula, 2001). While in the new economy human capital is the foundation of values creation, this most important asset is poorly understood and poorly managed (Norton, 2001).

HRD practitioners experience many problems concerning their less than strategic position, their low status and recognition within organizations and their lack of support from management – even if they adhere to management's problem definitions (Hytönen, Poell & Chivers, 2002; Poell & Chivers, 2003; Poell, Pluijmen & Van der Krogt, 2003).

Unfortunately, a large majority of organizations have yet to recognize the strategic importance of HR and HRD people have yet be recognized as partners in the strategic planning process (Sikula, 2001).

5.2.7   Organizational culture

Eighteen participants (90%) indicated that the organizational culture in the MDoE is not encouraging. It does not encourage continuous learning and development. The image of MDoE regarding the stealing of examination papers is also damaging the reputation of the Department. The HRD Strategy vision 2015's main objective is to develop a culture of high-quality life-long learning. The remaining 10% of the participants indicated that the MDoE is encouraging employees to further their studies and even grants bursaries.

All public institutions have vision and mission statements, but many employees are not committed to it because it is not part of the organizational culture and as such, has no significance for them. Further, constant changes in leadership often result in new strategies and direction which affect commitment, standards and achievement of goals (Public Service Commission, 2007).

The culture of the organization is very important because it contributes to the achievement and non-achievement of the strategic objectives. It also contributes to the attraction, retention and even repelling of staff. Most of the participants indicated that there is a lack of accountability and sometimes the responsibilities are not clear and the employees are not adhering to the values and principles of the organization. This makes employees to resign to find work environments with a culture of high performance. In its report on the management of poor performance, the Public Service Commission (2007) indicated work culture issues as one of the factors that contribute to poor work performance.

When considering six interrelated key elements identified by Scholes 's cultural web (Johnson & Scholes, 1999), it becomes evident that the stories told about the Mpumalanga Department of Education are not good and creates a bad image, the control system, the routines and the power structure are not attractive

and appealing to any outsider to join the Department. The organizational culture is regarded as the core process which in turn links to the HRD auditing process.

Organizational culture is unique to a particular organization. It is a complex set of assumptions, beliefs values and symbols relating to organizational realities and relationships. It is complex and difficult to measure. Every organization has a culture although it takes years or even decades to develop (Roberts & Hirsch, 2005). It is an unwritten code of conduct that governs the behavior, attitudes, relationships and styles of an organization. It is also described as patterns of shared beliefs and values, and knowledgeable means of managing an organization's experience. The culture manifests in material arrangements as well as the behavior of the members of the organization. According to Kreitner and Kinicki (2004), organizational culture can be defined as shared values and beliefs that differentiate an organization's identity. They listed the following key characteristics of organizational culture:

- Organizational culture is passed on to new employees by means of a socialization process;
- Organizational culture influences the behavior of employees in the working environment.

5.2.8   Management style

All participants (100%) agreed that there is a challenge with the style of management in the MDoE and it affects employee behavior and attitude. This in turn affects the operation of the HRD unit.

Management style must be congruent and consistent with the mission statement. Public leaders under the new dispensation are obliged to think in terms of principle-centered leadership because environmental realities like corruption and fraud necessitate adapting management style to organizational style. The management style of the Mpumalanga Department of Education has been

described by participants as being autocratic starting from the school level up to the provincial office level. This negatively affects service delivery and will eventually impact on the HRD audit process.

5.2.9   Performance Management and Development system

There was a consensus among all participants (100%) that performance management and a development system is not implemented properly in line with policy. All of them identified subjective assessment / evaluation as the problem. The other issue identified is the lack of understanding of the aims and objectives of the system.

5.2.10   Legislations / policies

Most of the participants (70%) indicated that policies are available but they are not fully implemented because of reasons like shortage of staff. Only 1 participant (5%) indicated that policies are not implemented because there is no management. Five participants (25%) indicated that the policies and procedures are in some cases violated by the superiors and it becomes difficult to enforce compliance while at the top there is defiance.

In order to effectively manage the huge numbers of employees in organizations, it is important for the organization to have streamlined and standardized policies as well as sound policies, systems and processes. These policies outline the criteria and guidelines that determine how the organization recruits, selects, trains, disciplines, promotes and remunerates its employees. Whilst there was significant progress in the Public Service in South Africa with regards to the legislative framework and development of policies, implementation remains a challenge (Public Service Commission Report, 2010).

The public service is to a large extent governed by legislations such as the Skills Development Act and Public Finance Management Act. It is important that managers and employees comply with the prescribed legislations governing specifically the Human Resource Development. These legislations and policies are rules and procedures designed to provide a clear structure for the organization. They are important because they enforce consistency, fairness, efficiency, establish rights/responsibilities of both employees and the employer and documents these rights/responsibilities and legal compliance.

The way that organizations have policies for employees' ethical behavior, customer service, or information security, they must also have policies focusing on employee training and development. Regardless of any specific focus, policies are promulgated by management to establish priorities and performance guidelines in specific operating domains. The word policy is used in this regard in a broad and generic sense to refer to a statement of goals, standards, and procedures that is expressed and adopted by the leadership of an organization because it represents the leadership's desired outcomes on an ongoing basis in a specific domain. Policies serve to direct the actions of managers and employees alike, functioning like standing orders for the members of the organization to help guide their decisions and activities on a day-to-day basis (Simon, 1997; Oster, 1999).

The Public Finance Management Act (1999) indicates that the accounting officer for a Department, trading entity or constitutional institution must ensure that the Department has and maintains a system of internal audit under the control and direction of an audit committee complying with and operating in accordance with regulations and instructions prescribed.

In an attempt to improve service delivery, delegates from the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) took part in the prestigious programme organized under the auspices of the Public Administration International (PAI)

Institution in London in the United Kingdom (UK) in June 2010. The programme is called "*Putting People First: the key to improving public services".* Based on comparative observations, experiences and lessons learned during the programme, it was realized that there are a number of existing policy vacuums and regulatory gaps that hamper effective service delivery in South Africa (Service Delivery Review, 2011).

5.2.11 Communication

Sixteen participants (80%) indicated that the Department does not communicate when it comes to training issues. They do not communicate formally in writing and it creates a challenge when other logistics such as transport should be organized. Communication is key to any organization (Schweiger & DeNisi, 1991). There are cases where information is not cascaded to employees at the bottom. The 2008/2009 Annual Report for the Department has also indicated poor communication as one of the factors negatively contributing towards the poor performance of the Department.

5.2.12 HRD systems

All the participants (100%) agreed that the HRD systems are not integrated. This makes the entire MDoE to be ineffective and not reach its strategic objectives. The participants made various references to the link between Performance Management and Development System and the skills audit. 2 participants made reference to the fact that they are not yielding positive results, therefore the HRD systems should be reviewed.

The issues of limited or lack of service delivery can be traced back to the lack of capacity or requisite skills within the Departments responsible for service delivery. There are more than one million people employed by the different Public Sector Institutions in South Africa (Public Service Commission Report, 2010), this

includes the MDoE. In order to manage these huge numbers of employees it is important for the organization to have streamlined and standardized policies as well as sound policies, systems and processes. The organization's HRD systems should be effective in order to meet the strategic objectives of the organization. Trevino and Nelson (2004) maintain that organizational systems must be aligned so that the entire organization is committed to a culture of efficiency and effectiveness.

