TURFLOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP (TGSL)

ABSENTEEISM MANAGEMENT IN LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

BY

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ABSTRACT

Absenteeism remains a challenge in government entities, especially if it is measured in monetary terms. Government loses a number of hours through employees who are officially or unofficially away from work. The high absenteeism is created by a number of factors, amongst which leave policy gaps and poor management systems can cited. Therefore this study expected to investigate the management of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

A qualitative research approach was used to collect data through semi-structured interviews. One of the major findings in the study is that there is a lack of communication between line-managers and human resources section. Departments still work in silos and hence some employees exploit their leave benefits. The study recommends that communication strategies in the Limpopo Provincial Legislature should be effectively implemented and policy gaps in relation to leave benefits should be reviewed.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my mother, Ramatsobane Ntsipa Mphahlele (nee Lesetja), my beloved husband, Phasoane Hlabirwa, my daughter, Lehlogonolo, my two sons, Tumelo and Tshepho and my two granddaughters, Kgaugelo and Potego.

DECLARATION

I declare that the research report, "Absenteeism management in Limpopo Provincial Legislature" is hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo for the Master's degree in Public Administration has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or any other University, and it is my own work in design and execution and that all references contained therein have been duly acknowledged.

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Signature   Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm, that I, Dr Lutz Ackermann, have read the Research Thesis entitled

"Absenteeism management in the Limpopo Provincial Legislature"

by Mrs **Tladi Florinah**

and that I am satisfied with the quality of work she has produced in terms of structuring the document, in terms of style, grammar and spelling. Suggestions for suitable corrections and improvements have been made to the candidate.

(Rev. Dr. Lutz Ackermann, Mankweng)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

Absenteeism is one of the major threats to productivity in the workplace and it has been a driver of lost revenue in many organisations globally and nationally. Managing absenteeism is important to the survival of any organisation and managers have a huge responsibility in ensuring that absenteeism is well managed by making sure that leave policies are adhered to and wellbeing of employees are taken care of. If employees are supported and recognised then they are able to be motivated and decide to take most of their time being at work and perform as expected. An individual performance and organisational costs can often influence the organisational performance. Armstrong (2009:1) states that performance management is a systematic process to improve the performance of a company by developing individual's and team's performance. In other words, performance gives the individuals and teams the responsibility to take liability for their own continuous improvement of business process.

Millions of rand are being lost because of uncounted leave of absence days which are taken by the employees in many organisations. Robbins, Ordendaal and Roodt (2003:15) reported that the estimation that absenteeism costs organisations millions of rand a year in Germany. Every day of absence is a cost to any organisation not only in terms of lost productivity but also in benefits. This cost can be either direct or indirect. Absenteeism is the largest single source of lost productivity in most of organisations. Employees decided to absent themselves from work while they are expected to be at work. Anderson (2009: 11) cites that absences occur whenever a person either chooses to allocate time to activities that compete with scheduled work.

Africa has experienced a high and continuous economic growth in the past decade but the continent has reached a turning point in its economic growth due to historic workplace challenges. In other words the continent since the turn of millennium has experienced a slowdown in economy due to low productivity. Nevertheless, its average growth rate of economy over the past decade has been negative and there

are factors that contribute to Africa's performance which amongst others is absenteeism. Africa Report (2014:8) confirms that in order for Africa to achieve a sustained and transformative growth it requires the improvement of productivity. High level of absenteeism is one of the characteristics of the impact of productivity on countries.

Most of African countries are affected adversely by absenteeism. Onikoyi, Awolu and Boyede (2015:68) conclude in the study of the effect of absenteeism on corporate that absenteeism reduces the level of organizational productivity, quality service and promptness of meeting customer's demand. Most of countries in Africa want to improve the level of their corporate performance. This can be done by either reducing or managing absenteeism properly. Absenteeism also impact adversely on the clients of the company. Tiwari (2001:4) adds that the management in Nigeria believes that absenteeism has a great impact on the achievement of organizational goals and productivity. Absenteeism does not only affect the customer's goals as indicated above but also do the same on organizational objectives.

Erickson (2001: 91) in the study conducted in Canada has encourages that if people are only absent from their jobs when they needed to be, such as for family commitments or when they are truly ill, then absenteeism would not be the major problem that it is today. In other words, absenteeism can be lessened if properly managed. Mogobe (2011:4) expands that the problem of absenteeism is not only in terms of days but also in its financial impact on organisation .In the current economic climate organisations are under extreme pressure to deliver high quality services in a timely and cost efficient way.

Limpopo Conditions of Services (2001:18) stipulates that "an officer who is absent from work for one or two days due to illness does not normally have to submit medical certificate." Leave of absence costs is high as per Annual Leave Report of 2014 and as compared to Annual Leave Report of 2015. Persal Leave Report (2014/2015) shows that the cost of sick leave without medical certificates is growing higher yearly. Beira (2008: 28) confirms that good attendance records record signals of reliability and suitability for promotion. In other words, a good behaviour rewards a person and by rewarding a good attendance will also motivate others to behave the same way. In Limpopo Provincial legislature the behaviour is different and

employees are taking voluntarily resignations and this turns to a high turnover rate. Turnover rate is high, both in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015. Persal Report (2014/2015) showed that the number has increased by two people within six months period. Poor performance issue is complex and if not managed properly then the institution could be liable for unfair dismissal and unfair labour practices.

1.2 Background

South Africa has been going through some reforms since the establishment of the new government in 1994. The country has undergone a transformation process whereby the government introduced new formation of provincial legislatures in terms of Chapter 6 of the Constitution of South Africa. The Limpopo Provincial Legislature is one of the nine Provincial Legislatures that were established and mandated by Section 105 of the Constitution of South Africa, 1996 to perform the core functions of the business which includes provincial law-making, oversight and public participation. Oversight Model (2002:3) states that Parliament and Provincial Legislatures are constitutionally charged with the responsibilities of making laws, conducting oversight of the Executive, exercising public participation and co-operative governance.

Members of Provincial Legislature are the ones who are supposed to perform their duties effectively so that services are delivered to the public. Employees are employed to give administrative support to Members of Provincial Legislature in order to achieve the legislative's objectives. These employees are supposed to report for duty when they are expected to do so. If one staff member fails to report for duty for one reason or another, then the mandate to achieve law-making, oversight, public participation process in the Legislature will then suffer. Based on the above, absenteeism management in Limpopo Provincial Legislature is of vital role and is also linked to service delivery. Service delivery was affected by the labour instability during and after apartheid era. Workers have spent time in the streets demonstrating whenever they feel infringed. The strike actions had extensive negative effects on the South African economy as a whole. Robbins et al (2003:53) report that up to 1o per cent of South African companies' annual payrolls go to costs is directly linked to worker absenteeism and Ejere (2010:115) confirms that an

employee not showing up for work is a human capital risk as the absent employee cannot contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives

The strikes further led to the decline of work productivity because many productive hours are lost through picketing, sit-ins, lock-outs and absenteeism. The damage that was caused by the strikes that are rife in all sectors during that period left the economy in a serious gap. Grawitzky (2002:44) reveals that the increase in workdays lost due to strikes rose from 500 000 in 2000 to 1,25 million in 2001.This impact has left private and public entities in a crisis and Limpopo Provincial Legislature is also affected by the problem.

Mwanda (2012:88) confirms that there is an inverse relationship between absenteeism and service delivery. Service delivery cannot be there without the labour force. Employees in Limpopo Provincial Legislature do not only give administrative support to Members of Provincial Legislature to carry out their mandate but also to achieve targets laid down in line with Legislature Annual Performance Plan of 2014/2015.

The research on absenteeism management in Limpopo Provincial Legislature seeks to investigate the management of absenteeism, focus on the identification of the factors that contribute to absenteeism and to assess the current monitoring system of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

This study covers chapter one which gives the introduction and background of the current problem, the problem statement, rationale and the significance of the study, the aim of the study, research objectives, research questions, definition of concepts, ethical considerations, chapter outline and the summary of the chapter.

1.3. Problem statement

In this study the problem that arises is the absenteeism by the staff members of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. Limpopo Provincial Legislature has a high rate of absenteeism associated with abuse of sick leave by employees. Employees absent themselves from work due to different reasons by taking authorized annual and sick leave from the employer. Annual Leave Report (2014) shows that employees are taking excessive authorised annual leave during May/June months and high authorised sick leave during the course of the year. The same report indicated that

55 % of employees were absent from work due to different reasons in 2014 as compared to 56% of employees in 2015 (Annual leave Report 2015). This shows that there is an increase of 1% in 2014/2015 financial year.

Conditions of Service Policy stipulates that every officer shall be entitled to 22 working days 'vacation leave per annual leave cycle and officers who have completed ten or more years 'service at the Legislature shall be entitled to 28 working days leave per annum(South Africa, 2001:17). The Policy continues to recommend that employee must take at least ten days 'vacation leave during each annual cycle and the remaining vacation leave days have to be taken during the eighteen month following the annual cycle, failing which they lapse.

This policy encourages all employees to utilize their annual leave days within the above stipulated period. Its purpose is to ensure that employees have a reasonable period of rest and recreation in the employment but not to disrupt daily job targets. 70 % of employees are taking these annual leave days almost at the same time i. e. during May/June (Annual Report, 2014: 20).

The employer is at a high risk of losing a lot of money as salaries are paid to people who did not render services they have supposed to render. Payroll May/June Report (2014) showed that all employees have been paid. Line managers are also run the risk of non- compliance as they approve annual leaves that are not planned in advance. It is the responsibility of management to make sure that boundary set out in the employment prescripts is applied. The eighteen month of each year ends in June of another year and this causes a problem to employees who waited until the beginning of June to utilise all their remaining days once.

Limpopo Conditions of service (2001:17) states that every employee is entitled to 88 sick leave days per three year cycle and further allows an employee who takes one or two sick leave days not to submit medical certificate. Annual Sick Leave Report of 2014 shows that employees who took one to two sick leave days are more and its costs is also high. Sick leave days are taken during the course of the year from January to December of each year until the expiry of three year cycle. If employees are giving illness as a reason for their absence, they are granted time-off to recuperate and return to work. This tendency of illness is recurring and affecting work productivity. Shortage of manpower is the order the day to all sections that are

affected. The Legislature will appoint relieving staff from other sections while at the same time it creates another burden to the same sections.

1.4 Rationale for the study

This study sets out to explore the aim of the study on how absenteeism is managed in the workplace and the understanding thereof. The study is also focused on how absenteeism will be properly managed to reduce its high rate and poor performance in future. There are studies that have been conducted in determining the factors which contribute to absenteeism in the public sector but little has been done in the legislative sector. Kgaphola (2010: 87) concluded in the study entitled" Determining the causes of the high rate of absenteeism in the East Vaal area of the South African Post Office" that factors such as working conditions, lack of reward,, shortage of resources contribute to high absenteeism in the Post Office, This study will not focus on the absenteeism management in Limpopo Provincial Legislature only but also look at this issue holistically in the legislative sector. The study further aimed to add value to the current state of knowledge by critically evaluating the existing literature on employee absenteeism and supplying a reflective stance on existing debates and findings. As a result, it addresses concerns about lack of proper management on absenteeism.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study will be helpful to the top management when taking strategic decisions. Top management will be able to identify the gaps in Human Resources policies and make amendments where possible. Awareness and programmes will be introduced to address the problem. This study provides useful knowledge that could assist Limpopo Provincial Legislature with the design and the implementation of policies and procedures for management of leave of absence. Employees will be able to understand policies and guidelines within the institution and be able to comply with them in order to minimize the risks of abusing leave of absence. The study will also assist the Provincial Legislatures and government departments in determining if policies and procedures are successfully implemented.

This study through its recommendations may assist Limpopo Provincial Legislature to gain understanding on proper absenteeism management.

McIntosh and Jansen (2007:13) stated that "benefits of not attending work are weighted by those of working. The productivity is the key that improves service delivery in the organisation. Mogobe (2011: 35) stipulates that an institution could reap many rewards from the sound programme for managing absenteeism, demonstrating genuine care for seriously- ill employees, preventing the abuse of sick leave and promoting and maintaining good attendance records. The study will provide management in legislative sector with the knowledge to formulate policies and guidelines on how to address the existence of factors of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

1.6 Aim of study

The aim of this study is to investigate the management of absenteeism of employees in Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

1.7 Objectives

1.7.1 To understand the rate of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature;

1.7.2 To determine factors contributing to absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature; and

1.7.3 To assess current monitoring system of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

1.8 Research questions

1.8.1 How is the rate of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature?

1.8.2 What are the factors that contribute to absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature?

1.8.3 How is absenteeism monitored in Limpopo Provincial Legislature?

1.9 Definition of concepts

Absenteeism: Absenteeism is a failure of an employee to report for or remain at work as scheduled regardless of reason (Robbins et al 2003: 15). When employees are absent, their days away from work affect business performance but they also

increase business risk and costs. Their timely attendance at work to meet business' demands is crucial to keep business activities moving and on schedule.

Productivity: Productivity is used by organisation as a measure to achieve its goals by transferring input into output at lowest costs which also concerns for both effectiveness and effectiveness (Robbins et al 2003:15). Whether absence is planned or not planned, the financial impact can include diminished profit margins from having for example to approve overtime or hire temporary workers to meet deadlines. The indirect costs of absence can include the risk of meeting organisation's performance objectives.

Annual leave cycle: Annual leave cycle is a period of twelve month employment with the Legislature immediately following an employee's commencement of employment, or the completion of that employee's prior leave cycle(Limpopo Legislature Policy 2001:1).The period of annual leave will start from 01 January and ends on the 31 December of each year.

Sick leave cycle: Sick leave cycle is defined as the period of 36 months employment with the Legislature immediately following an employee's commencement of employment or the completion of that employee's prior sick leave cycle (Limpopo Legislature Conditions Policy 2001: 2). The period of sick leave will be for three consecutive years.

Authorised absence: Authorised absence is when an employee with permission is absent, be it for holidays, study leave, special leave and the like (Anderson 2009:14). An employee will be excused in advance with acceptable reason and the manager's permission will be granted.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Neuman (2000:90) states that ethical issues articulates what is or is not legitimate The researcher was able to consider the ethical issues that concerned to this study. Ethical considerations included among other things the protection of respondents from discomfort and any harm by not disclosing information which can cause physical or emotional damage. Neuman (2000:89) confirms that it is the responsibility of a researcher to protect the privacy of subject's identity after information is gathered. Anonymity takes a form of the subject being nameless in a

way that the subject's identity is separated from his or her responses. Ndhlovu (2012:7) agrees that anonymity is achieved when the researcher cannot link a given response with a given respondent and reporting aggregate. In other words, the researcher has to guarantee the respondent's identity through anonymity.

Another form of ethical considerations is through confidentiality. Confidentiality is a guarantee by a researcher to a respondent in a research whereby the respondent is confident that any information provided to the researcher cannot be attributed back to the respondent. Bless and Higson- Smith (2000:97) advises that social scientists should never forget their obligations to research participants from whom information is sought and obtained. One obligation of researcher is to protect confidentiality of respondents even if the information received may have names attached to it but the researcher holds it in secret from the public. Ethical considerations are adhered to and discussed in chapter three.

1.11 Chapter outline

1.11.1 Chapter 1

There are five chapters in this research. Chapter one includes the introduction and the background of absenteeism management. The chapter also stipulates the importance of this study that provides the context, the rationale for the study, the problem statement, the aim of the study, the objectives and the research questions and brief of ethical considerations.

1.11.2 Chapter 2

Chapter two outlines the literature review which provides the conceptualisation of absenteeism and the related concepts. The chapter goes on to differentiate the kinds and causes of absenteeism and how absenteeism is managed in South African government and in the legislative sector which includes its benefits and challenges. The chapter concludes by laying out the intervention strategies, monitoring system and the effective communication in the institution.

1.11.3 Chapter 3

Chapter three discusses the research methodology and research design. Research methodology in this study is qualitative one. Semi- structured interviews are used as

a type of research design and as a simple source of gathering data in qualitative methodology. Questions are open- ended to allow participants to express their views. Documentation like Annual report, Annual leave report, time registers and Persal reports are used to gather the secondary sources. The chapter outlines the total number of employees and the sampling utilized. Themes are categorised and found relevant to analyse the qualitative study.

1.11.4 Chapter 4

Chapter four presented the findings which are discussed by processing, analysing and interpreting data. Recommendations are made based on analysis of the information collected from line managers and employees on the causes of the absenteeism in Limpopo Legislature.

1.11.5 Chapter 5

Chapter five presented the summary of the investigations, the purpose of which was to indicate how line managers could be helped to deal with the problem of absenteeism. The chapter summarises the results of the findings and has covered the conclusion of the study.

1.12 Conclusion

The chapter presented the summary of the study by indicating the purpose, the rationale, the objectives to be achieved and the type of research method to be used to achieve the objectives. The research took the qualitative approach in order to collect qualitative results from the managers and employees of Limpopo Legislature about the factors that contribute to absenteeism and management thereof. The outline of chapters was also discussed and ethical considerations. The next chapter is focussing on the literature review.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Employee attendance is the important element for managing the productivity of any organisation while employee absence is costly and disruptive to any organisation. Poor absence management can lead to termination of service of employees. Mwanda (2010: 11) confirms that lack of absence management can result in a high turnover rate when not properly managed. Organisations have always found themselves fighting with a huge number of employees who do not come to work when expected. Some of employees absent themselves with reasons while others are without reasons. Absenteeism is decided by many reasons and commitments which are related to personal, social and environmental.

Absenteeism is one of the biggest problems that a manager has to handle on an on-going basis as it is impacts on the work productivity and could also lead to financial losses. Mogobe (2011: 1) cites that the economic impact of employee absence derives mainly from the costs of decreased productivity because of absence from work. Beira (2008:29) agrees that absenteeism disrupts operations and is often costly to the organisation. In this study, personal reasons include employees who go on leave for a holiday, to rest, to attend a family matters, to take care of a child who is ill and when the employee is ill while work related commitments involve for example, employees who are selected by employer to attend a workshop for some days in order to improve organizational performance. In this study workplace absenteeism is the authorised or unauthorised absence of the employee in the Legislature at the time when the employer expects the employee to deliver as per Work plan or Performance Agreement. In the context of this study, workplace absenteeism will be defined as absence of employees at the workplace (Ndhlovu 2012:15).

Absenteeism is a challenge in African companies which include South Africa. The ADCORP Employment Index Report (2011:2)) states that the costs to the economy in South Africa has been enormous and the average output per worker in 2011 was R140 856 per year and the loss output due to sickness totalled to R3,9 billion.

This shows that absenteeism is not only larger in neighbouring countries but also nationally because in the above statement, it is clear that absenteeism is more visible and measurable in such a way that more working hours are lost in companies because of it. This report also suggests that sickness absence does not only affect the productivity but contributes to increase sickness absenteeism that will later exacerbate an employee's condition. Once the employee's health is deteriorating then the employee will have a pressure of not returning to work for a long time and this can result into unfair labour practises.

South Africa's economy depends on the productivity in government and companies therefore it can be maximised when labour force is available when expected. Productivity accelerates economic development and this improves the national economy. The more productivity the decrease of the rate of unemployment becomes. If the economy is growing then people will be employed in private sector.

South African economy depends more on private sector because the more productivity on this organisation, the more income it generates. Absenteeism if not managed properly can cause a huge damage on South African and companies. Absenteeism is not a problem in South African private sector but it cuts across all sectors including public sector. However, absenteeism needs to be addressed in all sectors as the challenges of absenteeism in Department of Education for an example cannot be the same as for the clothes shop. Chauke (2007:121) in the study of impact of absenteeism on the private security industry in Gauteng Province finds that the impact of absenteeism results in the termination of contracts, staff shortages which leads to theft and increased workload.

Given the above results, the productivity of the same company is reduced and this will increase the unemployment rate and obviously the economy will be negatively affected. Guinsberg and Bayat (2007:21) in the study conducted in Western Cape add that absenteeism rate at the vineyard Hotel and Spa is relatively higher than the average and also affects the hotel's operations. The reduction of this company's operations can also lead to adverse consequences such as retrenchments.

Public service performance is also affected by the absence of public servants during working hours as the employer expected. PSC Report (2010:41) finds that high absenteeism is continuing across all government departments that are caused by the

greater sense of less responsibility of sick leave by employees. The report continues to indicate that the abuse and the poor management of sick leave do not only impact negatively on service delivery but also has serious financial implications. This serves as evidence that if these challenges are not addressed sooner then they will impact negatively on the economy of the whole country.

In this chapter the first part focuses on the definition of absenteeism that has been guided by the literature review. The second part is divided in three sub-parts. The first sub-part discusses the legislative framework that regulates employment relationship and absenteeism which is followed by the government and Legislative sector perspectives on the nature of absenteeism. This followed by the-part which concentrates on different kinds and causes of absenteeism. The last part summarises the chapter.

2.2 Definition of absenteeism

Anderson (2009:13) defines absenteeism as the employee's failure to report for work, regardless of reasons. It is an obligation of the employer according to employment contrast that employee is expected to report for duty every time when the employer expected the employee to do so. Absenteeism is a universal problem that affects many organisations and they also suffer from this problem. Absenteeism is managed in different ways in many organisations hence its effects are similar. Defining absenteeism should be simple as an employee is either present or absent at the workplace.

However, Mwanda (2010:26) sees absenteeism as an unplanned, disruptive incident but more specifically it can be seen as non- attendance when an employee is scheduled to. Absenteeism indeed disrupts daily arrangements in such a way that Managers are forced to replace employees who do not come to work for one reason or another. Absence from work is the disturbing problem that impact negatively to organisational daily activities. Absenteeism as the non-attendance of an employee for scheduled job can be differentiated from that which is scheduled before time such as annual leave. It is noted from the above that absence from work without prior approval wherein the reasons are beyond employees 'control. The planned leave can happen when it was expected and the reasons include vacation, study etc. Beira (2008:28) describes this type of leave as scheduled and planned in advance. Orrick

(2004:3) disagrees by defining absenteeism as reducing the effectiveness and efficiency of a specific department. In other words, absenteeism regardless of either planned or unplanned has a negative impact on any organisational performance.

Ndhlovu (2012: 13) defines absenteeism as the number of days absent over a given period of time. Absenteeism is measured by the duration of work days missed. Employee is expected to work for the period of maximum working days. Days missed by the employee will be counted from the total maximum days and be regarded as days lost by the organisation.

For the purpose of this study, absenteeism can be viewed as a failure to report physically at work when expected by the employer.

2.3. Legislative framework governing leave management in different countries

Legislative framework refers to the rules that are formulated to govern people or something to ensure smooth operation in any organisation. There are some areas within the legislative framework which govern different sectors globally and locally and must be addressed to provide each sector with the structure it requires to function efficiently and effectively. Ndhlovu (2012:18) explained that a legal framework is a provision for the regulatory requirements for human resource management in the working environment.

2.3.1 Leave management in United States of America

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 Section 102 (a) (1) states that an eligible employee shall be entitled to a total of 12 unpaid workweeks of leave during any 12-month period when the employee or employee's parent, child or spouse has a serious health condition or for a child's birth or placement for adoption or foster care. The employers which are covered under this Act are private and public agencies in the United States of America.

Section 103 of the same Act further mentions that an employer may require that a request for leave as stated in the above paragraph be supported by a certification issued by the health care provider of the eligible employer or of the son, daughter, spouse, or parent of the employee, or of the next of kin of an individual in the case of leave taken.

FMLA as in the above paragraph allows employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for one or more above reasons and the leave must be accompanied by the medical certificate as evidence. Vacation leave in this Act is not federally regulated. This showed that United States of America government developed this act to help workers to manage their responsibilities in the workplace and at home.

This was the other mechanism of reducing absenteeism by allowing employees to take this unpaid family responsibility leave. Employees will prefer to come to work other than to loose salary when the situation is not real while the United States law offers no statutory paid leave on vacation leave.

2.3.2. Leave management in Canada

Canada Labour Code Section 206(1) stipulates that every employee who has completed six consecutive months of continuous employment with an employer and the employee is entitled to up to thirty –seven weeks to care for new- born child of employee or who is in the care of the employee for the purpose of adoption.

Section 206.3(2) employee is entitled to and shall be granted a leave of absence from employment up to eight weeks to provide care or support to a family member of the employee if a qualified medical practitioner issues a certificate stating that the family member has a serious medical condition.

Section 206.4 (2) employee who is the parent of critically ill child is entitled to and shall be granted a leave of absence from employment of up to 37 weeks in order to care for or support that child if specialist or doctor has issued a certificate.

Section 206.5(2) employee entitled to and shall be granted a leave of absence from employment of up to 104 weeks if the employee is the parent of a child who has died.

Annual leave entitlement in Canada is assessed and calculated on the basis of completed months of service. Leave taken must be approved by the authorities in advance. It is further noted from the above Act that leave days cannot be accumulated from one calendar year to another unless approved by the authorities.

The above Code further granted an employee, 37 weeks for parental leave, 8 weeks for compassionate care leave and 2 days for bereavement leave. Canadian government made arrangements in considering payment for the benefits and seniority of employees are accumulated during the days of absence from the workplace due to illness or injury and for family responsibility leave. All the above leaves of absence must be accompanied by certified medical certificate by a Medical Professional. Canada further regulates to pay two weeks' annual leave.

2.3.3 Leave management in Nigeria and Uganda

Labour Act laws of Federation of Nigeria of 1990, Chapter 198, Section 16 and 18 stated that a worker shall be entitled to be paid wages up to twelve working days in any one calendar year during absence from work caused by temporary illness certified by a registered medical practitioner. Every worker shall be entitled after twelve months continuous service to a holiday with full pay of (a) at least six working days or (b) in the case of persons under the age of eighteen (excluding apprentices) at least twelve working days.

According to the above Labour Act laws of Federation, annual leave in Nigeria shall be considered an entitlement for not less than six months after the previous leave within a leave earning service year. Any annual leave not taken within the calendar year concerned will be forfeited.

Uganda Employment Act of 2006, Section 54.1 (a) allowed that an employee shall once in every calendar year be entitled to a holiday with full pay at a rate of seven days in respect of each period of a continuous four months' service, to be taken at such time during such calendar year as may be agreed between the parties.

Section 55.1 and 2 entail that an employee who has completed not less than one month's continuous service with an employer and who is incapable of work because of sickness or injury is entitled to sick pay for the first month's absence from work he or she is entitled to full wages and every other benefit whether for his or her family or himself or herself stipulated in the contract of service. The employer may require that the certificate be obtained from a qualified medical practitioner.

The above information proved that the Nigeria and Uganda preferred a paid sick leave but this government differs with the Canada and USA which pay only the

vacation leave but not sick leave. Canadian Nurses Association (2009:1) confirms that in 2008, the average full-time health care employees in Canada was absent from work for 14.9 days, compared with 79 days among full-time employees in the general population. This shows that the health sector in Canada loses more days per worker because of absenteeism.   United Kingdom is also affected by absenteeism as shown by Harter (2001:58) when he agrees that the rate of absenteeism in United Kingdom among full time employees was 2,5 % in 1998 compared to 2, 4% in 1996 while Madibana (2010:1) added that UK has lost 177 million of days in 1994 and this cost 11 billion UK pounds.

Onikoyi et al (2015:68) report in study conducted in Nigeria that the impact of absenteeism and the labour turn over on organisation performance appear to be on average and Ejere (2013:120} confirms that absenteeism is significantly affecting the job satisfaction. The two researchers acknowledge the prevalence of absenteeism in Nigeria.

 In terms of the stated four governments, family responsibility and maternity leave must be supported by medical certificate from Medical Health Practitioner when an employee is taken a sick leave.