The biggest challenge seems to be service delivery and productivity in various organizations and that gap analysis is not conducted. Organizations must create the skills inventory; compare the current state of internal audit capabilities with where they should be. With a gap analysis of current and future states, determine what changes need to be made to processes, skill sets, systems, and technologies in order to achieve Departmental objectives (PricewaterhouseCoopers' Internal Audit 2012, 2007).

Organizations should know the current level of systems such as Performance Management and Development System, Induction and Orientation Systems, a Skills Audit System. Pareek and Rao (1977) in their second report of the Human Resources system recommended that the personnel function should be viewed as Human Resources Function (HRF). They differentiated the HRD from other components of HRF and also integrated structurally and system-wise. Structurally the HRD is to be a subsystem of HRF. They also outlined a philosophy for the new HR system. They outlined 14 principles to be kept in mind in designing the HRD System. These principles deal with both the purpose of HRD systems and the process of their implementation. Some of these principles include:

- HRD systems should help the company to increase enabling capabilities. The capabilities outlined in their report include: development of human resources in all aspects, organizational health, improvements in problem

solving capabilities, diagnostic skills, capabilities to support all the other systems in the company, etc.

- HRD systems should help individuals to recognize their potential and help them to contribute their best towards the various organizational roles they are expected to perform.

- HRD systems should help maximize individual autonomy through increased responsibility.

- HRD systems should facilitate decentralization through delegation and shared responsibility.

- HRD systems should facilitate participative decision making.

- HRD system should attempt to balance the current organizational culture with changing culture.

- There should be a continuous review and renewal of the function.

5.2.13   Unions

Seventeen participants (85%) have confirmed that the unions in the MDoE are involved in various HRD activities. The MDoE to an extent of conducting training on HRD processes so that they can have common understood especially that they form part of training committees in various institutions. The MDoE is complying with the Skills Development Act.

Human resource development practices and activities must meet the needs and expectations of both external clients (the public and other stakeholders) and internal clients (Departmental management, line managers and the employees themselves). The HRD Strategy vision 2015 indicates that there must be willingness among staff and stakeholders to support the selected initiatives of the HRDS and all Departments must have leadership backing on critical initiatives. Stakeholder participation and support for the HRD auditing process is important because there will be a sense of ownership and commitment to the entire process.

5.2.14   Funding and Resources

Twelve participants (60%) indicated that the budget for training in the MDoE is always insufficient. Five participants (25%) said that funds are "completely not available". They referred to the fact that in many occasions the MDoE will allocate budget on paper but when you want to utilize it you find that it is not available. According to them it means that the money was never there in the first place.

Section 195 (1) of the Constitution, 1996 states that public administration must: respond to people's needs, promote effective economic and efficient use of resources, and maintain a high standard of professional ethics. Therefore, in order to ensure that human resource development and training is effective in the Department, it must be funded and resources must be made available. The HRD audit will assist in evaluating whether there funds allocated to HRD and the resources are sufficient.

5.2.15   Monitoring and evaluation

All participants (100%) indicated that there is no effective monitoring and evaluation in the MDoE. This means that there is no return on investment. The MDoE is spending money for training but no performance improvement.

The White Paper on Human Resource Management (1997) aims to change the human resource management culture in the public service; to develop a framework for human resource management; to put into practice human resources processes that need to be followed in the public service, and to implement the practices as well as monitoring and evaluation functions performed by the Department of Public Service and Administration as the custodian of this White Paper. Training will play a role in ensuring that performance assessments are used as tools to help identify strengths and

weakness of individual employees before embarking on actual training interventions and development at career counseling, mentoring and coaching aspects of the employee.
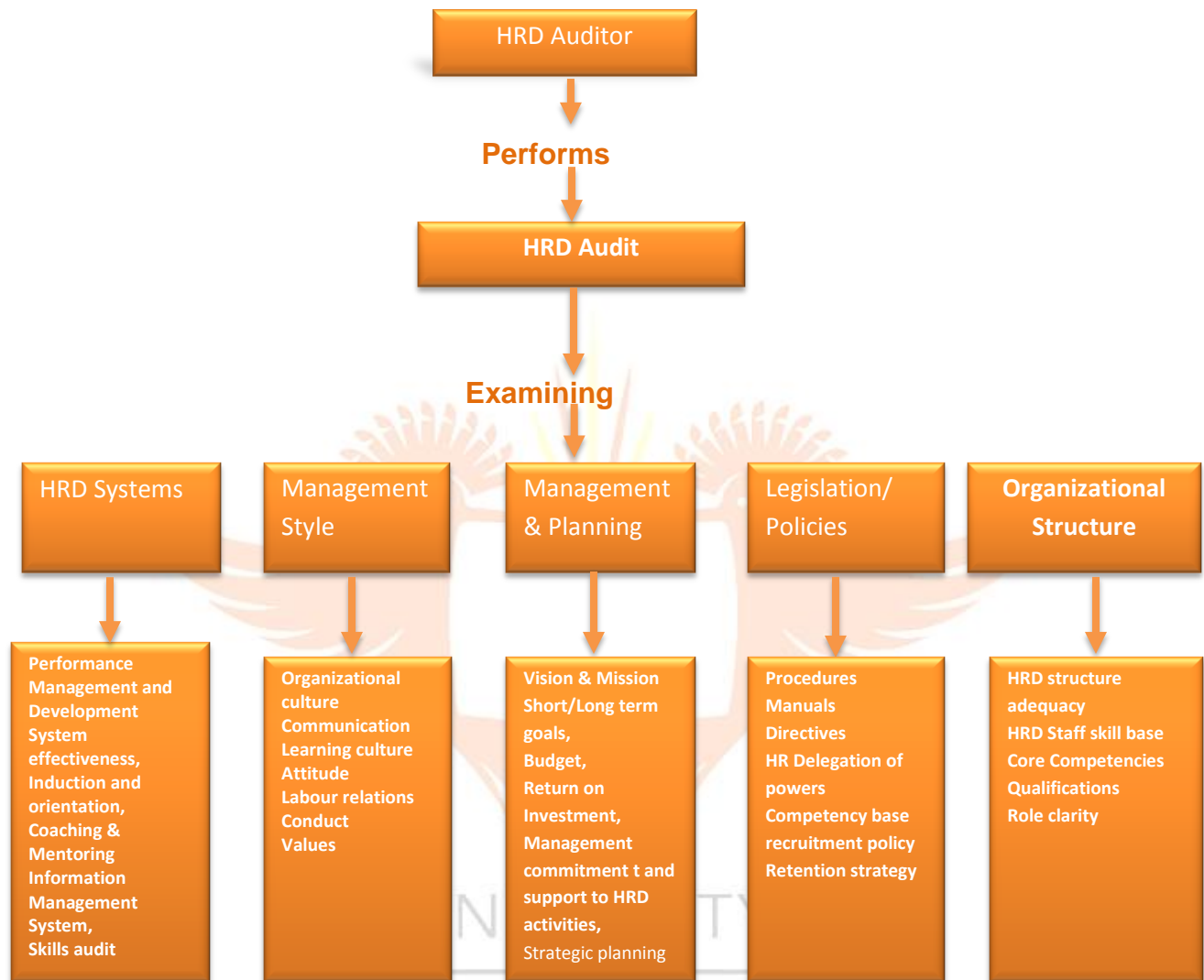
5.3   HRD audit process

HRD audit process should foster accountability and transparency. This process includes interviews, review of key documents such as strategic plan, policies, procedure manuals, etc. The critical component of the audit process is the engagement of the stakeholders and interviews with employees (Ezezika, Thomas, Lavery, Daar & Singer, 2009). This process must be comprehensive in order to be effective. Hence, the perusal of the organizational structure, legislations/ policies, strategic plans, etc.