2.3.4 Different legislations in South Africa on leave management

The Constitution of Republic of South Africa of 1996 Section 23(1) provides that every person shall have the right to fair labour practices. Every person referred to every employee, employer or entity involved in labour relations. The Constitution is the supreme law in the country and impacts on the labour. The provision is made in the bill of rights to prevent the legislature not to encroach on the individual rights. The employer cannot treat any employee unfairly due to gender or illness etc. Everybody in any organisation either in the private or public sector must be treated with dignity and respect.

Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1998 Chapter 2.6 states that no person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly, against an employee in any employment policy or practise, on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation,

age, disability, religion, HIV status, conscience, belief, political opinion, culture, language and birth.

Labour Relations Act, No, 55 of 1995, Section 188.1 (a) states that a dismissal that is not automatically unfair, is unfair if the employer fails to prove that the reason for dismissal is fair reason related to the employee's conduct or capacity.

In other words, employees who cannot perform as expected due to ill- health must be treated fairly. It is better for an employer to determine if whether the employee can be accommodated in an alternative position other than dismissal.

Basic Conditions of employment Act of 1997 Chapter three Section 20. (2 -3) states that the employer must grant an employee at least 21 consecutive days' annual leave on full remuneration in respect of each annual leave cycle or by agreement one day of annual leave on full remuneration for every 17 days on which the employee worked or was entitled to be paid and by agreement one hour of annual on full remuneration for every 17 hours on which the employer worked or was entitled to be paid. The employee is entitled to take leave accumulated in an annual leave cycle.

Section 22.5 proclaimed that an employer must pay an employer for a day's sick leave the wage the employee would ordinarily have received for work on that day and on the employee's usual pay day.

Section 23(1) added that an employer is not required to pay an employee if the employee has been absent from work for more than two consecutive days or on more than two occasions during an eight–week period and on request by the employer does not produce a medical certificate stating that the employee was unable to work for the duration of the employee's absence on account of sickness or injury. In other words, if an employee is absent on more than two occasions even if only one day during the same eight week month time, then for another absence , the employer is to insist on a medical certificate but if not produced then the employer can regard that leave as unpaid.

Section 25 cited that an employee is entitled to at least four consecutive months' maternity leave, may commence maternity leave at any time from four weeks before the expected date of birth unless otherwise agreed or on a date from which a

medical practitioner or a midwife certifies that it is necessary for the employee's health or that of her unborn child.

Section 27.1 declares that an employee who has been in employment with an employer for longer than four months and who works for at least four days a week for that employer is entitled to three working days paid leave in the event when the employee's child is born, sick, death of spouse, life partner, parent, adoptive parent, grandparent, child, adopted child, grandchildren or sibling.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) Leave Policy Section 4.A(1) , 9 described that an employee is entitled to the following annual leave in an annual leave cycle with effect from 1 January of each year less than 10 years' service 22 working days and more than 10 years' service 26 working days.

DPSA Leave policy Section 4.B showed an employee will be granted 36 working days sick leave with full pay in a three year cycle and the Department shall require a medical certificate from the a registered and recognised medical practitioner if three or more consecutive days are taken as sick leave.

DPSA leave Policy 4.E (1) added that an employee will receive three paid working days per annual leave when his or her spouse /life partner gives birth or child, life partner is sick and five paid leave days per annual leave cycle in the event of death. Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Resolution 1 of 2012 5.1(1) added that as a recognition of long service all employees who have 10 or more years of continued service will qualify for 30 working days leave.

PSCBC Resolution 1 of 2012 added that with effect from 01 January 2013 an employee will be entitled to 5 working days family responsibility leave per annual leave cycle for utilisation if the employee's spouse or life partner gives birth to a child to a child or the employee's child, spouse or life [partner is sick and 5 working days leave per annual leave cycle for utilisation if the employee's child, spouse or life partner dies, or an employee's immediate family member dies.

In South African government as in the other African countries like Nigeria and Uganda, annual leave, maternity leave and family responsibility leave are considered to be offered to employees on full pay basis. The annual leave entitlement for

\employees who have worked for less than 10 years was 21 consecutive days as per BCEA but it has increased to 22 leave days in line with DPSA Leave Policy.

The Policy indicated that employees have qualified for 36 working days per three year cycle. Resolution 1 of 2012 has increased leave entitlement for employees who have worked for 10 years and more from 26 working days to 30 working days. The same resolution has revised three working days family responsibility leave to five working days to employees to use them in the event of birth and sickness and another five working days in the time of bereavement. Leave accruals in the government is rising other than reducing and it can have an impact on absenteeism as public servants consider leave entitlement as a benefit not a privilege.

2.3.5 Limpopo Legislature legislation on absenteeism management

Limpopo Legislature Conditions of Service Policy No. 02/2001, Section 6.12.2 states that every officer shall be entitled to 22 working days leave per annual cycle on full pay, officers who have completed ten or more years' service at the Legislature shall be entitled to 28 working days leave per annum, officers shall only be entitled to take vacation leave that has actually accrued. The policy further indicated that it is compulsory to take at least ten days' vacation leave during each annual leave cycle and the remaining days of vacation leave to be taken during the eighteen months following annual leave cycle failing which they lapse.

Section 6.12.3 stipulated that every officer irrespective of her marital status shall be entitled to four months maternity on full pay per pregnancy, an employee may commence maternity leave at any time from four weeks before the expected date of delivery, unless otherwise agreed or from a date on which a medical practitioner or midwife certifies that it is necessary for the employment's health or that of her unborn.

Section 6.12.6 cited that every officer is entitled to 88 working days sick leave on full pay over a three year cycle, an officer who is absent from work for any period due to illness shall notify his or her immediate supervisor without delay, an officer who is absent from work for one or two days due to illness does not normally have to submit a medical certificate but must complete sick leave forms immediately upon his or her return and the officer who is absent from work for three days or more must normally

submit a satisfactory medical certificate and must complete sick leave forms immediately up to his or her return.

In view of the above, employees in South African government departments and in legislative sector are aware that they are entitled to sick leave days from up to two days that the employer does not require medical certificate and they are vulnerable of abusing the system. In Limpopo Legislature employees who have less than 10 years' service are entitled to 22 working annual days which is the same in government but employees who have 10 years 'service and more are entitled to 28 working days and of which the number is more compared to 26 working days in government as per PSCB Resolution 1 of 2012.

2.4 Types of leaves in Limpopo provincial legislature

2.4.1 Annual leave

The basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997 Chapter three Section 20.1 annual leave cycle means the period of 12 months employment with the same employer immediate following an employee's commencement of employment or the completion of that employee's prior leave cycle.

 Limpopo Legislature Conditions of Service Policy No.02/2001 Part 1.1.1 displayed annual leave cycle as the period of twelve months employment with the Legislature immediately following an employee's commencement of employment in the completion of the employee's prior leave cycle.

2.4.2 Family Responsibility leave

Limpopo Legislature Conditions of Service Policy No. 02/2001, Section 6.12.19 explained that every officer shall be entitled to three working days family responsibility leave on full pay per annual leave cycle to attend to the birth, illness or death of a close relative.

2.4.3 Maternity

Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997 Section 25 described that an employee is entitled to at least four consecutive months' maternity leave. Limpopo Legislature Conditions of Service Policy No. 02 /2001 agreed to describe maternity

leave as entitled by every employee irrespective of marital status for four months full pay per pregnancy. .

2.4.4 Sick leave

Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 75 of 1997 Chapter Three Section 22(1) described sick leave cycle as the period of 36 months' employment with the same employer. Limpopo Legislature Conditions of Service Policy No.02/2001 Part 1. (1.1) further described sick leave cycle as the part of 36 months employment with the Legislature immediately following an employee's commencement of employment or the completion of that employee's prior sick leave.

2.5 Types of absence

Nel (2001:549) describes three main different categories of absence which are authorized absence sick leave and unauthorized absence.

2.5.1 Authorised leave

Chauke (2007: 18) explained that authorized absence as occurs when the employee is absent for any reason other than illness and it is accepted by management Employees should be encouraged to request for permission in advance only if the situation allows for it. An employee should arrange for this type of leave as reasons for such leave differ, leave can be provided for holidays, study etc.

2.5.2 Sick absence

Chauke (2007:18) describes sick absence as it occurs when a person is absent due to a reported illness, whether the illness is genuine or not. The answer of how many days should be regarded as a stage where a medical certificate is needed will be determined by the organisational policies. Ndhlovu (2012:10) confirms that absenteeism is considered a good barometer of staff- morale, an indirect measure of employee's health and well- being and is found to be associated with health related absences from work while Anderson (2008:12) added that sick absence means that an employee claims ill- health as the reason for the absence. In other words sick note will distinguish the type of leave an employee is taken.

2.5.3 Unauthorized absence

Anderson (2008:18) continued to explain unauthorized absence as the absence not falling into either sick or authorized leave and for which no reason is provided or accepted. In other words, an employee is not granted any permission prior to the absence.

2.6 Causes of absenteeism

There are many reasons of why employees intended to absent themselves from workplace and these include personal factors, environmental factors and social factors.

2.6.1 Personal factors

An Employee can decide to go on leave for different personal reasons. Personal reasons can include child care, going on holiday, study or writing examinations etc. the leave is granted by the employer to protect benefits like salary etc. An employee can request either a leave with full or leave without pay depending on the employer's leave policy. An employer will use own discretion to grant an employee leave with pay for any reason.

In event of illness, the employee is expected to produce evidence from a medical doctor in order to receive salary and its benefits BCEA and Limpopo Legislature Conditions of Service Policy have stipulated that if an employee is absent from work for more than two days, it require medical evidence of illness or a proof.

2.6.1.1 Family responsibility

Mogobe (2011: 10) said that the motivation to be absent from the work is determined by factors internal to the individual. Other factor can include family responsibility wherein the employee can notify the immediate supervisor of the need to take a leave of absence to care for a close family member .This type of leave needs to be recommended by the supervisor the supervisor and supposed to be authorised by the Head of Department.

Family responsibility results into an unavoidable event when employees' children suddenly become ill and employees often report absence. Anderson (2009: 22) cited

that employees often report absence because of events or conditions beyond their control and it is estimated that 40% of absenteeism is unavoidable.

Employees are then forced to miss work in order to look after their children, siblings, parents or husbands. Van der Westhuizen (2006: 48) concluded that number of dependants have some level of impact on employees' absenteeism. Madibana (2010:91) concluded that the main factors influencing absenteeism rates among nurses in NHS hospital in London was based on being responsible for taking care of the respondents' children or family members. Madibana agreed with what Mogobe has said and this showed that family responsibility is one factor that is unavoidable in London and South African government. The taking care of children and family members is not only a factor that is unavoidable but also causes a financial loss in any organisation as evinced by Biron, M. and Bamberger, P (2012:909) that the Municipality in United States of America which has 23,634 employees had a loss of approximately S127, 4 million a year due to sick leave. European Research Report (1997:29) concluded in the research done to eight European countries that vast amounts of money are involved in paying for absenteeism due to ill- health.

2.6.1.2 Public holidays

Every employee is responsible for notifying his or her supervisor when he or she absents himself from work and for submitting appropriate leave request form. The request form shall be approved by the employer in line with the applicable policy. The leave of absence of this nature must be requested in advance. This type of reason occurs when the employee decides to take a leave of absence in order to have a rest in a particular place different from where you live. Cairncross and Walker (2004:14) have concluded in the research undertaken to establish whether taking holidays leave over a period of 20 days or more is helpful in reducing workplace and other stress in Australia. Researchers have been conducted and found that stress is another factor that causes people to absent themselves from work. A Morneau Shepell Research Report (2014:14) conducted in Canada has concluded that there was a relationship between presenteeism, workplace stress and absenteeism. This study confirmed that taking a rest, holiday or a rest during a public holiday can reduce factors such as tiredness which can lead to stress.

Gyansah, Esilfie and Atta (2014:17) confirmed that in the study done that teachers who obtained permission from school authorities to write, examinations and attend classes during weekends, they get tired in the course of the week and therefore they stay away from school.

2.6.2 Environmental factors

Mogobe (2010:23) related organisational factor to conditions in the work environment such as job satisfaction, low morale, sick leave entitlement, inadequate remuneration and poor working conditions. There are also other legitimate reasons for employees to be absent related to organisational factors like age and organisational culture.

Mwanda (2010: 89) saw an organisational environmental factor as affecting service delivery negatively which confirms that there is a relationship between absenteeism and service delivery.

2.6.2.1 Job dissatisfaction

Job satisfaction becomes a key variable in psychological models of absenteeism through which a number of factors exert an indirect effect. Job satisfaction refers to the positive attitudes that employees may gain from work and determine the possibility of the measure to achieve a higher performance. If employees feel that their jobs are pleasing, they will be ready to offer extra effort at work for the benefit of the whole organisation. Job satisfaction is the one important key factor that also influences employees to come to work while job dissatisfaction is the opposite motivator that discourages employees to be committed to work.

When employees are dissatisfied in the work that they are doing, they are likely to leave the organisation. Most of employees in different organisations who find their jobs interesting will tend to be present at work all the time than always absence and resolved to terminate their services to avoid the pains and at the same time to get greener pastures. Pillay (2009:8) agreed that the primary reasons for a high turnover of nurses increased absenteeism and reduction in quality of patient care are job satisfaction and job security.

Yende (2005:16) cites that absenteeism is assumed to be a manifestation of withdrawal from or dissatisfaction of a job. Obasan (2011: 45) concluded in the study

conducted in Black horse industries Nigeria that there is a direct linkage between employee absenteeism and job satisfaction extrinsic sources such as pay and promotion. Ejere (2010:120) agreed that job satisfaction is one of the factors that caused teachers' absenteeism in Uyo Primary school Nigeria. There is no difference between the private and public sector job satisfaction in relation to absenteeism however Mashonganyika (2004:99) in the study of the Shop floor workers in a motor manufacturing plant South Africa concluded that the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism is complex and unclear. This evokes further study to check if whether the Legislator has the same challenge.

The aim of organisation to pay and promote employees is to enhance the employee attitude towards the job and work productivity. Researchers in some African countries like Nigeria and South Africa are agreeing that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism. Is this the case in the legislative sector hence the employees of any organisation are motivated by the satisfaction of their jobs?

2.6.2.2 Low morale

Koen-Muller (2005:94) saw low morale as an organisational factor that does influence absenteeism in the workplace. Low morale involves the attitude and perception that employees have towards the job on the whole organisation. Employees who have positive morale are always willing to perform at work than employees who are having low morale. There are root causes of low morale such as job security, working conditions, remuneration etc. When employees 'morale is high, they are motivated to work harder and contribute towards the achievement of organisational goals than when they are less motivated. Koen – Muller (2005:94) concluded that the organisational factor that does influence absenteeism at Ngqura Harbour Project in Canada is low – morale.

2.6.2.3 Low salary remuneration

Salary plays a distinctive role on how well the employee performs. In other words, incentive pays on the work that the employee performs and increases productivity in the organisation. Khan, Nawaz, Aleem and Hamed (2011: 2702) concluded that facets of job satisfaction such as pay, promotion, job satisfaction, job autonomy

relation with co-workers, relationship with supervisor and nature of the work, significantly affect the level of job satisfaction among autonomous medical institutions of Pakistan. Mogobe (2010:67) confirmed that an incentive programmeme provides an employee with a boast to their motivation to avoid unnecessary absenteeism. Singh (2012:58) concluded that lack of promotion opportunities amongst other factors in nursing fraternal was identified as the critical factor of absenteeism. Salary payment does not impact on absenteeism only but also helps to motivate and retain employees in the organisation. Mabindisa (2013:101) agreed that paying employees a market related salary may help management in retaining valuable employees.

2.6.2.4 Poor working conditions

Nyathi (2008:24) identified working conditions that may contribute to absenteeism as adequate group cohesion, inadequate delegation of autonomy, role ambiguity, ineffective routinisation and the effect of the workload in the workplace. Good working conditions arise from values that the organisation views as important to its missions and at same time employees are also entitled to a safe and hazard free environment.

2.6.2.5 Ageing workforce

Ndhlovu (2012: 69) concludes that the highest absenteeism rate was found at age 45 to 49 years. Anderson (2009:23) added that the impact of the aging workforce an organisation has become a vital research area while Kgaphola (2010: 20) on the other hand suggests that the older employees have higher rate of unavoidable absence due to poorer health associated with aging and anger recovery when injured. Anderson (2009:24) suggested that South African organisations will be faced with the ageing workforce because of a decline in the number of young employees entering the organisation owing to the impact of HIV/AIDS.

2.6.2.6 Negative organisational culture

Employee group belief in the legitimacy of absence taking also influences absenteeism. This can develop strong determinants of absence behaviour by the employees. Employers' believe that absenteeism can be reduced by making the workplace a positive and welcoming place. Positive organisational culture also helps

to promote job satisfaction and job satisfaction can reduce absenteeism. Employees in some organisations where there is a permissible culture will regard sick leave as a benefit not a privilege. Adogboyega, Dele and Ayodeyi (2015:68) found that organisational culture significantly improved employee's happiness in carrying out their jobs which in turn reduces the employees' absenteeism in Cadbury Nigeria. It is important for managers to be interested in their employees 'attitude to guard against incoming problems. Prevention however will generate a positive attitude that will lead to improvement on job productivity.

2.6.2.7 Organisational gaps

Department of Public Service and Administration Leave Policy allow employees to take up to two days consecutive paid sick days without a medical certificate. Employees regard sick leave as a benefit and sometimes abuse it. If you know the organisation's system then it is easy for them to manipulate it regarding absenteeism, other employees will consider sick leave as a benefit to be utilised. Employees in government are aware that Basic Conditions of Employment Policy granted 36 paid sick leave days to an employee within three year cycle. Some employees will try to take sick leave days up to two consecutive sick days than three consecutive days to avoid medical certificate submission.

Kgaphola (2010:20) stated that where there is a sick leave policy in the company, it is unfortunately true that many employees abuse the provision for paid sick leave as contained in the policy and concluded that the main causes of the high rate of absenteeism in the East Rand area are the poor working conditions, poor management style, low employee morale, job dissatisfaction, abuse of sick leave entitlement, low salary and stress. This is confirmed by Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement (PILIR) (2010:41) that abuse of sick leave entitlement as stated in Basic Conditions of Employment Act and post management of sick leave do not only impact on service delivery but also have financial implication.

Executive Summary Report (2010) discovered that employees in both national and provincial departments are absent or sick on Mondays. Public Service Commission Report (PSC) (2010:25) further confirmed that employees were most likely to commence sick leave on Mondays, Fridays as well as the day before and after public

holidays. PSC (2004:31) found that there is high rate of abusing official time where employees are applying for sick leave with full pay to moonlight.

Kgaphola (2010:20) stated clearly that where there is a sick leave policy in the company then employees are vulnerable to abuse the provision of which it is happening in government according to the above findings but it is unclear if the same is occurring in the legislative sector.

2.6.3 Social factors

Social factor are the facts and experiences that affect person's attitudes and lifestyles. Mogobe (2011: 24) defined crime, poverty and erratic transport systems as elements that have an adverse impact on absenteeism.

2.6.3.1 Poverty

It is a social problem that permeates in every dimension of culture organisation and society. This includes sustained low levels of income for employees in the organisation that will also result in lack of decision making ability, communications and transportation. Poverty on a world scale has many historical causes in South Africa. Yende (2005: 33) cited that the key dimension of absence culture concerns norms.

2.6.3.2 Crime

Crime can involve amongst others the verbal threats, threatening behaviour or physical assaults by co- workers such as current employees or manager. Any form of crime can be violence by a co-worker. Appelbaum and Shappiro (2006:18) concluded that individuals who have grown more attached to their jobs and organizations as a whole are more likely to follow rules set forth by their workplace which precedes over ethical decision making. World Health Organisation (WHO) Report (2004:59) estimated that 30 % of absenteeism and workplace accidents caused by alcohol dependence.

2.6.3.3 Distance from work

Distance appears to influence the absence from work due to transport difficulties. Koen- Muller (2005:91) concluded that transport problems do not have a major

impact in the absenteeism rate while Madibana (2010:85) agreed that lack of transport amongst other factors contributed to absenteeism of professional nurses in London. Chauke (2007:109) concluded in the study conducted on the private Security industry in Gauteng Province that one factor that contributed to the absenteeism of security officers is the transportation of the employees.

2.7 Absenteeism management in South Arica

Absence from work causes South African government billions of rands every year. Beira (2008:29) confirms that the estimated cost of work absenteeism in South Africa is approximately R1, 3 million per 500 employees and this adds unnecessary pressures to the daily operations of an organisation. If employees are absent from work due to illness either on Mondays, Fridays and any working day, they must produce a sick note to support their absence. Managers must make sure that employees are forced to complete sick leave forms every time they take sick leave so that they are able to monitor and identify if there is any pattern with certain employees. The other problem is that the large amount of leave taken is impacting on employees' performance that will also hinder organisational operations. Managers must also make sure that employees are aware of applicable annual and sick leave policies. Limpopo Legislature as a sector is also experiencing the same when it comes to the loss of rands and must do the same so that employees are complying with relevant legislations when completing leave forms.

Global Competitiveness Report (2014) ranked South Africa 53rd out of 148 countries in the rate of sick leave taken in the government and this is a greater threat to productivity Public Service Report (2010:25) confirmed that the cost of sick leave measured in terms of salary expenditure came to R 631 633 660. In other words South Africa is not doing well in absenteeism management and if not managed properly, then there will be an adverse outcome on organisations. There are many factors that are contributing negatively towards these ratings and the costs.

2.8 Absenteeism management in legislative sector and its impact on work productivity

Legislative sector is constituted by the National Parliament and provincial legislatures. The aim of this sector approach is to help to strengthen the

Constitutional democracy and to ensure democracy. Plaatjie, Borchard and Layman (2014:18) defined the Parliament of South Africa as consists of nine provinces which play an important role in the execution of oversight in terms of legislative developments, implementation of laws, application of budgets and the effective management of government departments amongst others.

The nine provinces include the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. Absenteeism may disrupt this Legislative objective by disturbing the effectiveness of providing administrative support in strengthening democracy. Ndhlovu (2012:27) cited that managing workplace absenteeism remain a challenge for all employers and can be reduced by tightening up policies and procedures relating to control of absenteeism and intensifying monitoring processes an absent employees. Managers are responsible for management of performance.

Performance standards are set at the beginning of each financial year and where good performance is expected to meet targets quarterly and annually. Limpopo Provincial Legislature is part of those institutions which set their performance standards yearly. In the 2011/2012 financial year, the institution has failed to get clean audit report as expected but it received disclaimer report. The performance of the institution was not good and the causes of this poor performance can be attributed to a number of factors. The performance of an individual employee is vital to support the overall mission of the Legislature of which it is to strengthen the democracy. Low morale is one factor that can impact negatively on the organisation as a whole. High commitment of employees are likely to demonstrate higher levels of performance Employees in Limpopo Provincial Legislature showed a low morale behaviour as indicated in the Attendance register of 2014/2015. According to this register employees have the pattern of reporting for duty late on Mondays and sign-off early on Fridays.

Maintaining good employee relations is one of the tools for any organisation to succeed. One way of maintaining a healthy employee relationship in the organisation is to make sure that tasks are carried out by every employee in that organisation to achieve its goal. Managers are responsible to make sure employees are present every time when they are expected to perform their duties entrusted on them. Therefore absence from work can have an impact on work productivity in an

organisation. Mwanda (2010:88) concludes that there is an inverse relationship between absenteeism and service delivery. There is no organisation in whatever country that would not want to improve the level of its corporate performance. This can be done by reducing absenteeism and improve the level of effective absenteeism management. Organisations are striving to ensure that there is a high level of productivity but unfortunately, employee absence disrupts the whole arrangements.

This also confirmed that the above poor performance happened as a result of low engagement of employees and it caused a risk to the institution to operate optimally. Absenteeism, no matter the reason, is a costly and disruptive problem facing managers, it is costly because it reduces output and disruptive because it means the modification of schedules and programmes Matteson (2002: 205). It is important that sufficient staff members are available for working hours to provide all administrative duties to the organisation's daily activities. The real damage resulted from giving little time to the job and not going beyond the job description. This pattern of behaviour threatens the core business of the Legislature. Given the above challenges, it is clear that Limpopo Provincial Legislature cannot be able to achieve the three core functions if employees are not in for their jobs. The above challenges have made the researcher to be interested in conducting this study to identify and analyse the factors and the current monitoring systems that contribute to the cause of high rate of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

Mogobe (2010:15) explains absenteeism as one of thorniest issues in the workplace and organisations often find themselves battling with a large number of employees who do not report to work as expected. This is a national challenge and legislative institutions are not in exclusion. Ndhlovu (2012:27) cited that workplace absenteeism can be reduced by tightening up policies and procedures relating to control of absenteeism and intensifying monitoring processes on the absent employees. Mogobe (2010:27) defined proper absenteeism management as guidelines that are clear and consistent. This will also involve the accountability of the manager and employee in applying the applicable guidelines. The involvement of the two parties will assist in reducing the seriousness of absenteeism.

There are situations where absenteeism can either benefit the employer or an employee. When an employee is taken an absence from work for legitimate reasons, then it is beneficial to both the employer and the employee. Employee who is ill reduces the risks of unproductive and allows productive workforce to operate. Kgaphola (2010:37) agreed by saying although most absences have negative impact on the organisation there are situations in which the organisation may benefit by an employee's voluntarily choosing not to come to work. There are factors that contribute either on annual or sick leave and these factors are more or less the same with those stated above.

2.9 Management intervention strategies in Limpopo Provincial Legislature

Managing absenteeism is still a challenge in all sectors and Limpopo Legislature has not yet overcome these challenges as it renders the core functions in the province. The mandate of making sure that it is there to make provincial laws, oversee the executive departments and make provision so that the citizens of the province are participating in an effective way. These should happen if the administrative employees are always available to provide an administrative support to Members of Provincial Legislature. Employees' absence from work will cripple these functions and the province as a whole. Abuse of leave entitlement is regarded as an overriding and challenging in instances where employees do not comply with the policies and guidelines. PSC Report (2010) found that leave accruals in South African government departments is higher and implicated on non-compliance with prescripts in work environment.

Limpopo Legislature Conditions of Services policy as stipulated above gives permission to the employees to take up to two consecutive paid sick leaves without producing a medical certificate. Employee is also entitled to 88 paid sick leave days per three year cycle. Kgaphola (2010:20) has already proven in the above that employees unfortunately decided to abuse these types of provisions. Employees have the responsibility of rendering a quality service to their clients while managers have equally so have a right to expect them to do so. Intentional leave of absence is by a right a violation of laws but managers in Limpopo Legislature are tasked with the duty of identify if there is a trend of any violation of guidelines and acts in line with policies. The reason being managers in Limpopo Legislature are held

accountable for the performance of the institution in line with their annual performance agreement.

There are several management strategies that are aimed to promote a healthy workforce and reduce absenteeism. They are occupational health and safety, Employee Assistance Programme, teamwork, good absenteeism record management and effective communication.

2.9.1 Occupational Health and Safety

Employees who have taken absence from work due to injuries related can be helped through employees' participation in wellness programmes that will keep them at work. Managing absence due to sicknesses requires effective people management policies and may be helped by a focus on employee well- being. Employees with health problems are more frequently or for longer periods absent from work than employees who are healthy. Workplace absenteeism can be decreased by addressing the health problems of employees. Employees could decide to take sick leave depending on their health wellness. Employees of Limpopo Legislature are eligible to fill in sick leave forms which will be evidenced by the medical certificate as stipulated in the Limpopo Legislature Conditions of Service Policy. The Policy allows employees to take one to two days sick leave without producing a medical certificate.