The researcher constructed the HRD auditing process from the themes extracted during the data analysis. The researcher analyzed the different relationships between various concepts and reviewed them against the literature and Departmental documents until the HRD audit process was formalized. However, to construct the HRD audit process, the researcher started by creating a concept map that took into account the key elements within HRD. (See Figure 5.2).

It should however be noted that the elements included were identified during the interviews. The scope of HRD audit is strategically focusing but not limited to the HRD systems, management styles, management and planning, legislations and organizational structure. These elements were chosen because they are crucial to the success of the HRD audit in that they are closely linked to the organizational context of the HRD audit. The HRD audit could not exclusively focus on other areas within the MDoE because they were fully audited by internal audit. The researcher took this decision based on the challenges faced by HRD Practitioners and the suggestions made by the participants. The concept map in Figure 5.2 provides an overview of HRD audit.

Figure 5.2 - Concept map to demonstrate the scope of HRD auditing

Source : Own construction

Out of the concept map indicated above as Figure 5.2, the HRD auditing process (Figure 5.3) was developed. The researcher developed the HRD auditing process from the primary and secondary data. The secondary data such as the Department of National Treasury Internal Audit Framework (2009) provided the researcher with useful data about the key elements for consideration during the development of the HRD auditing process.

Figure 5.3 - HRD audit process
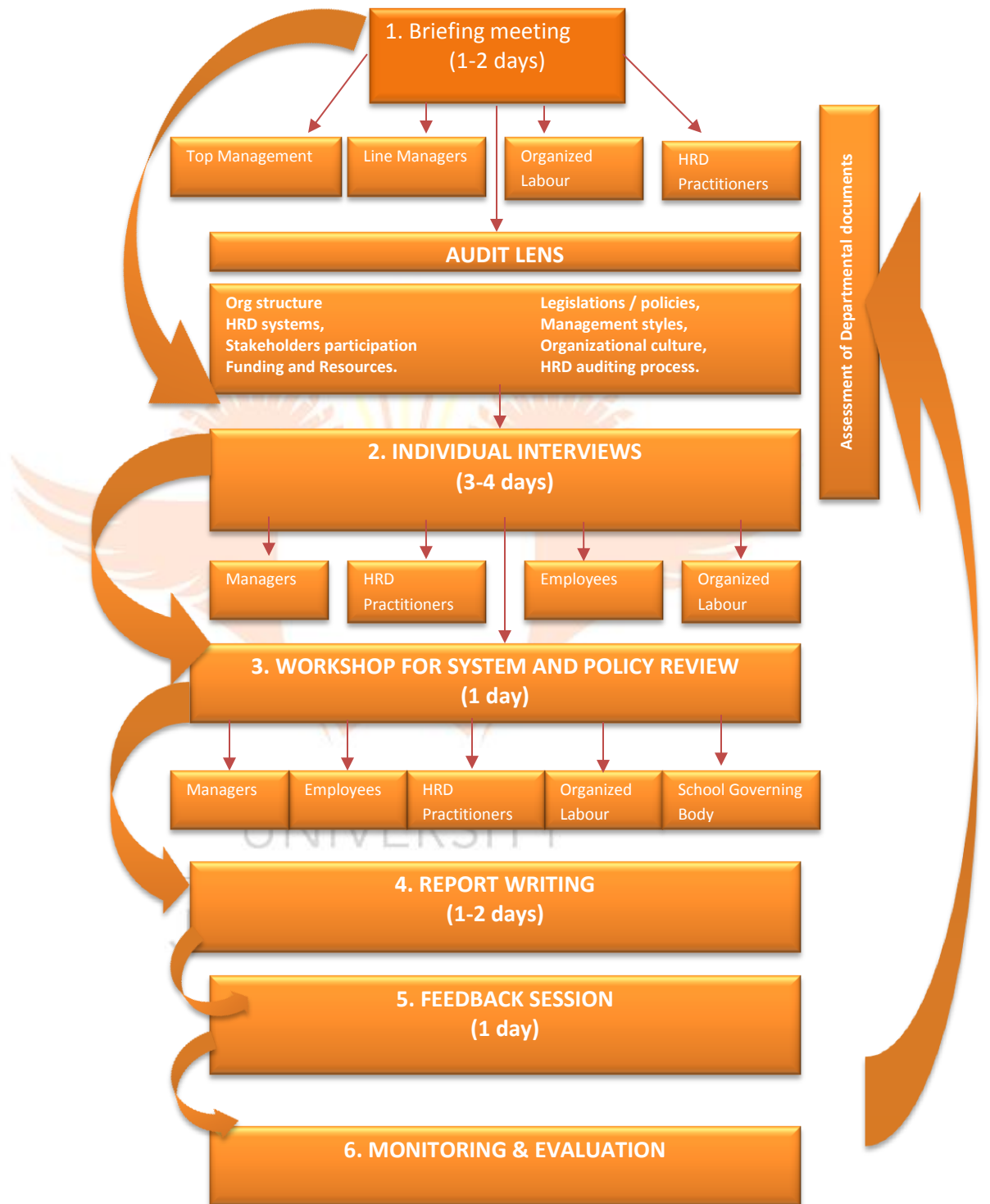
Source : Own construction

Figure 5.3 highlights the steps of HRD audit process which are to be followed sequentially. Depending on the time in which the Departmental documents are provided to the auditors, the assessment of the Departmental documents may begin in step 1 during the briefing meeting. The overall audit is expected to take between 8 to 10 days. The actual time will depend on the size of the Department or unit to be audited. The various stages of the HRD audit process will now be discussed briefly.

5.4   Stages of the HRD audit process

The stages of the HRD audit process indicated below have been developed utilizing data obtained from the literature review and the participants during the interviews where the researcher was establishing the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention. The researcher also customized the stages contained in the Internal Audit Framework: National Treasury Republic of South Africa (2009).

- *Stage 1:   Briefing meeting*

This stage is regarded as a planning stage which is aimed at securing a buy-in from the organization and to prepare as much as possible in time so that every day will be spent fruitfully. This is the stage where the managers, supervisors and all other stakeholders will be made to understand the benefits to be gained from the audit so that they can commit time and effort to assist and cooperate with the auditors. This is the stage where the HRD auditors will lay the foundation for positive collaboration by explaining the positive benefits of the audit. The auditors should secure agreement from the top management and ensure commitment to the audit process. This is the stage where the auditors indicate how the entire HRD audit will unfold from day one until the end.   The auditors outline and request all the necessary documents that will be required during the time of audit. The documents in this regard include the strategic plan, legislations / policies, procedure manuals, organizational structure and HRD systems descriptions. The

last part of this stage is to make logistical arrangements of the individual interviews and the system reviews workshop.

It is in this stage that the Department takes ownership of the audit results, hence the consultation and reporting lines during the audit. This stage should provide the basis for greater understanding of the importance and purpose of the HRD audit within the organization. This stage takes 1 to 2 days depending on the availability of Departmental documents provided to the auditors by the management of the organization.