Health risks are the key factors to absenteeism but healthy environment promote healthy workers who will overcome absenteeism. Health and Safety policies tend to focus on accident avoidance and safety however it will also consider the impact of the physical and psychological work environment. This approach can bring in the benefits that are meaningful to the organisation. Anderson (2009: 85) concluded in the study conducted in on–site employer sponsored childcare that poor working conditions amongst other factors serve as the main cause of tellers' unscheduled absences. Poor working conditions include injury, sickness etc.

Healthy working environment includes continuous assessment of risks to health and training on issues. WHO (2010:99) recommended that there is much that needs to be done to improve the health safety and well-being of workers globally by protecting and promoting health in the workplace. Kgaphola (2010:39) indicated that employers might reduce employee absenteeism and improve organisational commitment by

helping employees reduce financial stress by means of effective workplace financial education. This can also help in reducing the risks of injury and maintains workplace safety. Ndhlovu (2010:32) stipulated that occupation and health committee focus on the provision of a safe working environment and monitors issues of compliance. It is of vital role to establish this committee that will adopts the advocacy role of the employees in any organisation.

Matlhape (2003:31) agreed that many studies were done which concluded that health and performance at work identify occupational stress of being an important consideration at all levels of seniority in the workplace. Stress as an occupational health is therefore increasingly directing organisations to focus their Occupational Health and Safety not only on curative physical health care and disability but also explore preventative programmes that will result in enhanced work performance. Risk Management Report (2014/2015) concluded that health and safety in the Limpopo Legislature is high and can cause health hazards and damage at any time.

2.9.2 Employee Assistance Programme

Yende (2005:12) defines an Employee Assistance programme as the systematically organised and continuing provision of counselling, advice and assistance provided or funded by the employer designed to help employees and their families with problems arising from work- related and external resources. Malatji (2001: 34) sees Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) as designed to enable management to build the productivity capacity of each individual in the organisation. Merrick (2002, 43) summarises that EAPs should improve workplace efficiency and reduce absenteeism.

Naicker and Fouche (2003:29) concluded in their study that absenteeism was usually the element rated the lowest pre-EAP and which showed the greater improvement post–EAP. Public Service Commission (2006:32) found that management commitment and leadership have proven to be one of the important aspects of influencing the successful functioning of EAPs. Kocakulah, Kelly, Mitchell and Ruggieri (2009:84) in the study of absenteeism problems and costs in the United States of America concluded that the implementation of EAP programme in the workplace will help the workers to deal with issues outside and inside of work that employees bring to the workplace and its goal is to minimize the effect that issues

such as parenting and marital issues have on the worker while on the job and assist with return to work.

Matihape (2003:37) concluded that EAPs strength in "healing" individuals and broken relationships can be transferred effectively to enhance organisations benefits from their human resources investments. In other words EAPs can address the costs of an organisation by reducing workplace absenteeism and unplanned absences. This programme gives employees a way to cope with personal issues that can have a negative impact on their job performance like work- related stress. Mogobe (2010:31) encourages proactive mechanisms like EAP initiatives to be employed in the organisation by addressing the problem as soon as there are indicators of pattern of absenteeism rather than waiting until all sick leave credits have been exhausted. Legislature Human Resource Strategy (2013/2015) confirmed that employee assistance programme in the Legislature is dysfunction.

2.9.2 Teamwork

Mogobe (2010:70) identified team spirit as one of benefits of absenteeism management. Mathlape (2003:37) concluded EAPs is also well placed to build relationships within different teams as well as between teams in order to facilitate alliance in the quest for achieving organisational objectives. Kriek and Venter (2009:122) found that outdoors, interventions as more successful indoors teambuilding interventions. Mendischi and Olta (2009:224) see teambuilding as means talking, discussing, asking and answering, being ready for brainstorming or for working more than usual, listening and asking for suggestions, respecting and following the indications received, keeping the moral as high as possible and motivating the people when needed.

Mdunjana (2010: 42) also sees teamwork programme as revealed to be very effective in the current study as revealed by the results after the intervention. In other words, teambuilding helps to foster better and open communication between the employees and managers that will improve the professional relations, understanding and cooperation. The Legislature Human Resources Strategy 2014 /2015 proceeded to indicate that employees in Limpopo Legislature are working in silos. This can lead to strategic objectives not achieved as others will be reluctant in delivering the good service. Ndhlovu (2012:31) agrees that managers through the team development

effort encourage effective communication among team members, motivating others and the development of problem-solving skills. Institutions can achieve more through working together and by breaking silos in sections.

2.9.3 Monitoring of workplace absenteeism

The proper record keeping helps in the situation when employees return to work because it provides a good opportunity for a manger to examine the individual records. The manager's responsibility is to caution the employee and emphasizes the importance of work attendance. The records determine exactly whether the employee needs a counselling and what type of counselling to be effected. In the above paragraph, it is indicated that counselling is aimed at identifying symptoms of problems and come up with amicable solutions. The other reason of record keeping is to find out if the employee absence is prong so that manager should arrange another alternative person so that the work does not suffer. The recording of absenteeism is also assist managers in reporting sessions so that they able to give statistics during management meetings. In giving these reports then corporate decision is taken as a way forward. Managers are expected to keep records of all employees that are accurate and simple to analyse. The below figure 2.1 illustrates one of options offered by a software programme for the analysis of absenteeism.

Table 2.1 Option offered by an absenteeism management software programme

GROUP TRENDS
- Department/section   Education   - Age   Length of service   - Gender and race   Residential area   - marital status   Go to main menu

 Source: Nel van Dyk, Haasbroek, Sono and Werner, 2004:551

The above type of absenteeism information is shown information such as recording department, age, gender, and marital status can be recorded in order to assist managers in making correct analysis of the nature and the cause of absenteeism in

any organisation. The important issues that will be detected during the analysis such as incapacity, illness, counselling can be dealt with before they result into dismissals. Monitoring of absenteeism emanates from line managers as their function and high level of absenteeism in the institution is an indication of poor management. Ndhlovu (2012: 29) points out those monitoring systems to monitor and record attendance of work are put in place to assist management with simple accurate functional data that facilitates informed decision- taking at management level. The presence of employees in Limpopo Legislature serves as a focus of productivity and they need to be monitored by managers. Personnel and Salary (PERSAL) financial system on other hand is one useful tool that is used to monitor movement of Limpopo Legislature employees.

2.9.4 Effective communication

Communication is the key in managing absenteeism which managers can utilize to reduce high rate of employee absenteeism in any organisation. Some of managers believe that the only way to reduce absenteeism is by disciplining the employees while the other tools that can be used to reduce absenteeism. Kgaphola (2010:21) confirmed that one of the communication strategies to control employee absenteeism that managers use is absenteeism feedback intervention. Why is it important for the managers to communicate with other employees? It is relevant to the employees to know Leave policies and guidelines that govern their actions. The only better way is to communicate the message to make them aware   that there are existing policies and help them in interpretation. Managers must introduce policy awareness programme so that the message is delivered to the relevant people.

Some of the employees are acting in a different manner because they do not know the consequences thereof. Policies of the institution should be clearly communicated and accessible to all employees Broucek and Bass (2008:45) demonstrated that when people receive feedback documenting their absences as well as the average number of absences during the same period by their co-workers, their attendance improves, significantly reducing subsequent absenteeism among individuals with the higher than average absenteeism.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, absenteeism was shown to be caused by different factors which are personal, organisational and environmental. The chapter goes on showing the effective absenteeism management. The chapter referred each item to relevant literature review. The next chapter will provide the detailed research methodology which is implemented.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Neuman (2000: 63) states that research methodology is what makes Social Science scientific. The tool used systematically to solve the research problem. In this study, the method which was used to carry out this research is detailed. The attention is paid to the research design, sampling, population and how the information was collected from the research participants and how data was analysed. The researcher has utilised semi- structured interviews to collect information from the respondents. The focus was on the managers' and employees' experiences on the factors contributing to absence and their responses on how absence should be properly managed. The research methodology in this regard was qualitative in nature. Ethical considerations pertaining to the research are also discussed.

3.2 Different types of research paradigms

Paradigms are patterns of beliefs that regulate inquiry within a discipline. There are few paradigms that are used in the research to guide on how the researcher should act with regard to inquiry. The few paradigms commonly used in the research are objectivism, interpretivism and constructionism. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2012:309) state that objectivity refers to the ability to know things as they are. In other words, objectivism philosophy argues that there is one objective reality and people of the world can be discovered through an objective manner. De Vos et al (2012: 309) maintain that interpretivists believe that subject matter of the social sciences is fundamentally different from that of the natural sciences. The paradigm supports the view that there are many truths and multiple realities and the real world can be discovered through a systematic interactive methodological approach. De Vos et al (2012:310) argue that constructionists believe that there is no reality "out there" only a narrative reality that changes continuously.

Three research designs were discussed for the purpose of this study. The three are phenomenology, grounded theory and case studies.

3.2.1 Phenomenology

Phenomenology refers to a person's perception of the meaning of an event. The aim of phenomenological research is to describe the experience of a lived phenomenon and attempts to understand people's perceptions, perspectives and understandings of a particular situation. De Vos et al (2012: 316) define phenomenology as intent to understand the phenomenon under study on their own terms and therefore to provide a description of human experiences as experienced by the subjects. In phenomenological research, the participants are asked to describe their experience as they perceive them

3.2.2 Grounded theory

Grounded theory is a study wherein information is collected and analysed and then theory is developed that is grounded in the data. The aim is to understand the process which the subjects have learnt. This philosophy is developed to be more concerned with generation rather than the testing of hypothesis. De Vos et al (2012:318) define grounded theory as a specific highly developed rigorous set of procedures for producing formal substantive of social phenomena.

3.2.3 Case studies

Case studies are in-depth examinations of people or groups of people. They are not used to test hypotheses but may be generated from case studies. The method is used to narrow down a broad field of study to one easy researchable topic. De Vos et al (2012:320) define case study design as more of a choice of what to study than a methodological one.

Kruger (2002:182) states that a case study is pertains to the fact that a limited number of units of analysis such as an individual, a group or an institution are studied intensively. The case study research provides detailed information about a particular subject.

In this study the researcher intended to get inputs from experienced managers and employees on absenteeism in the Limpopo Legislature. Based on the above, a qualitative research with case study was found to be a suitable design in this study. It provided in-depth knowledge of absenteeism in the Limpopo Legislature and offered

a chance to build a linkage with the participants. Phenomenology was relevant as Limpopo Legislature as an institution was targeted and the researcher selected the managers and employees in order to get details of their experiences about absenteeism. Managers and employees were the ones who will be able to identify the factors of absenteeism and gave inputs on how best absenteeism can be managed. Mogobe (2011:39) agreed that conducting qualitative research enable the research to gain an understanding of how absenteeism is viewed and experienced.

The researcher has analysed various factors which motivated employees to absent themselves from workplaces. The type of paradigm used in this study is phenomenological in nature as the researcher tried to understand the essence of absenteeism by examining the views of both managers and employees who have experienced the phenomenon.

3.3 Research design

Kumar (2005:84) maintains that research design is a plan, structure or strategy of investigation conceived in such a way that it provides answers to research questions. It is vital for a researcher to utilise a research design which will assist to identify the type of evidence needed to answer the research question in a rightful way. In other words, research design articulates what data is required, what methods are going to be used to collect and analyse the data and how all of this is going to answer the research questions. There are also different types of designs which are used in any research by either quantitative or qualitative research as indicated above. The designs utilised determined by the purpose, the research questions and the methods available. There are two research designs which are quantitative and qualitative.

3.3.1 Quantitative research design

Neuman (2000:157) explains quantitative research as a technique that can produce quantitative data (i.e. data in the form of numbers).The numerical information in this case is an empirical representation of the abstract ideas. The research design will be able to equip the researcher with in-depth knowledge of absenteeism management but it is time consuming and not very cost effective. The data collected in this case is numerical descriptions which provide limited results rather than the detailed narrative and give less elaborate accounts of human views.

3.3.2 Qualitative research design

Holiday (2008: 8) describes qualitative research as the methodology that looks deeply into the behaviour within specific social setting rather than at broader population and on the other hand Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005:188) maintain that qualitative research is a descriptive form of research. In other words, the authors agree that qualitative research is not limited to definable variables but provide the in-depth examinations of phenomena.

Qualitative research allows the researcher to understand different perspectives and experiences towards phenomenon. The researcher is able to understand the employees 'personal experiences of absenteeism in studying a limited number of cases in depth. The researcher decided to use qualitative design in this study.

The selected research design provided relevant answers to specify and scrutinise employees' absenteeism in Limpopo Legislature.   The research method for the purpose of this study is a qualitative one and it made use of semi-structured interviews. The questions were designed in an open-ended format in order to address the research objectives. Semi -structured interviews schedule was prepared and distributed to Managers and employees. They were interviewed individually in order to get the in-depth knowledge for absenteeism.

3.4 Population

The population in this study is the line managers and the employees of the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. It consists of a total number of 167 employees which composed of Senior Managers, Managers, Deputy Managers, Senior Administration Officers, Administration Officers and the general workers.

Welman and Kruger (2001: 46) stipulate that population is the study object which may be individuals, groups, organisations, human products and events or the conditions to which they are exposed. The population will mean the whole total number of population.

Limpopo Provincial Legislature is an individual institution out of nine Provincial Legislatures in South Africa. It consists of 162 total employees, 42 Managers and 120 other employees who are all taking part in absenteeism were studied as the

population for this study. This institution was intensively studied to determine the absence that is like a recurrence pattern.

Welman et al (2005: 64) continue to confirm that the smaller the total population, the relatively larger the sample should to ensure satisfactory results. Limpopo Legislature is a small institution which does not have district offices and its sample is likely to bring the satisfactory outcome.

3.5 Study area

Limpopo Provincial Legislature was formally established in 1994 in terms of section 114(2) of the Constitution of Republic of South Africa and it is made up of 49 Members of Provincial Legislature. 167 staff members are employed to provide administrative duties to them. Limpopo Provincial Legislature is situated in Lebowakgomo government complex which is 60 kilometres south of Polokwane.

3.6 Sampling

De Vos (1998:42) defines a sample as a small representative of a whole. In this research the study of the whole entire population will be a time-consuming and produce a massive amount of time. In this sampling, the researcher need to interview and observe only one of phenomena involved to gain a usable idea. The size and representativeness is what matters most in sampling. The study has used sampling strategy types which are purposive sampling focus on Senior Managers, line Managers and general workers. The researcher is purposefully selected, four Senior Manager and six general workers. The researcher selected the respondents purposefully in order to collect the in-depth information from line managers of their understanding in approving leave of absence of employees and employees themselves.

Employees who are studied fall between grades of general workers, Senior Administration officers, Administration officers and Managers and Senior Managers who are the respondents to this study. The study was done in order for the researcher to get the perceptions and reasons of employees' leaves of absence.

De Vos (1998: 42) describes a sample as a small representative of a whole. In this research the study of the whole entire population will be a time- consuming and

produce a massive amount of time. In other words, sample design is a definite plan determined before any data are actually collected for obtaining a sample from a given population. In sampling, the researcher is needed to interview or observe only one of phenomena involved to gain a usable idea. The researcher attempted to study the sample of four Managers, one Human Resource Practitioner, one Labour Relation Officer and four other employees. Other employees included Service Officers, Transport Officers and Administration Officers etc.

The researcher intended to select this sampling to get the inputs from these participants so that the information collected could be used by all employees in the Limpopo Legislature.   The other reason was that Managers have relevant information as employees are reporting directly to them and Human Resource Practitioner is responsible for keeping all leave records of the institution and has the knowledge of what is taking place daily as far as absenteeism is concerned. Labour Relations Officer has the information regarding the grievances lodged either by the manager or employee when there is dissatisfaction on how absenteeism is handled between the two parties. .

There are many types of sample designs but in this study the researcher has used a purposive sampling method other than probability sampling. Probability sampling is a method of sampling that utilizes form of random selection wherein the researcher must set up some procedure that assures that the different units in the population have equal probabilities of being chosen. Purposive sampling involves the deliberate selection of a particular unit of the universe.

Purposive sampling represents a group of different non-probability sampling technique and depended on the judgement of researcher when coming to the selection of employees.

Babbie (2005: 486) supports that using purposive sampling the researcher selected the participants on the basis of own judgement. The total number of 10 respondents is small when compared with the probability sampling technique and furthermore the selection was not randomly based units from the whole employees compliment. The sample was studied in order to enable the researcher to pursue qualitative results not to make generalisation from the sample.

3.7 Data collection methods

Data collection is a process of gathering and measuring information on targeted variables in an established way and also enables a researcher to answer research questions. There are two types of data collection methods which are qualitative and quantitative. The researcher found relevant to use a qualitative method in the form of primary and secondary data collections. In primary data collection, the researcher used semi structured interviews questions while in the secondary data collection the researcher used Legislature documents such as Persal print outs, leave reports, leave register, attendance register. Williams (2006:247) pointed out that a range of methods may be used to collect data, including interviews, group discussions and questionnaires. Mouton (2001:150) further explained that the data collection methods include the use of semi- structured interviews with open ended questions.

Semi- structured interviews are open and allow new ideas to be brought up by the respondents during the interviews. In this study semi-structured interviews were relevant as the researcher has prepared questions in advance and the questions helped the researcher to be competent. Semi structured interviews were conducted because the researcher was elaborating and clarifying questions and statements while on the other hand respondents were expected to give detailed views with regard to absenteeism of employees The researcher used an interview guide during semi- structured interviews that provided a clear set of questions and recorded answers consistently across the interviews (see Appendix "Ä").

Since the researcher also used paper based interview guide to follow, tape recorder was used to capture diverged answers and also helped in the analysis stage. The process was flexible as the participants were allowed to express and share their views freely. The researcher has scheduled the date and time of when the interviews will be taking place. The interview was scheduled for 30 minutes for each respondent but the time lasted for 40 minutes.

The researcher also took the initiative of explaining the purpose of the study to respondents and showed them how their inputs should be important to the recommendations. The language used to conduct interviews was English. All the interview dates were recorded in the diary so that the researcher would know who is following and when. The respondents were interviewed one by one according to date

and time agreed on between the researcher and the respondent. The interview was conducted in their offices to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The researcher was following the prepared interview schedule to conduct the interviews. The researcher was noting their responses and also recording them in the voice recorder at the same time that ensured the information is captured correctly.

The following data collection instruments were used which are, semi-structured interviews and documentation.

3.7.1 Semi structured interviews

Semi-structured interview was conducted to Senior Managers and lower level employees to collect answers that helped to analyse the data. The following is the information that was used to arrive at qualitative primary information.

3.7.1.1 Semi structured interview session

All four Managers, one Human Resources Practitioner, one Labour Relation Officer and four other employees were interviewed. The following are the questions formulated and asked to the 10 participants during the interview to gather the information. The questions structured were prepared on the interview guide and utilised to source the first hand data in a qualitative way.

3.7.1.2 Background information of respondent

Respondents were requested to provide answers to the questions such as their gender, age, current position, number of years in the Limpopo Legislature and the number of employees who are reporting to them.

3.7.1.3 Knowledge of absenteeism

Respondents were asked the following in order for the researcher to find out their knowledge about the concepts absenteeism: the understanding of respondents about the concept absenteeism, the role respondents are playing as far as absenteeism management is concerned in the Limpopo Legislature and to provide four causes of absenteeism with its reasons.

3.7.1.4 Absenteeism management

Respondents were asked the following in order for the researcher to get information on absenteeism management: the challenges that are faced when respondents apply for leave of absence, the policy barriers encountered as far as applying for absence is concerned and what would be done to prevent absenteeism in the Limpopo Legislature.

Welman et al (2005:142) put it clearly by saying that participants may have insufficient knowledge about themselves may be unable to verbalise their innermost feelings or may deliberately provide incorrect answers. Based on the above, Annual Performance Plan of 2013/2014 was used to check the annual performance of the institution, Attendance registers of 2013/2014, Annual leave reports of 2013/2014 were also used to check the consistency of leave of absence and the type of leaves Legislative Policies were also served as basis of the argument

3.7.2 Documentation

Secondary data was collected for the purpose of obtaining information to assist in the analysis. Documents were provided and visited to check the trend at which employees are taking leave of absence. The documents such as Annual Leave Reports, Persal Leave reports attendance registers were also used to gather the information.

3.8 Data analysis

De Vos (2005:333) states that data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. Data was gathered and variables that have similar meaning were identified and prepared together into themes for analysing, presentation and discussion. The researcher was concentrated more on the feelings of the managers and employees about the causes of absenteeism which is what matters most in this study. The data collected from attendance registers, annual records and leave records were compared in order to determine consistency of the causes of absenteeism.

3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles are adhered to in this study. Formal letter was written to the head of Department and permission was granted that this type of research must be conducted in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. (See the attached Appendix "B")

The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents so that they will exercise their right to choose to participate in the research. Cooper and Schindler (2001:112) emphasise that the respondents participate on voluntary basis and they pull out anytime they wish. Managers and employees were given guarantee of their anonymity so that they know that the information they provided will be treated as confidential.

After receiving approval to go on with the study, the researcher continued to schedule the appointments with the respondents. Before the interviews began, the researcher explained the aim of the study to make the participants to feel free and understand that taking part in the study is voluntarily. The researcher confirmed with them that there will be no violation of privacy and guaranteed confidentiality will be maintained even though the questions about their biographical information are asked. The researcher further confirmed that their names will not be included on their answers to prevent dishonesty. The interviews were conducted in their offices to ensure anonymity. Babbie (2007:64) stipulates that anonymity is guaranteed in a research project when neither the researcher nor the reader of the findings can identify a person with a given response. The researcher made sure that there was no harmful situation that the respondents are exposed of.

The data that was gathered via PERSAL, attendance register and leave register showed personal particulars. The information was used but treated as confidential.

3.10. Conclusion

The chapter discussed the research design and methodology that were used to gather the answers from the respondents, the sample and sampling method and the analysis technique employed to answer the research questions of this study. Semi-structured interview was used to conduct the research study and the information collected was analysed in chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher is dealing with the empirical findings from the case study in chapter three wherein ten respondents were interviewed. Data collected through semi-structured interviews in chapter three were analysed, discussed and reported in the form of themes and sub-themes which are the answers from the respondents, The questions during the interviews includes the background of the respondents, knowledge of absenteeism and its management.

4.2 Analysis and findings

Information collected was analysed and presented in three sections. The first section which included the background information of the respondents was presented in the form of tables. The second and the third sections consisted of main theme and sub-theme.

4.2.1 Background information

Table 4.1: Gender of respondents

Male	Female
6	4

In the above table, it is shown that the number of male interviewed was six and the female was four which means that male were more than the female counter part. Three male were Senior Managers and the three male were at the lower position other than Senior Manager. Out of four female, one female was Senior Manager and three females were at lower level of Senior Manager. It was detected from the above table that there were few females who were appointed in the senior management positions.

Table 4. 2: Age of respondents

18- 25years	`26 – 35years	36 – 45years	46years and above
-	1	5	4

The above table indicates that the age of the respondents who took part in the study ranged from 26 and above. Out of ten respondents who took part in the study nine of them were aged 36 years and above. One respondent was between 26 – 35years. Five respondents were ranged from 36- 45years and the last group was having four respondents who were between 46 –and above.

Table 4.3: Position of respondents

Senior Manager	Section/Unit Manager	Senior Administration Officer and lower
4	4	2

In the above table, it is shown that eight of the ten respondents are in the category of Manager Position while the remaining two are on the level of Senior Administration Officer.

Table 4.4: Years of experience

1 - 10years	11 – 15years	16 -20years	21years and above
2	6	2	-

It is depicted from the above table that two employees have one to ten years of experience, six of them have eleven to fifteen years and two employees have from sixteen to twenty years.

Most of the employees are falling between sixteen and twenty years of experience. It is found from the ten respondents interviewed that there is no one who worked in the legislature for more than twenty years.

Table 4.5: Employees under supervision

2 Senior Administration Officer	4 Section/Unit Managers	4 Senior Managers
0	0 – 20	21 and above

The table shows that there are no employees who are reporting to Senior Administration Officer from the ten employees who were interviewed. Those who are reporting under Section/Unit Managers are ranging from one to twenty and not more. Those who are reporting to Senior Manager are twenty one and more. The respondents have enough information that will help in the recommendations stage.

4.2.2 Main themes

Researcher categorised the questions into three main themes and three sub themes. The themes were as follow: knowledge of absenteeism, the role of manager or employee and absenteeism management. Each main theme was allocated its three sub themes as indicated below.

4.2.2.1 Knowledge of absenteeism

The first main theme identified was the respondent's knowledge of absenteeism. The theme was separated into three sub themes which are: the understanding of absenteeism, the role of manager or employee when it comes to absenteeism and the causes of absenteeism

(a) Sub-theme 1: Understanding of absenteeism

What is your understanding about absenteeism?

Respondents were asked to indicate their understanding of the concept absenteeism and the following are some of their responses:

Respondent Ä "Absenteeism is when employee is not reporting to work for various reasons"

Respondent B "Not committed to work"

Respondent C "Intentional absence from work and has a habit that develop for a time"

Respondent D "Conduct wherein an employee does not come to work with or without supervisor's approval"

Three respondents have agreed that anyone who takes a leave of absence should first have a reason of doing so. Does this mean that if an employee does not have a

reason for the application of leave then there is no leave? Three respondents have try to answer by saying that whether the leave applicant has a reason or not, this does not matter a lot. They have agreed that leave application must be intentional. The employee decides first to go for a leave and there comes the actual application.

If the applicant has applied for a leave then can an applicant be free to go for e leave? Two respondents have confirmed that even though the leave applicant has decided to apply for a leave of absence, the leave application should be either approved or not approved before the applicant can go for a leave.

The approved leave is therefore called authorised leave as discussed on page 21 of Chapter two. Chauke (2007:18) supports the respondents' understanding of authorized leave as occurs when the employee is absent for any reason other than illness and it is accepted by management.

One respondent has understands absenteeism as absence from work without authorisation and Anderson (2006:18) defines unauthorised absence as absence not falling into either sick or authorised leave and for which no reason is provided or accepted.

There was one point that was raised by one respondent who understands that absenteeism concept is when employee decides not to report for duty because of lack of organisational commitment.

Most of the respondents understand the concept absenteeism as a failure to report for duty and Anderson (2009:13) supports respondents by saying absenteeism is the employee's failure to reports for work. Mwanda (2010:26) emphasizes that absenteeism is an un-planned disruptive incident but more especially can be seen as non-attendance when employee is scheduled to.

(b) Sub theme 2: The role of Manager or employee

What is your role when it comes to absenteeism in the Legislature?

Managers responded as follow:

Respondent A "To find out the reasons of absenteeism and if there are problems or trend try to assist,"" Identify other avenues on how to help the employee"

Respondent B "To engage with the employee to identify the need of absenteeism and check if the application of absence is in line with applicable policies"

Employees responded as follow:

Respondent E "To know what type of absence I am applying for and if vacation leave, to check if days are enough and make sure leave is approved in advance but if sick leave then is emergency"

Respondent F "Managers must check if I have reasons when I take leave"

Respondent G "Employees must understand the procedure s when applying for a leave"

Managers' opinions agreed that their role is to identify the reasons of the leave of absence, check if the request is in line with applicable leave policies, give advice and help where there are problems"

Managers are not the only ones who play the major role in absence management but also employees. Employees were also asked to explain their roles in as far as leave is concerned. Employees' responses were as follow: Two employees out of six employees agreed that the type of leave must be known before they apply for it. Two employees have agreed that reasons must be known. Two have responded that leave days must be checked before applying for a leave. One respondent has responded that the leave application must be approved first and the other one said that the leave applied for must be in line with the applicable policies.

(c) Sub theme 3: Causes of absenteeism

In your own understanding what are the causes of absenteeism, give four and reasons?