The data analysis of this research displayed the fact that communication in the MDoE is a challenge. Therefore, in this stage of the HRD auditing process, the auditors should urge the managers, supervisors and all other stakeholders attending the briefing session to cascade the information discussed during the meeting to all employees. The other significant factor is to accurately highlight the purpose of the audit to all the stakeholders involved. It was discovered from the participants that there were instances where the head of the unit was not aware that the auditors will be coming to audit his/her section. As a result of that he/she could not provide them with information they required to conduct the audit. This stage of the audit determines the success of the entire HRD audit process.

- ***Stage 2:   Individual interviews***

In this stage, the actual audit takes place. Depending on whether or not the Departmental documents were given to auditors during stage 1, the assessment of policies, procedures, strategic plans etc. takes place. These will be able to give the auditors strategic direction of the Department. The understanding of the strategic direction of the Department will help to facilitate the interviews. However, this may not be a problem because the researcher recommends that the audit team should be appointed from within the Department. This is the stage where the auditors interview individual employees, managers, and organized

labour and HRD practitioners. The respondents will be asked questions covering all the audit lenses indicated in Figure 5.1. This stage takes 3 to 4 days to complete.

Although interviews can potentially be time-consuming, they have the benefit of providing personal contact with members of staff and it is often possible to collect more detailed information than from questionnaires. Interviews allow supplementary questions to be asked on the spot and thus offer greater flexibility in following up initial answers. It is through the interviews that informal information can also be collected, such as suggestions for improvement.

Interviewing is used as a conclusive method of obtaining evidence or confirmation after the perusal of Departmental documents. Prinsloo and Roos (2006) state that when conducting interviews, auditors should be armed with a checklist of the main points to be discussed, ask open-ended questions that will ensure a discussion, be courteous, be impartial and be seen to be impartial, ensure by a combination of tact, diplomacy and sheer perseverance, that all the information which is required is in fact obtained, ensure that interviews are not confined to the more senior officers , make sure that the interview takes place in private, where interruptions will be kept to a minimum. Random sampling in this regard is recommended in order to ensure that all combinations of sampling units in the population have an equal chance of selection.

In this regard the organizational culture becomes displayed to the auditors. The way in which the individual employee relates to the auditors contributes to the outcome of the audit. The way they relate to one another will also be picked out by the auditors. During the interviews 7 out of 20 participants (35%) indicated that auditing is a waste of time because the recommendations made are not implemented. This simply means that auditing is not taken seriously especially because the auditors would conduct the audit and make recommendations which will not be implemented. The other significant point which emanated was the fact

that if there was no proper briefing which is the planning stage then individual employees would display a negative attitude towards the auditors.

- *Stage 3:   Systems and policy review workshop*

In this stage the auditors facilitate a workshop where the current systems in place are reviewed. This includes the policies that are also implemented by the organization. This stage takes only 1 day. The auditors would have been recording all the data highlighted by the interviewees regarding the gaps identified and functionality thereof. In this stage all the key stakeholders are invited to ensure that the inputs are comprehensive. The auditors in this stage deal with a large group rather than individuals. The aim in this regard is to obtain from the employees, managers and other stakeholders a general understanding of the need for policies and systems review. Depending on the delegation of authority in a particular organization recommendation and approval of the policy and / or system review may be finalized and obtained during this stage.

During interviews of this study, the researcher discovered that in the MDoE there are policies in place but they are not properly implemented. Some of the policies were not available. There were also no proper monitoring and evaluation of policies. Whenever inputs are made for the review of certain policies, the inputs were not considered.

- *Stage 4:   Report writing*

The auditors collectively compile a report regarding all that transpired during the audit process. Recommendations from the systems and policy review workshop should be included as well. A discovery was made during the interviews of this study that the recommendations of the auditors were not implemented; the employees did not take the audit recommendations seriously. Therefore, during the report writing the auditors should not mix their words in order to enforce compliance. The action to be taken against those who do not implement the recommendations should be clearly stated in the report. In addition to the other

findings made by the HRD auditors, the framework attached as *Annexure E* should be used as a format for outlining the key HRD audit findings. The HRD Audit reporting framework was adopted from Prinsloo and Roos (2006). It contains the following key elements which must be clearly outlined by the HRD auditors:

- Cause (the management measure)
- Findings (Attributes of effectiveness)
- Effect (impact on service delivery)
- HRD auditor's recommendation

- *Stage 5:   Feedback session*

In this stage feedback is given to the top management of the organization for further communication to the rest of the employees and other key stakeholders. The recommendations by the auditors should be clearly communicated. The comments by the managers regarding the entire HRD auditing process should also be raised at this stage because this is a two way communication session. The interviews conducted in this study revealed that communication is a challenge in the MDoE and this made the employees to have a negative attitude towards the auditors.

- *Stage 6:   Monitoring and Evaluation*

This is the stage where auditors must establish procedures to include:

- An evaluation of management response;
- Verification of the response; and
- A follow-up engagement (Internal Audit Framework, 2009).

In this regard observations and recommendations requiring immediate action should be monitored by the HRD audit team until corrected. The audit team should ensure that actions are taken by management address the identified

deficiencies. Responsibility for follow-up should be defined and follow-up audits must be incorporated in the HRD annual audit plans. Follow-up audits entail verification of implementation of management actions. In this regard auditors should follow-up in order to ensure that the recommendations made are implemented.

5.5 HRD audit lens

The audit lens refers to the key focus areas of the HRD audit process. The dimensions that should be covered by the audit lens are the organizational structure, legislations/policies, HRD systems, management styles, stakeholders' participation, organizational culture, funding and resources and the HRD auditing process. These factors should be audited by the HRD audit team in order to have a clear picture of the HRD component in the organization. These factors were identified by the researcher as the key elements for the HRD audit process because they all significantly impact of service delivery.

- *Organizational structure*

The structure of the organization was identified by the researcher as one of the key elements to be covered by the HRD auditors because it defines the way HRD processes occur in the organization. The auditors should be able to identify the HRD component within the organizational structure and investigate whether or not it is assisting the organization to achieve its objectives. The responsiveness of the organizational structure to the service needs of the Department is also critical for the HRD audit process.

- *Legislations / policies*

The legislations, policies and procedures were identified as one of the audit lens because they are critical for the functioning of every organization. The legislations, policies and procedures used in the organization should be assessed by the HRD auditors. The auditors should be able to link the HRD policies with the general legislations and policies of the organization. Monitoring

and evaluation of policy implementation and review is also important for consideration by the auditors.

- *HRD systems*

The HRD systems that are in place in the Mpumalanga Department of Education should also be assessed to see whether they are yielding positive results. The other significant factor is to check the integration of the HRD systems with those of the entire organization. The review of the HRD audit systems is critical in this regard because the improvement of service delivery depends on the systems that are in place.

- *Management styles*

The style of management influences the way the organization handle human resource development issues. In this regard, the auditors should check the impact of the management styles on the processes and practices of HRD. The management style of the organization determines the level of productivity. Therefore the HRD auditors will, through individual interviews, identify areas of improvement and make appropriate recommendation to the management of the Department or organization.

- *Stakeholders participation*

Stakeholder participation is significant in any organization. For the Mpumalanga Department of Education, the key stakeholders are the organized labour / unions and the school governing bodies at the school level. These are regarded as crucial because the Skills Development Act for example, dictates that union representatives should be part of the training committee. In this regard, the auditors should also check whether the stakeholders are consulted and participating in HRD activities. The proof of participation should also be produced.

- *Organizational culture*

The culture of the organization influences the value the organization places on HRD activities. The auditors should be able to assess how the employees perceive the HRD component processes and activities. They should also identify areas which could make individuals not to be attracted to join the Department and even those which repels the employees from the organization.