Employees were asked to give four causes of absenteeism and to indicate the reason thereof. Respondents were responded as follow:-

Respondent A "Limpopo Legislature is situated in Lebowakgomo and most of their employees are staying outside it"

 "Staying away from the work is a culture"

"Employees are taking sick leave due to their psychological well-being such as depression and ill- health"

"Employees are not committed to their work and they come late and leave early from work"

Respondent B "Employees doing the same duties daily and develop attitude towards the work by staying away from the work situation"

"Employees take excessive of sick leave to abuse leave policy

"Employees may sometimes be required to endure pressures regarding deadlines and targets and this resulted into tiredness therefore they resolved to take a leave.

Respondent C "Employees feel not motivated as there are salary gaps between management and employees then they decide not to come to work"

"Drinking alcohol may affect an employee in a way that it increases sick leave especially on Mondays".

"Change management in the institution can bring pressures and result in tiredness which will lead into employees taking leave of absence" "

"Lack of management support can lead to absenteeism"

Respondent D "Employees may be experiencing problems in their respective sections which are difficult to be solved then they decide to stay away from work"

"Family problems may lead to absence of employee to attend to unresolved problems"

"Lack of employee commitment can cause absenteeism"

"Workload can make an employee to become tired and run away from the responsibility"

Respondent E "Employees on the lower positions are not taken care of and they decide to stay away from work"

"Most of employees take sick leave when they are not well""

"Management do not give support to employees during the time of absence "

"Employees have the culture of non-adherence to policies and it tends to a culture of taking leave without reasons or coming to work late and leaving early"

Respondent G "Most type of leaves received in Human resources Management are sick leaves due to policy gaps"

"Employees' expectations are not be considered and lead to absence from work"

"Various types of sicknesses can cause employees to absent themselves from work'

"Employees have negative attitude towards the work and develop a culture of staying away from work"

Respondent H "Doing routine work demoralises employee and absenteeism is the way to go"

"Sickness leads to employees' absence"

"Employees who worked for a lengthy period in the same institution are easy to abuse policies"

"Employees tend to emulate other staff members and resulting in a bad culture of an institution"

Respondent I "Employee when they do not see management support they lose courage and resolved to stay away from work"

"Employees take leave during June month because they do not want to forfeit leave days "

"Lack of proper job description confuses employee and do not know what to do and at the same time take leave to rest.

Two respondents have agreed that staying far from work station is a challenge for employees. Employees decide not to come to work due to transport fares problem. This means that some of the employees might also have financial problems in paying their transport fares and therefore financial constraints might cause some absences from work. Madibana (2010:85) agrees with the respondents in her study

of factors that influenced absenteeism among nurses in NHS hospital in London that lack of transport amongst other factor contributed to professional nurses 'absenteeism. Is the situation in London the same as in South African Legislative sector?

Four respondents have given the same reason that employee's personal or family reasons lead to absenteeism. Personal and family matters might differ from one employee to another. One reason can be to care for yourself, your child or immediate family who is sick and unresolved family issues. Madibana (2010:91) supported the respondents in the same study as above that the main factors influencing absenteeism rates among nurses in London was based on being responsible for taking care of the respondents' children or family members.

Three respondents have supported each other by saying sickness is the factor that lead to absenteeism in the institution and further pointed out that the abuse sick leave policy contribute to the high rate of absenteeism. They said that employees who have worked in the institution for a lengthy period are the ones tempted to abuse the leave system. This was highlighted by Kgaphola (2010: 88) when he concluded that sickness like stress led to tellers to take unscheduled leave.

Respondents do not see employees who worked for the institution for a lengthy period and tend to abuse leave system as the only challenge but they further become bored with their jobs. As these employees are performing same jobs daily and they become bored as they regard the exercise as routine.

Some of the respondents raised another point that was interesting by saying if employees do not see the support of management in their daily activities they get discouraged and they resolved not come to work. It is the responsibility of any manager to support their colleagues by empowering them through training where they have identified any need as confirms by Tromp(2008:39) that organisational advantage in empowering employee is that this principle can lead to increased productivity, improved job satisfaction, reduced sick leave and less absenteeism.

Respondents do not only see management support as a challenge that can lead to absenteeism but have the views that employees because of pressures and datelines they are supposed to meet and they are unable to reach targets, they decide to stay

away from work as this is discovered by Greenberg and Baron (2000:184) that being committed leads people to remain in their jobs and show up when they are supposed to be there.

Other respondents believe that employees who are on the lower levels are not taken care of as they are left in one post for a long time and this creates a salary gap between the level of managers and them. Reward system is the factor that tends to job satisfaction and if employees are satisfied then absenteeism rate will go down. This is emphasized by Nieman and Bennett (2007: 255) that the consequences of dissatisfaction with remuneration package are poor performance ; job dissatisfaction and grievances and all of which result in high levels of absenteeism among employees and Chauke (2007:36) agreed by saying that people want recognition and praise for a job well done to reinforce good attendance behaviour.

4.2.2.2 Absenteeism Management

(a) Sub-theme 1: Challenges of absenteeism

What are the challenges encountered when applying for leave of absence in the institution?

Respondents have responded as follow:

Respondent A " Employees do not check with Human Resources section to find out if whether they have enough leave credits to cover their absence"

Respondent B "Managers do not ensure that there is development of leave plans at every beginning of the year.

Respondent C "Managers do not check with Human Resources section if leave days are enough.

Respondent D "There is no proper communication between employee and supervisor when the application of leave is made"

Respondent E" There is no proper record keeping by line managers in tracking the trends

Respondent G "Some sections have limited staff and if one employee takes a leave of absence then the work suffer as a result of absence

The following opinions were raised by the respondents regarding employees being reluctant of checking if whether they have accumulated enough credits from Human Resources Section in line with what they are entitled to while at the other hand employees indicated that line managers are not verifying the information at their disposal. This is seen as a gap in the organisational culture because leave is treated as an entitlement but not as a benefit

The other opinion raised by the respondents was the issue of employees not making leave plans in the beginning of the year and think to take leave as and when it suits them has an impact on absenteeism. This was raised a challenge because unplanned leave come as a surprise to line managers and they find themselves in a corner and fall in a snap of authorising the leave application.

Respondents raised another issue that employees and line managers are not adhering to the policies and procedures in place. The respondents here think that non adherence to policies also block the implementation thereof and this could be detrimental to its success. This agrees with Falcone's statement (2009:99) that the frequency of worker absenteeism should be relative to industrial and geographical standards. This put it clear that non - compliance with applicable policies can hinder its implementation. Other respondents confirm this statement.

Another statement of interesting from the respondents is that there is lack of proper record keeping by line managers. Line managers are unable to trace the trends of absenteeism by their colleagues as this impedes information about the type of leaves and the reasons. This agrees with Levy's assertion (2009:9) that supervisors and managers are often too busy to take action to prevent absenteeism and see such a control as the responsibility of another department such as human resources.

(b) Barriers in applying leave policy

Is there any legislation or policy governing leave of absence in your institution and please elaborate if you are experiencing barriers in applying it?

Respondents in sub-themes (a) and (b) have more or less the same answers. 70 percent of the respondents are agreeing that there are no proper recording of leaves that are taken, No proper monitoring of leaves by the managers, no good relationship between managers and employees, policies and guidelines are not known and not adhered to, No communication of policies and there are deviations to those who know them and there are no leave plans in place. The issue of employees not adhering to policies has emerged time and again as in the previous sub-item. In chapter two Kgaphola (2010: 21) confirmed that one of the communication strategies to control employee absenteeism that managers use is absenteeism feedback. Ndhlovu (2012:27) concluded that workplace absenteeism can be reduced by tightening policies and procedures relating to control of absenteeism and intensifying monitoring processes on the absent employees.

(c) Possible solution to the problem

In your own opinion, what do you think has to be done to prevent absenteeism challenges encountered in your institution?

Respondents have raised the following suggestions:

Respondent A "Managers should develop leave plans yearly in order for them to monitor employees"

Respondent B "To conduct leave policy awareness and enforce health programmes in the Limpopo Provincial Legislature"

Respondent C "There should be teambuilding efforts between Manager and employee to encourage a good relationship"

Respondent D "Workshop the employees about the policy content assist employees through Employee Assistance Programme"

Respondent E "Managers should have own register to record leaves of employees timeously"

Respondent G "Revisit the leave policy gaps to curb the abuse of it"

In view of the above answers, Ndhlovu (2012:29) further concluded as stated in the previous chapter that monitoring systems to monitor and record attendance of work

are put in place to assist management with simple accurate functional data that facilitates informed decision – taking. This can be effectively done if there is a working together spirit in the institution as confirmed by Matlhape (2003:37) in chapter two that Employee Assistance Programmes strengthen in healing individuals and broken relationships can be transferred effectively to enhance organisation benefits from human resources investment.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the data and findings from the respondents. Secondary data was collected through PERSAL report; leave register and attendance register were considered when analysing. Out of ten respondents, four were Senior Managers, one Human Resource Practitioner, one Labour Relation Officer and four employees other than senior managers. Semi-structured interviews were used to gather information. Data was unfolded in order to achieve the study objectives. Different main factors amongst others that contribute towards absenteeism were identified such as distance from work, family responsibility commitments and sickness. The results proved that managers and employees have the responsibility of adhering to leave policies in place and proper absenteeism monitoring be the tool to be used to track the trends.

According to the evidence, the benefits of proper monitoring would be the best to reduce high risk rate of absenteeism.

In the next chapter, themes and sub- themes identified in the study will assist to discuss the findings so that recommendations and conclusions are made.

CHATER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMEDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of the study was to explore absenteeism management in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. An empirical study of a qualitative approach was conducted and the purpose of the study was to engage Senior Managers and employees in sharing their views on managing absenteeism properly. Ten participants were interviewed and data was collected through semi - structured interviews. Collected data was analysed and interpreted in the previous chapter.

This chapter is a final evaluation of this study. The chapter presents discussions of the findings, conclusions and recommendations and the overall conclusions of the study.

5.2 Discussions

This section will discuss the findings of the study in the format of themes as in chapter four.

5.2.1 Knowledge of absenteeism

The findings in this main theme highlight number of the interesting factors that contribute towards the high rate of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature that include:

5.2.1.1 Distance from work

The perceptions of the respondents are that since well the Limpopo Legislature is situated in Lebowakgomo and most of the employees who are working in it are staying in Polokwane which is far and also include far surrounding areas. The reason behind this is that when employees do not have transport fares they decide to stay away from work and during Mondays or Fridays

5.2.1.2 *Personal and family responsibility matters.*

The results indicated that employees are having different reasons of staying away from work. The reasons includes amongst others employees personal issues that

are known to them and those which involve caring for their immediate families who are ill for example, children, spouse etc.

5.2.1.3 Routine work

Although line managers together with employees set targets in line with employees' job descriptions, employees are expected to perform their duties to achieve these targets but there are certain duties that are regarded as routine to them. In this case employees are doing the same duties daily and instead of enjoying the work they develop attitudes towards the duties and feel bored. They avoid being demoralised by staying away from work.

5.2.1.4 Lack of management support

Respondents felt that there is a support gap which brought about by the bridge between management and employees. Though employees are experiencing pressures of meeting deadlines and targets there is no support that is coming from line managers and this resulted into tiredness of employees and therefore they resolved to take leaves.

5.2.1.5 Lack of employee commitment.

Although the salaries of employees are benchmarked with other Legislature, the respondents felt that employees' commitment to organisation is low. They maintain that that low level of organisational commitment is associated with high level of absenteeism.

5.2.1.6 Organisational policy gaps.

Although the respondents acknowledged the presence of leave policy in the Limpopo Provincial Legislature, the results indicated that employees are entitled to a certain number of sick leave days in an annual leave cycle. They know that since the policy does not need any medical certificate if two sick leave days are used and they decide to take either one or two days timeously which resulted into more than two days within a month. The other issue raised is the annual leave days' entitlement in an annual leave cycle. The respondents further indicated that since they know that they cannot transfer the remaining annual leave days into another leave cycle, they decide to take high absenteeism during the month of May or June of every

5.2.1.7 Lack of promotions.

The respondents felt that employees are placed into one position for a long time and they become demoralised. If employees are not promoted then the respondents felt that there were no opportunities for growth in the institution. Lack of promotion leads employees into a job dissatisfaction which influences employees to take leave of absence.

5.2.2 Absenteeism management

The findings in this main theme highlight the challenges, barriers experienced in managing absenteeism in the institution and the possible solution. They include:

5.2.2.1 Lack of leave plan

The empirical evidence given by the respondents confirm in tem 4.2.2.2 (a) that lack of leave plan is a challenge to managers as they unable to solve the problems experience when employees have taken unplanned absence. They have suggested that this challenge could be curbed through development of leave plans by each line manager will assist them to monitor employee's presence, be able to know in advance when it will be a gap in the workplace and be able to make arrangements on time when any employee is taking a leave of absence. Robbins (2003:24) highlights that high unplanned absence can result in unacceptable output quality and at the worst could, complete shutdown of operational activities. In other words, it is risky to choose not to manage absenteeism as it could have financial implications and an adverse impact on the performance of the organisation.

5.2.2.2 Lack of proper communication

Respondents have felt that managers of any institution must create a platform whereby managers and employees are able to share the leave information. They further indicated that management and employees are working in silos and therefore there is a less information that is transmitted from management to employees as respondents indicated in item 4.2.2.2(b). Management of any organisation must have a good communication and this will create a system whereby employees are able to share leave complaints. If this does not happens employees could resolved to

express their frustrations by taking leaves. Mogobe (20l0: 82) concludes that employees should be kept informed of trends and patterns in absenteeism.

5.2.2.3 Lack of proper record keeping.

The respondents felt that proper record keeping is the good way of monitoring absenteeism as it will indicate the kinds of leaves taken by the employees and the rate at which such leaves are taken. This will assist line managers to track and attend to early signs of absence than the absence itself. Respondents felt that not all leave taken are recorded by line managers before they are submitted to Human Resources section for capturing in the PERSAL system and recommend that section managers should develop their leave registers as in item 4.2.2.2(c). It is easy for any manager to trace the movement of his or her employees if proper record is kept. Public Service Report supports this opinion by emphasizing that leaves filed in managers' records and are not captured in Human Resources Management section will not form part of auditing process.