- *Funding and Resources*

The budgets of the organization highly affect the implementation of HRD programmes. It also dictates the resources allocated to the HRD unit and the Department at large. This will give the HRD auditors a picture of the organization regarding the budget and resources available to be able to achieve the strategic objective.

- *HRD auditing process*

The HRD auditing process will be discussed by the auditors and the management. This will assist in making logistical arrangements such as offices, stationery; venues for the workshops, etc. this process should also be covered during the briefing meeting so that people should know what to expect from the HRD auditors during the period of audit. Once the auditors have handled all of the above, they will be able to link the organization's mission, goals and objectives. In addition it will illustrate the strategic position between the organization's mission, culture, structure, management style, systems, funding and resources.

5.6 HRD audit working papers

A working paper is a record of an audit. Working papers contain the records of the audit from the briefing meeting until the conclusion of the audit. They include the minutes of the meetings, interview working papers, the work plan, findings, the audit report, etc. The working papers should be compiled as soon as

possible after the event to ensure an accurate reflection of progress and no loss of information. Its purpose is to ensure that the audit is done in an orderly fashion, that the process and information obtained is documented (Prinsloo & Roos, 2006). The HRD auditors should make use of the audit working papers and keep the HRD audit files.

Each working paper should address a specific audit objective. The aim of the working paper is directly linked to the audit objective and indicates what the auditor intends to do to achieve the audit objective. The procedures performed should be indicated in sufficient detail. The procedures performed must be indicated on work performed and evidence found must be stated and the implications must be stated. What should be done during the next execution phase must be stated on conclusion (Prinsloo & Roos, 2006). An example of a working paper is attached as Annexure F.

5.7   HRD audit file

The layout of the file should reflect the auditing process according to the stages of the HRD audit process that is, briefing, execution and report writing. Prinsloo and Roos (2006) indicated that lever-arch files have been found to be the best to safeguard working paper. They keep papers from getting lost, and allow you to sort, resort, and to add or to remove papers with ease. Dividers should be inserted to separate the various phases of the audit. The researcher in this regard recommends any type of a file as long as documents can be well filed and properly labeled.

5.8   Conclusion

The findings of this study have been interpreted and synthesized in this Chapter. Various elements were explored through the eyes of the stakeholders and their perceptions, views and opinions were interpreted in relation to the research

question and existing literature. It is evident that the MDoE has been performing poorly because its systems, policies and legislations are not comprehensively reviewed. Hence, the problem statement set out in Chapter 1 is that the MDoE is performing poorly and yet it has an HRD unit with HRD systems, structures and policies/ legislations and spends money on human resource development and training. The next Chapter presents some recommendations and a conclusion of this study.
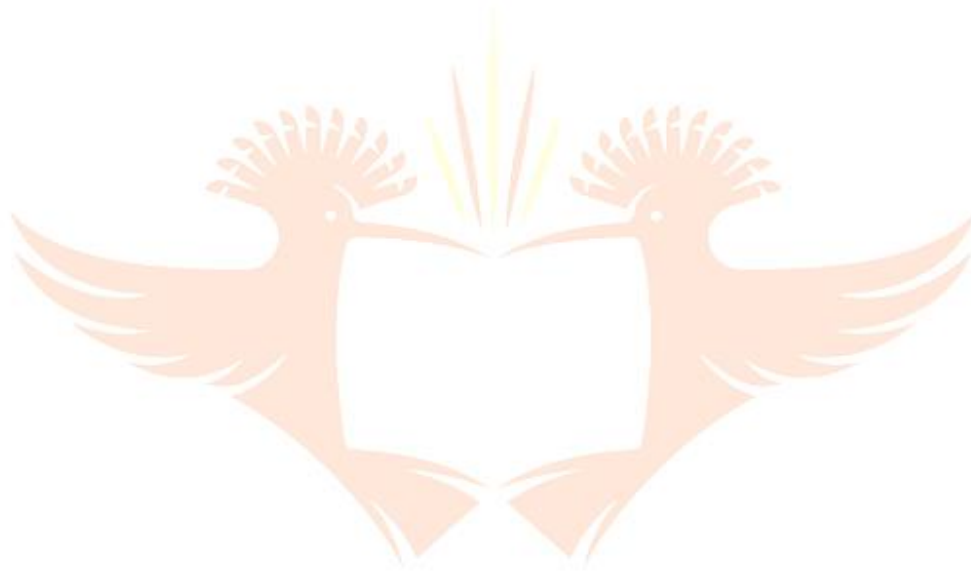
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This Chapter provides an overview of this study and a summary of the findings. Final conclusions are drawn and recommendations are made. The contributions to the body of knowledge and the limitations of the study are also outlined and conclude with recommendations for future research.

6.2 Overview of the study

In Chapter 1 the researcher contextualized the study by presenting the background and motivation for the study. From the non-technical data, it became clear that service delivery is a challenge in the MDoE under study. The problem statement of this study was the MDoE is performing poorly and yet it has a HRD unit with HRD systems, structures and policies/ legislations and spends money on human resource development and training. The preliminary literature review also made it clear that more still needs to be done about HRD auditing. When considering the contributions made by this study the researcher identified the following:

Firstly, this study could assist in generating scientific knowledge by employing a qualitative methodology to establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention in the MDoE and consequently construct an HRD audit process.

Secondly, it will assist in redefining policy and practice. By investigating the effectiveness of internal auditing in the MDoE, the discovery of the exclusion of some of the key elements in the documents such as the HRD strategy and by

exploring the organizational context affecting HRD, and the construction of the HRD auditing process, arguing that this research could assist to redefine policy and practice.

Lastly, this study will advance qualitative research. The end result of this research was to construct the HRD auditing process utilizing an interpretive qualitative research approach.

Chapter 2 of this study dealt with the literature review. The trends and theoretical foundation of HRD in South Africa were discussed. Several studies regarding internal audit, and HRD audit were also presented.

Chapter 3 of this research offered a description of the research design including the researcher's scientific beliefs. The researcher applied an interpretive approach based on a belief that reality is a social phenomenon which comes about through meanings derived from human experiences, interactions and perceptions. Thus, as the researcher investigates this reality he/she is inevitably part of, it changes. An interpretive qualitative research approach was used based on the research problem. As Patton (1982) argued, decisions about which research paradigm to use have moved from the traditional research focus to the focus on the research question/problem/hypothesis. Research projects can be individualized: research analysis forces one to address the problem, identify the audience, determine the research paradigm, and share the impact of the research process. The sample for this research consisted of various stakeholders including the HRD practitioners, the internal auditors, managers and employees.

Chapter 4 dealt with the discussion of the major findings and will be summarized in 6.3.

Chapter 5 presented the interpretation and synthesis of the major findings and evaluated against existing literature.

6.3   Summary of major findings

This study has revealed the following in the MDoE:

- The human resource development and training services are not properly managed. It was discovered that employees who attended training were also not monitored to see if they implement the skills that were learned. This means that the HRD unit in the Department left much to be desired. The application of the HRD audit process which was developed could enable the Department to enforce internal control measures, monitoring and evaluating of various HRD initiatives. It will furthermore assist the Department to pay attention to how employees' capabilities are sustained and developed.

- There is insufficient staff for implementation of policies and plans. The MDoE studied has an approved organizational structure with positions for HRD practitioners. The serious challenge is that the positions are not filled. The Department is unable to fill the vacancies because of funds. The HRD audit process could positively contribute in this regard because funding and resources are some of the elements to be considered for auditing.

- HRD practitioners are not all trained and accredited as trainers; this means that recruitment and selection policies must be looked into so that only suitably qualified employees are appointed. If the quality and quantity of the employees are insufficient it simply means that services are compromised. The proposed HRD auditing process will assist in this regard because policy review forms part of the audit.

- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation. This point emerged when participants indicated that even if policies are available, there is no one

who monitors and evaluates them. The issue of the HRD systems also emanated from the fact that the same process takes place every year and there is no improvement. That is why some employees are not complying to annual process such as skills audit because there are no changes or improvement. Evaluation of the HRD systems is critical for HRD auditing because they will be checked whether they are effective or not.

- There is a lack of accurate information keeping which even compromises both support staff and teacher training in the MDoE. This is what causes the same people to be trained repeatedly on the same course while others have never attended the training. If records were properly and accurately kept, it would be realized that employee X is attending the training for the second and third time while employee Y has never attended. This point would be covered during the HRD auditing. The activities of human resource development would be checked to determine whether they are positively contributing to the achievement of the strategic objectives of the Department or not.

- HRD is not a priority during the budget allocation process. The cause of this could be the fact that HRD practitioners are not participating during the strategic planning process and this consequently leads to insufficient budget allocated for HRD activities. The other point that emerged is that the unfunded mandates within MDoE are always utilizing the little budget allocated for HRD. The effectiveness of the HRD auditing process comes into place in that the strategic plan of the Department will be assessed and whether the plans are actually implemented.

- Recommendations made after the internal audit are not implemented. This makes the internal audit to become ineffective in the MDoE particularly within HRD unit because it is responsible for the development of the workforce to ensure that strategic objectives are achieved. It is believed

that if these recommendations are implemented, there will be improvement in the entire Department.

- There is poor communication in the MDoE. It was discovered that since most of the powers and delegations are centralized at the provincial office, a list for training would take a long time before it can reach the relevant employee who should be sent for training. This leads to school principals sending any other available educator because of the information arriving late. The same problem is encountered when the internal auditors are visiting institutions to conduct internal audit. It was discovered that in some units the heads of sections are not cooperating with the internal auditors because they were never informed that the internal auditors will be auditing their institutions. The HRD audit will be effective because all the stages should be followed which includes communication.

- Stakeholder participation is a challenge in the MDoE. It was discovered that some of the HRD activities were not supported by organized labour because they were never consulted. Despite the fact that some are members of the training committees they felt that the involvement was not comprehensive. The HRD audit process prioritizes the stakeholder involvement, particularly organized labour, in order to ensure that a healthy relationship exists.

- The HRD processes in the MDoE are not managed correctly. The researcher believes that all of the above factors evidently support the statement that HRD is not effectively managed. Therefore, it can be argued that these discoveries supported the main objective of this study, namely to establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention.

The significant process of HRD audit was not extensively researched and is actually lacking in South Africa. In other countries, the researcher found a study by Rao (1999a) which was conducted in an Indian organization and other studies were conducted on HR audits. The researcher could not find a single research study on HRD audit being conducted in South Africa.

6.4   Contributions to the body of knowledge

The objective of this research was to establish the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention and thereafter to develop the HRD audit process within the context of the MDoE. The findings of this research suggest that without a comprehensive evaluation of strategies, styles, skills and systems the MDoE will not achieve its strategic objectives. This study has conveyed valuable insights which were not offered by prior literature. The responses received from the participants enabled this study to discover various aspects such as a high vacancy rate negatively affect service delivery. Of importance was also a discovery that the recommendations of the internal audit were not adopted and consequently not implemented by various sections.

The proposed HRD audit process could play a vital role in the accountability framework of the public sector and the private sector, as intended by the internal auditors. Based on these findings, this study has contributed to the current literature on HRD audit by providing better understanding of the human resource development auditing process in the MDoE.

The researcher deemed it necessary to outline further the value-add of the study (practice, theory and methodology).

Practice: The establishment of the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention and the development of the HRD audit process has made a significant input in the field of human resource development. This fact in itself

helps putting the HRD efforts in perspective. The public and private sectors organizations should be made aware of the alternative process and methods available to audit HRD. For scholars this finding is also important because it helps building bridges between apparently separated scientific fields. This research also revealed the practical reality of human resource development practices in the MDoE with regard to the HRD practitioners, managers, educators and unions. The HRD auditing process developed is not only meant for the MDoE but for the private sectors and other provincial and national Departments as well. This study also revealed that planning, communication and stakeholder involvement is very critical for the success of the HRD auditing.

Theory: Theoretically, the HRD auditing process highlights the current theoretical considerations. Critical elements affecting HRD auditing were drawn from the participants' responses and various sources of literature and this increased the generalization of the study. The literature review guided and reiterated the importance of stakeholders' participation in various organizational practices including HRD. Monitoring and evaluation of the HRD auditing process was included in the model.

Methodology: The researcher utilized Mouton's (2002) building blocks to construct clear concepts of developing the HRD auditing process and provided a basis for further development of scientific knowledge on a human resource development audit. The researcher applied an interpretive qualitative methodology in an unadulterated manner by consulting the existing concepts and consequently consolidating her own insight.

Additionally the researcher assessed the research findings of this study for value and the contribution to knowledge. The six questions that were used for assessment in this study as indicated by Whetten (1989) are the following:

- What's new?
- So what?

- Why so?
- Well done?
- Done well?
- Why now?

The six questions are separately discussed per sub-heading below in order to assess this research.

What is new? Does this study make a significant value-added contribution to the current knowledge?

The proposed HRD auditing process in this research represents a first attempt to provide insight into the significance of comprehensive evaluation of the current HRD strategies, structure, systems, styles and skills in the context of the short and long-term business plans of the organization here referred to as the HRD audit. It attempts to provide a holistic understanding of the contribution of effective human resource development practices to the attainment of the strategic objectives of the organization. This process adds value and new insight for HRD practitioners of both private and public sector responsible for human resource development and training of the employees.

It is without doubt that the findings of this study will add significant scientific knowledge about this relatively unexplored phenomenon in the South African public and private sectors.

So what? Will the proposed HRD auditing process likely change the practice of HRD research?

The developed HRD auditing process established the fundamental significance of stakeholder involvement in matters related to HRD auditing. The HRD audit process work plan would enable the HRD auditors to communicate in advance

with the managers, employees and the organized labour which has been a challenge previously with other audits whereby staff does not cooperate with the auditors.

The research findings showed how stakeholder involvement and buy-in of both employees and managers is critical for the sustainability of the audit. Hence, whenever there is a sense of ownership and the common understanding of the aims and objectives of the HRD audit, this in itself has the potential to convince the staff and unions to willingly participate and cooperate. Furthermore, participation of the HRD Practitioners as the HRD auditors makes it easy because they will be more familiar with the HRD practices, systems, policies and to gain more relevant and valuable information.

The HRD auditing process will assist organizations in determining whether HRD unit performance contributes to the overall performance of the organization. Lastly, it will assist organizations to determine whether HRD units support the organizational strategies.

This research with its foci as the establishment of the stakeholders' perception of a HRD intervention should contribute to the way HRD auditing process should be approached. It shows the value of comprehensive evaluation of the current structure, systems, policies and styles in line with the long and short term business plans.   In this sense, this research contributes to the practice of HRD research particularly the HRD auditing.