5.2.2.4 Lack of leave policy awareness

The respondents felt that employees are not aware of the leave policies in the institution and it is the responsibility of line Managers to raise awareness during employees' meetings so that they sensitise them about the implications of absenteeism. This confirms the idea that organisations should provide all staff members with information about absenteeism trends.

The responses seem to suggest that employees could continue being upset if they are not aware of the costs of absenteeism. The results suggested that if leave policy awareness could be properly conducted attendance improvement will be the order of the day. Paton (2006:9) supports this notion that good absence management is about cutting down on absenteeism prior it is becoming a problem by communicating a message of responsibility, intervention and rehabilitation. This will promote a level of transparency because the institution will make guidelines available to all employees.

5.2.2.5 Poor monitoring of workplace absenteeism

Respondents 'views were clear on the point of monitoring employees 'workplace absenteeism as line managers are expected to monitor absences taken by the employees. Absenteeism management should be in line of applicable policies in place so that managers are able to guard against any non-adherence that will caused by poor monitoring. Respondents suggested that the responsibility of managers to know the whereabouts of the employees and they will do so by monitoring the attendance register. They must ensure that employees are signed on the attendance register they knock on in the morning and knock- off in the afternoon. This monitoring system to monitor and record attendance at work will be in place to assist managers with data that facilitates informed decision- making at the management level. Therefore there is a need for careful monitoring of annual and sick leave within the Legislative sector. PSC Report (2002: 44) points out that the importance of the effective management of sick leave should be high prioritised in any organisation.   .

5.2.2.6 Lack of team spirit

Respondents have felt that managers and employees are not working together and this contributes to operational activities. There is a say that working to achieve more. In other words, institutions value team effort over an individual achievement. Ndhlovu (2012: 31) points out that managers encourage nurturing and transmitting of institutional culture through the team developments and Chauke (2007:38) agrees by saying that absence management should be a team effort and not the responsibility of only one person. Involving other relevant parties in the absence management will lessen the burden of this issue.

5.2.2.7 Dysfunction of Employee Assistance Programme

Respondents have same opinions that although wellness programmes section are created in this institution; it needs to be enforced so that management will refer employees who are having personal or family problems. It was detected from the respondents' opinions that once managers are aware of poor performance through attendance records, they are able to get clear trends of their absenteeism and be in positions to direct employees to this programme. Management of employee absence

cannot be left to the line managers alone but employees who have problems be referred to other parties to receive assistance. Ndhlovu (2012: 32) supports that it is the responsibility of every organisation to provide EAP that is funded by the employer, to the employees and Yende (2005:35) points out that despite having been around since 1996 for the National Department of Health, has not actually been managed and utilised to its full extent whereby if fully utilised would assist in the management of employee workplace absenteeism. The enforcement of the programme will afford the employees the opportunity to talk to the professionals about their problems they encounter in their personal and family lives.

5.2.2.8 Leave Policy gaps

The respondents further indicated that employees are entitled to certain number of vacation and sick leave days within a leave cycle. They know that since they cannot transfer their remaining days into the next cycle it is better to utilise the remaining vacation days before they lapse. This leads take the remaining vacation days in certain month before they expire. They further know that taking two sick leave days or less does not need a medical certificate, they better take one or two sick leave days as and when so that they do not attach medical certificate.

The respondents felt that the existence of policies and procedures are important in order to guide employees on taking leaves and mangers to manage absenteeism; however the institution must guard against the gaps which might be abused. In actual fact, the abuse of certain accruals and sick leave benefits poses a challenge to the institution. Mogobe (2012:82) concurs that absenteeism management could fail if proper policies and procedures are not implemented.

5.3 Conclusions

The aim of this study is to investigate management of absenteeism of employees in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. This section presents the conclusions of this research study with regard to its objectives in item 1.6. The researcher used the collective case study to collect the first-hand information from the views of line managers and employees themselves in the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. The conclusions will be brawn and deal with aspects of semi- structured interview which

include the two themes which are knowledge of absenteeism and absenteeism management

5. 3.1 Knowledge of absenteeism

The findings in this study highlight number of factors that contribute to a high absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. These include:

- The findings reflect that most employees stay outside Lebowakgomo where the Limpopo Provincial Legislature is situated. This causes a challenge to those employees who are staying far away and need transportation fares to reach this station. Employees have been forced to take unplanned leave. They felt that if the institution could consider travelling or rental allowance the absenteeism rate will drop.

- The findings revealed in 4.2.2.1.(c) that routine work in the institution serve as an enemy of a good attendance and respondents felt that if management could decide to introduce rotational work, employees will be encouraged to be at work as they are expected to and be able to deliver a good service.

- Respondents indicated that another reason why employees are not turning to work is due to family and personal matters. Their views are that reason known to them such as illness of the main member or closest family are the ones which causes employees to absent themselves from work situation. They even tempted to take advantage of certain leave clauses and use them to cover their prolonged leaves.

- Findings further revealed in the above coded item that some employees have pressures of meeting the date lines and they are unable due to workload. This resulted into employees developing attitudes towards their jobs and their commitments become lowered and at the end they decide to take leave of absence.

- Although employees during the struggle of meeting deadlines are expecting their managers to give relevant support, respondents felt that employees do not get what they are expecting from their managers and therefore feel lonely in whatever they are doing and resolve to go on leave.

- Although employees' salaries have been benchmarked against other Legislature, respondents felt that employees are placed in one position for a

long time without given a reward. Reward system to be granted to employees to motivate their morale. It is their belief that motivation be in the form of promotions advance their levels so that it will prevent unscheduled absence.

5.3.2 Absenteeism management

The findings in this study further highlight the barriers and challenges of absenteeism management in this institution which include:

- Lack of annual leave plans which need to be developed between the two parties who are the line managers and the employees was found to be a challenge. The perceptions of the respondents are that leave plans will assist line managers to prevent unplanned leave of absence.
- Lack of good communication was indicated to be having a negative impact on the workplace absenteeism. Respondents felt that management do not communicate enough to employees to alert them about the trends and patterns of absenteeism. This say of knowledge is power should be is not applicable in this institution and
- Lack of proper record keeping was found in the institution. Respondents felt that proper record keeping is important and it will assist line managers to track the trends of types of leaves in the early stage and be able to identify the symptoms of any problem that might occur.
- Employees should be kept informed about the guidelines and procedures that contribute to the absenteeism and be made aware of what is expected from them as far as absenteeism is concerned. It is found from the respondents 'views that there is lack of leave policy awareness in the institution of which proves that employees are not aware of the clauses applicable to their situations. They do not know the disadvantages of not complying with the applicable guidelines.
- Although it is found that attendance register is one tool that was used by the lime managers to monitor the movement of the employees, the respondents felt that the register were not monitored up to the satisfactory and suggest that section leave register be developed in support of attendance register.
- The findings further revealed that managers are working as individuals but having the same common understanding of achieving institutional strategic

objectives. Respondents felt that there is a bridge between managers and employee but if they can work together they will achieve more.

- Although respondents acknowledge the fact that there is Employee Assistance Programme in the Limpopo Provincial Legislature, they have felt that if it can be enforced then the programme will assist to reduce the burden of employees 'absenteeism.

- Respondents although they have acknowledged the existence of leave policy but it was found from their perspectives that leave entitlement and certain clauses are remain challenges in this institution and need to be relooked at.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the outcome of this research study, the researcher recommends that the institution should consider the following when dealing with absenteeism.

- The institution should through discussion forums come up with incentive system to compensate employees in the form of travel or rental allowance in order to encourage employees to avoid their decisions to take unplanned leaves due to distance instead they are able to report for duty regularly.

- The managers should consider developing annual leave plans in order for them to curb the high absence taken by employees during June month of every year to avoid expiry of annual leave days. Manager -employee discussions should be encouraged regarding the conclusion of leave plan..

- Managers should further consider the proper record keeping by developing section leave registers whereby they should record leaves taken by employees before submitting the same to Human Resources section for capturing so that they could use the register to track and monitor the frequent of absence.

- The findings further indicated in item 4.2.2.2(a) that the role of employees and line managers should be to take the responsibility of checking with Human Resource Management section to confirm if indeed employees do accumulated enough leave credits in line with they qualify before the leave taken is authorised.

- Institution should encourage closer communication between management and employees this communication should be of top-down and bottom – up to

avoid one way communication so that management should be able to assimilate leave information to employees and employees should be able to share their frustrations to avoid grievance route that may result in dismissal. They should play a supportive role and be able to identify any symptoms of factors during early stages that can lead to employee absence. Employees with absence problems should be referred to the same programme for counselling and problems.

- As routine work was identified by the respondents to be one factor causing employees to absent themselves as in 4.2.2.1(a), it is recommended that the institution should consider discussion platform regarding possible work rotations to avoid boredom and in a way promote multiskilling.

- Institution should consider on-going policy awareness on institutional leave policies and procedures in order to explain and alert managers and employees about absenteeism procedures. The policy awareness will also assist managers to enhance the enforcement of Employee Assistance Programme as indicated by the respondents in 4.2.2.2 (a).

- Though it is recommended in the above paragraph that the leave policies which are in place should be communicated to the recipients, the respondents felt as discussed in 5.3.8 that leave entitlement in line with these policies is abused by employees and there is need of revisit of leave policies. It is therefore recommended that leave policy be revisited in order to close the gaps identified.

- Respondents again felt that another factor that contribute to absenteeism is the fact that employees who hold lower positions are placed in those positions for a long time which in turn demoralises them. They felt that if the institution could consider rewarding employees through promotions, this will motivate employees'' morale and at the same time reduce absenteeism.

5.5 Overall conclusions

Absenteeism management was identified as a challenge in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. This study was meaningful because it enabled the researcher to explore the respondents' experiences about the factors of absenteeism. The study further

suggested mechanisms and strategies of proper absenteeism management that the institution can use to reduce the level of absence in Limpopo Provincial Legislature.

This study was qualitative in nature and the researcher decided to use a case study to collect first-hand information from the line managers and employees who have the experience of absenteeism management in the institution. The following three objectives as outlined in chapter one were achieved.

- The first one was to understand management of absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. The researcher used semi-structured interviews to collect primary data from four Senior Managers and six employees on absenteeism management. Interview schedule was further used and list of questions were asked Senior Managers and employees who have experiences and know more about absenteeism management. These were the people who work in this institution and they have provided relevant views to the researcher. Information gathered from these respondents was divided into themes and sub themes to give meaning to this study. It was shown in Chapter three that research ethics were considered in such a way that the dignity of the employees was protected. In Chapter four the information collected was further analysed and integrated by the literature review. The findings in Chapter five indicated that this objective was achieved.
- The second objective was to determine the factors that contribute to absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. Data collected in Chapter four indicated different types of factors that contribute to absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature and the findings concluded that the following factors need to be dealt with to prevent the absence prevalence: distance from work; family and personal responsibilities; Routine work; lack of management support; lack of employee commitment; organisational policy gaps and lack of promotions. These would serve as a point of reference should the institution and management endorse proposed possible solutions in Chapter five.
- The third objective was to assess the current monitoring system in the Limpopo Provincial Legislature. The final objective was for researcher to find out if the current monitoring system works efficiently so that possible

recommendations will be made. Challenges were revealed in Chapter four and possible solutions be suggested in Chapter five.

- From the above information it is therefore concluded that the aim and objective outlined in Chapter one were successfully achieved.

This research study reveals that there are a number of challenges in monitoring absenteeism in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. However, the study is not a representative of the legislative sector as a whole. Future research could identify other challenges that contribute to poor absenteeism management in other Legislatures. The research could be conducted across the legislative sector in order to generalise the findings to the whole sector.

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APPENDIX "A":   INTERVIEW SCHEDULE AND QUESTIONS

ABSENTEEISM MANAGEMENT IN LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Dear Sir/ Madam

The aim of the study is to identify the factors contributing to the high absenteeism in the Limpopo Legislature and to recommend possible proper absenteeism management in preventing the challenge.

You are kindly requested to answer the following questions as possible as you can and feel free to ask clarity where you do not understand. Your clear responses will be of high importance and be utilized to form part of recommendations on how best can absenteeism be managed in the institution

Section A: background Information

What is your gender?

What is your age?

What is your current position?

How many years of experience do you have in the Legislature?

Do you have employees who are reporting to you and how many are they?

SECTION B: Knowledge of Absenteeism

What is your understanding about absenteeism?

What is your role when it comes to absenteeism in the Legislature?

In your own understanding what are the causes of absenteeism in the Legislature? Please name four of them and give reason of each cause?

SECTION C: Absenteeism management

What are challenges encountered when applying for leave of absence in the institution?

Is there any legislation/policy governing leave of absence in your institution and please elaborate if you are experiencing barriers in applying it?

In your own opinion, what do you think has to be done to prevent the absenteeism challenges and barriers encountered in your institution?

Limpopo Legislature
Office Of The Secretai;y

APPENDIX "B"

Physical Address:

Lebowakgomo
Government Complex

Postal Address:

Private Bag X9309
Polokwane
0700

30 November 2015

The Acting Secretary

c\o Limpopo Legislature

P/Bag X9306

POLOKWANE

0700

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH IN THE LIMPOPO LEGISLATURE

A request is hereby made that I Raisibe Florinah Tladi be allowed to come and conduct a research in your institution. My topic for my mini-dissertation is Absenteeism Management in Limpopo Provincial Legislature. I will be collecting the primary and secondary data through interviews and documents respectively. The purpose of conducting this study is to make sure that information gathered should contribute to the possible recommendations. Ten employees will be interviewed and the time scheduled for each will be 30 to 40 minutes.
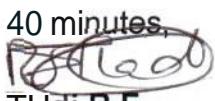
TUdi R.F

Permission granted/ Permission not granted

Mr. Mothoa S.

Ac ts:z g Secretary: Limpopo Legislature

Tel: (015) 633 5071 - Fax: (015) 633 8185 / (015) 633 8119