Why so? Are the underlying logic and supporting evidence compelling?

The development of the HRD auditing process was developed from the secondary and primary data. The HRD audit process was done utilizing the process of the interpretive qualitative methodology which guided the researcher in every step of the way. The supporting evidence was clear through the perusal

of the Departmental documents, literature review as well as the empirical data obtained from the research participants. This research used various data sources to derive its final results in a convincing logical manner from the data.

Done well and well done? Is this thesis well written, does it reflect a reasoned thinking?

The thesis systematically unfolded and provided sound arguments to address the objective of the study. (See 6.2 for detail). Based on the background information given, the researcher concluded that this thesis is presented in a coherent manner and reflects a profound thinking because none of the work reported in this study has been arrived at without considerable effort and reflection.

Why now? Is the topic of contemporary interest to the scholars?

It is evident that the world is becoming a global village with a borderless and knowledge-based economy. Globalization can have far-reaching implications for human resource development (HRD) and management practices in general (Bae & Rowley, 2001). Thus, HRD scholars need to become aware of as many tools as possible to further explore processes in which organizations become more effective. Furthermore, HRD is relatively young as a scholarly discipline, it is imperative that its foundation be built on strong theoretical underpinnings (Hatala, 2006). This is in line with this research which established the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention and eventually developing the HRD audit process.

The HRD auditing process developed in this research has valuable implication for human resource development units both in the private and public sectors. It also calls for a reconsideration of the role of the HRD practitioners who don't participate in key matters like strategic planning sessions in various organizations. Most significant is for the organizations to consider comprehensive

evaluation of the current structures, policies, styles and systems in line with their long and short term business plans.

HRD auditing is a relatively new area of research. Therefore, this proposed HRD audit process will hopefully ignite interest of scholars to test the model, customize it to other units or even to expand it. This research study brings a new understanding of issues regarding HRD systems, policies, structure and styles which are not positively contributing to the improvement of service delivery. The establishment of the stakeholders' perception of the HRD intervention and the development of the HRD audit process which places the HRD practitioners as the ones identified to conduct the HRD audit is likely to appeal to scholars in the field of HRD to conduct further research on this issue and those related to it. The evaluation of this study has been in line with the questions raised by Whetten (1989) and therefore confirms that this research study has significant potential for future HRD auditing research.

Although debates have brewed over the years regarding the classification of the theoretical foundations for HRD (McLean, 1998; Swanson, 1999), there was a lack of agreement over which components, exactly, should be included. Many claimed that the HRD field is increasingly fragmented and lacking a shared theoretical vision (Mabey, 2003; Ruona *et al.*, 2003). The researcher believes that over time, this HRD audit process will continually be shaped and refined as the result of numerous HRD audits that will be conducted in a variety of public and private sector organizations.

6.5   Possible limitations of the study

No research is without limitation and this study is no exception. The possible limitations of this study could include the following:

- This study is interpretive in nature; hence the findings and results presented were largely drawn from the interpretation of the researcher. The interpretations were based on the data available. The researcher has made the data as transparent as possible for the interpretations to be credible. However, another researcher with a different background analyzing similar data may have different interpretations of the data.

- This study is limited to the context that it is in, and the results are limited to the sample used. In addition, it was also confined within a relatively short time period. A longer time frame may allow more data to be gathered therefore enhancing the knowledge that could be gained.

- Even though the HRD auditing process was developed, it was not tested in an actual work environment and this means that strength and weaknesses (advantages and disadvantages) may be discovered.

- The reliability of interpretive results rests on the interpretative abilities of the researcher who is also subjectively involved in the research process. Although, strategies were employed to overcome these limitations including acknowledging the researcher's subjective role including prior experience and assumptions and confirmation of the results with participants, it cannot be confirmed that this study results are reliable.

- The paradoxical dilemma that the HRD audit has to investigate the issues (organizational structure, management style, HRD systems and legislation/ policies), which determine its viability.

6.6 Recommendations for future research

Based on the findings of this research, the following are suggestions for future research:

- HRD audits must be considered for future research because research studies about it are limited. There is no research about HRD audit in South Africa.

- The research studies about the perception of stakeholders on HRD intervention to be extended to other government Departments and the private sector.

- The HRD auditing process that was developed in this study must be tested and verified in various workplaces to establish generalizability.

- To explore how HRD auditing can ever escape from the dilemma of investigating the same issues which determine its viability perhaps by using external consultants who are not bound by the constraints.

6.7   Conclusion

The researcher considers this research to have been a journey to explore and discover the actual perception of the stakeholders about the HRD intervention in the MDoE. Working on the research problem and the literature review, the researcher has been able to link the poor performance of the MDoE to the non-evaluation of the HRD system, policies, styles and structure.

The responses of the HRD practitioners were contrasted with the responses of the managers regarding the participation of the HRD practitioners during the strategic planning sessions. It became apparently clear that HRD practitioners are not participating during the strategic planning sessions, they will only attend the sessions if delegated by the manager who is not available to attend. The understanding of the managers is that when the manager is attending he/she is representing the entire directorate and all sections equally. The evidence gathered from literature review and other participants including unionists and

curriculum implementers is that HRD should be prioritized during the strategic planning because it is critical in improving the performance of the MDoE.

The outcome of this study in establishing the perceptions of the stakeholders on a HRD intervention and constructing the HRD audit process has been what the MDoE needed. The poor performance of the MDoE has been a concern to actually various stakeholders and this has been raised during the interview sessions. Most of them especially the HRD practitioners and internal auditors were optimistic that the proposed HRD audit model would assist the Department a lot.

The importance and value of HRD auditing process in the MDoE cannot be overemphasized. There is a need for the policies, management style and systems within the MDoE to be reviewed and changed for the better as long as the Department intends to achieve its strategic objectives of ensuring a better life for all.

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CONSENT FORM

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Consent form

I…………………………………………………………………….. (Full names) hereby agree to participate in this research project about "The development and evaluation of a Human Resource Development Audit Model".

I therefore, grant you permission to interview me.

Signature:………………………………….

Date:………………………………………
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THE RESEARCHER'S BACKGROUND

My public service experience in the field of human resource management and development dates back from 2001 when I was placed on a post of Division Head: Human Resource Management in the Department of Correctional Services. I was employed in the Department of Correctional Services as a Correctional Officer in 1991. In 2001 the implemented PSCBC Resolution no 7 of 2002 which led to my placement in the position of Division Head: HRM and Development. In that position I was responsible for overall management of human resource management and development staring from personnel administration, human resource development and training, labour relations to Employee Assistance Programme. I had relevant qualifications which enabled me to do the job. I had a BA degree in social sciences (major courses: Psychology and Sociology), Higher Education Diploma, and BA Honours degree in Psychology. I was stationed at Tzaneen prison which was one of the smallest prisons / correctional services centres in the country and I had only one Personnel Officer reporting to me in HRM section. I am a generalist in HR but I have passion for human resource development. I participated in the development of various policies such as women placement in the Department of Correctional Services, including the Code of Conduct for the Department. When policies are approved I will be expected to conduct training workshops on those policies and many other HRD intervention programmes, which is what I enjoyed the most. The other thing I liked about the Department of Correctional Services is that it had various procedure manuals for employees to work with and quite often had inspectors visiting institutions to compliance to policies. Locally each station was expected to have its own inspection team to conduct inspection which is now referred to as audit prior the provincial inspections. I was appointed as one of the inspectors in the Department of Correctional Services, which is also another thing that I enjoyed because my main responsibility as a local inspector was to check and monitor compliance to legislations and policies.

In 2004 July, I took a position as Chief Personnel Officer at Natalspruit Hospital in Gauteng Province Department of Health. In that position I was also responsible for various HRM and Development function, the only thing is that I was reporting to the Assistant Director HRM. My passion for HRD continued and consequently, I registered for Masters Degree in HRD with the University of Johannesburg in 2005.

In December 2005, I was offered a promotional position of Assistant Director: HRM at Tambo Memorial Hospital in the same Department of health. The responsibility increased and still I enjoyed HRD more than other areas in HRM.

In August 2006, I took a transfer to Letaba Hospital in Limpopo. There I occupied a position of Deputy Manager: Human Resource Development and Planning. My function in that position was solely human resource development and training as well as human resource planning. I worked diligently because our section was rated as one of the best by Cohsasa. Even when internal auditors and Auditor General audited our institution, we never received a qualified audit report. The audit report in most cases had not queries/ exceptions from HRM &D.

In March 2008, I was offered a promotional position of Deputy Director: Human Resource Services in the Mpumalanga Department of Education (MDoE). My duties include overall management of human resource services including HRD but excluding Employee Relations. In all the Departments I worked auditors visited once or twice a year, Internal Auditors and Auditor General interchangeably. I also worked with various stakeholders of the Department both internal and external stakeholders. I have seen frustrations of the stakeholders when the policies and systems in place are not reviewed and /or have some bottlenecks which limit their performance. I have also seen how internal auditors relate to the staff and vice versa.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE – GUIDING QUESTIONS

A. Introduction

I would like to thank you most sincerely for taking your valuable time to participate in this study. You have been selected as a valued and knowledgeable participant in this DPhil research project, which attempts to establish the stakeholders' perception of HRD intervention and consequently develop an HRD audit process. By participating in this research project, you will make a valuable contribution to the current level of understanding and insight regarding the contribution of HRD towards achievement of this Department's strategic objectives, the HRD systems, policies and practices, thereby expanding the body of knowledge in this field.

Thank you for your willingness to be interviewed by the researcher. The interview questions consist of 10 main items in number which has sub items. This interview will not take longer than 60 minutes of your time. As a participant, you are assured of the strictest confidentiality of the information that you will provide. In order to gain maximum benefit from this research project, it is important that you respond in an honest and truthful manner. I may pose follow-up questions in order to gain clarity on specific items / statements. Kindly note that the interview process will be tape-recorded so that it can transcribed.

As a valued respondent, I am willing to make the findings/outcome of this research available to you, in case you will want to see them. The Department will only have access to the HRD Audit model upon request. Again, thank you for your willingness to participate in this research project. Your time and contribution is much appreciated.

B. INITIAL QUESTIONS
- How long have you been employed by the Department?
- What is your current position?
- What is your highest qualification?

C. MAIN QUESTIONS
1. Vision and Mission
- Describe the vision and mission of this Department in relation to the goals and objectives of HRD section?
2. Organizational structure
- Do you think the organizational structure of this Department / institution is capable of handling the present and future needs of the Department?
- Are the posts allocated to HRD adequate enough for the HRD services?

3. Training and Development

- Would you say that HRD is providing excellent services to employees?
- Are the service providers adhering to SAQA s unit standards?
- Are the training interventions offered in terms of the skills audit system?
- Is training accessible to all employees?
- Is there adequate involvement of stakeholders in various HRD activities?

4. HRD Practitioners/ Internal Auditors

- Are there qualified trainers in the Department?
- Do HRD practitioners participate during the strategic planning session?
- Briefly explain the type of job you do and how does it relates to the strategic objectives of the Department?
- Are the HRD / Internal Audit activities supported by management and organized labour?
- Describe the challenges you face when carrying out your duties?

5. Planning and Management

- Would you say there is proper/ effective planning and management in HRD? Motivate your answer.
- Do you prioritize the strategic requirements of the Department when planning the training interventions/ programs?
- Do you think other managers take IA and HRD seriously?

6. Legislations / Policies

- Are policies available for management of HRD?
- Are they successfully implemented?
- Is the Department complying to Skills Development Act and Public Finance Management Act?
- Is there effective monitoring and evaluation for the implementation of policies?

7. Funding and Resources

- Is sufficient budget allocated to workforce training and development in terms of SDA?
- What are the challenges regarding funding and resources in HRD?
- Is there proper monitoring of training expenditures?

8. Performance Management and other HRD systems

- Dou you think employees and managers are aware that HRD is critical for organizational performance?
- Do you think HRD systems which are in place are effective? Why?

9. Communication

- Would you say communication is effective in the Department?
- Are IA and HRD activities communicated in advance to all employees?

10. HRD Audit and Internal Audit

- Do you know what IA and HRD audit is all about?
- Who do you think is best suited to conduct IA and / or HRD audit?
- Do you think HRD /Internal Audit is positively contributing towards improvement of service delivery.

- Is the Department monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the recommendations made by the IA?

D. CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

- Is there anything else that you would like to add?

E. DE-BRIEF

- In qualitative research studies like this one it is significant to obtain feedback from the interviewees. Therefore I would appreciate it if you frankly share your views with me regarding the following:
- How do you think the interview went?
- Was the interview questions adequately clear to you?
- Were you free enough to share your views and experiences with me?
- Is there anything we discussed you would like to think over?
- How did you experience my approach to this interview? Is there anything you wish to recommend that might improve my interviewer role?
- How was the setting of the interview? Would you have preferred another place?
- Did the tape recorder affect you?
- Do you feel that my position as a Deputy Director: HR Services in the Department influenced you when you responded to questions?

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS DETAILS

PSEUDONYM	PARTICIPANT DESCRIPTION
P1	Manager (Region)
P2	Manager (Region)
P9	Manager (Head Office)
P3	HRD Practitioner
P4	HRD Practitioner
P5	HRD Practitioner
P6	Internal Auditor
P7	Internal Auditor
P8	Internal Auditor
P14	Circuit Manager
P16	Circuit Manager
P12	Curriculum Implementer
P13	Curriculum Implementer
P16	School Principal
P17	School Principal
P10	Educator
P11	Educator
P18	Unionist
P19	Unionist
P20	Member of Parliament

HRD Audit reporting framework

Management Measure (cause)	Attributes of effectiveness (findings)	Impact on service delivery (effect)	HRD Auditor's recommendation
Compiled by:	*Signature:*	*Venue:*	*Date:*

WORKING PAPER TEMPLATE

Stage………………..
(The HRD auditor should indicate the stage which the working paper is utilized. For example: stage 1- briefing meeting).

Name of institution:	Prepared by:	Date:	W/P Ref:

Audit objective:

The objective of the stage which the working paper is used should be clearly stated.

Procedure performed

The procedure performed by the auditor should be stated including what has been obtained such as documents and the rank/ title of the employee interviewed if she/she prefers to remain anonymous.

Work performed

The auditor should indicate what the document shows and a brief summary of the outcomes of the interviews and what the documents show. The findings and the implications should be stated in this regard.

Conclusion

The conclusive remarks of the auditor and the recommendation should be stated. The recommended due date and the proposed responsible person depending on the matter in question should also be stated.

Signature:	*Venue:*	*Date:*

The working paper was adopted from (Prinsloo & Roos, 2006).