

**EXAMINING CAUSES OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT ON ANNUAL
PERFORMANCE PLAN TARGETS: A CASE OF THE LIMPOPO
DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION, HEAD OFFICE-
POLOKWANE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE**

by

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my caring family with special regards to my wife, Ntanganedzeni Matibe-Ugoda, my lovely kids, Thuso and Muhulu Ugoda for their support, patience, encouragement and understanding during the time of my studies.

You have been my source of strength.

D E C L A R A T I O N

I declare that the EXAMINING CAUSES OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT ON ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN TARGETS: A CASE OF THE LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION, HEAD OFFICE-POLOKWANE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo ,for the degree of MASTER OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (MPAM) has not previously been submitted before for a degree at this or any other university; that is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged .

TSHIFHIWA ONISMUS UGODA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the causes of underachievement on the annual performance plan targets in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education Head Office, and to identify possible strategies to improve the current situation. The study was guided by three objectives and secondary data were analysed to answer the research question. This study utilised a qualitative research design as it allowed the researcher to identify and develop procedures necessary to undertake this study. The study used secondary data, a desktop study to investigate the causes of underachievement in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education.

Literature points out that strategic planning affects all organisations and it is considered to be the most complicated stage in the strategic management processes as it requires discipline, commitment and sacrifice. If desired goals are not achieved as planned, the organisation might be doomed to failure.

The researcher managed to achieve the objectives of the study. Based on the findings of the study, underachievement on annual performance plan targets is influenced by the following major factors. The study points out that, Firstly, that lack of monitoring and support followed by insufficient budget allocated to programmes' implementation contribute to underachievement of planned targets. Secondly, lack of commitment from top management have an impact on achievement planned targets. Finally, budget is not allocated according to the needs, inadequate leadership to oversee implementation of plans and high vacancy rate contribute to underachievement on the planned targets.

In conclusion, the Departmental performance plan and individual performance plan should be directly linked to ensure improved performance and quality service to the public.

Based on the findings of this study it is therefore recommended that firstly, the department should strengthen alignment of budget and plans of the department to ensure successful implementation of programmes, secondly, capacity building and skills development

programmes should be enhanced to ensure a skilled workforce and improved performance.

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CHAPTER 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Departments invest a much time and resources in developing plans aimed at rendering improved quality of service delivery to the public but implementation of those plans is characterised by underachievement of the planned targets. Implementation of strategic plans has been identified by various studies as one of the most challenging aspects of the management's responsibilities in the public sector.

According to Pearce and Robinson (2005:03), strategic management is viewed as the set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation, implementation and control of plan designed to achieve an organisation's vision, mission, strategy and strategic objectives within the business environment in which it operates. In the same vein, Thompson and Strickland (2003:365) indicate that strategy implementation is an integral component of the strategic management process and viewed as a process that turns the formulated strategy into a series of actions and then aims to ensure that the vision, mission, strategy and strategic objectives of the organisation are successfully achieved as planned.

Departments develop Annual Performance Plans (APPs) to operationalise the strategic planning, and these APPs are three-year plans which get reviewed annually and reported upon on a quarterly and annual basis, and it also outlines activities, targets, responsibilities and time frames. The study will focus on the causes and contributory factors to underachievement on performance plans' targets in the public service; a case of Limpopo Department of Basic Education. Underachievement, performance plan and performance management will also be discussed in detail. Key concepts are clarified and the data collection and analysis will be described and interpreted.

A review of the Limpopo Department of Education Annual Reports (2013/2014-2017/18) has shown that there is a growing phenomenon of underachievement on the annual

planned targets (Republic of South Africa (RSA), 2013/14-2017/18). Underachievement on Annual Planned targets and under spending on allocated budget is becoming a norm amongst government departments and municipalities in South Africa while the outcry on the lack of service delivery is very high (RSA, 2013/14-2017/18). The Limpopo Department of Education develops its strategic plans together with its Annual Performance Plans with clear targets and allocated budgets as per the framework but the achievement seems to be a challenge. The process of the annual review commences with the delivery of the President's State of the Nation Address at the beginning of each year. This is to determine whether or not its implementation is in line with its set objectives and, where gaps are found, to develop corrective measures to align strategy execution with the strategic plan.

This Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans are in line with the National Development Plan launched on 15 August 2012. Mubangizi (2003:06) states that indeed one of the strategies suggested in the National Development Plan is that society be mobilised to support the plan through conducting research on critical issues affecting long-term development; advising government and social partners on implementing the plan and working with relevant state agencies to report on the progress of the Plan's objectives. David (2009) maintains that strategic planning affects all organisations and it is considered to be the most complicated stage in the strategic management processes as it requires discipline, commitment and sacrifice.

If desired goals are not achieved as planned, the organisation might be doomed to fail. The Limpopo Department of Basic Education spends more time and resources crafting its strategic plans and annual plans but implementation is still below expectation (RSA, 2013/14-2017/18). It is on this basis that the study was conducted in order to assess the causes and contributory factors underlying the underachievement's being posted by the Department.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A review of the Limpopo Department of Basic Education Annual Reports (2013/2014-2017/18) show that there is a growing phenomenon of underachievement on the annually planned targets. According to RSA (2010:6), an annual performance plan should be linked to the strategic plan, the budget and the MTEF and should be informed by any updates to government long term plans. It further outlines that in-year monitoring of the annual performance plan is conducted through quarterly reports, and end of year reporting. It also outlines that an institution is expected to identify a set of programme performance indicators and targets in its annual performance plans to track its on-going performance. Ehlers and Lazenby (2007:214) indicate that some of the problems that organisations experience when implementing strategies are:

- The coordination of implementation efforts is not sufficiently effective;
- Leadership and direction provided by top and middle managers are inadequate;
- Goals have not been sufficiently defined and are not well understood by employees;
- The formulators of the strategy are not involved in implementation, or have left before the implementation is completed; and
- Key changes in responsibilities of employees have not been clearly defined.

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:25) state that a research problem is expressed as a general question about the relations between two or more variables. Fouche (2002a:96) continues by saying that research problems are identified in the following sources, observation of reality, theory, previous research and curiosity. According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2001:19), problems are special kinds of questions that arise for which knowledge is needed. The researcher observed a growing phenomenon in the department; that of underachievement on the set targets which are budgeted for. The underachievement results are underspending and these impact negatively on service delivery. The Limpopo Department of Education develops annual performance plans with clear targets but the achievement of the set targets is very low which dictates that there is a need to find out the causes of the problem. Programme managers are involved in

developing the plans and setting targets to be achieved by the department's various units; they need to be able to set realistic targets and ensure implementation to avoid underachievement of those targets. As such it is worthwhile to explore their views regarding the causes of underachievement of set targets within the department.

The Department underspent its budget by R561 079 million of the total budget (RSA, 2014). This underspending is a clear indication that some of the plans were underachieved, hence some learners are learning in mud-schools, no learner teacher support material and some still travel long distances without provision of scholar transport. Some schools are still without proper infrastructure while the budget is being returned to Treasury. The annual report outlined areas of underperformance on the annual plans such as, learner enrolment in public ordinary schools programmes, staffing for both educators and non-educators, implementation of no fee schools, learner transport, teacher training programmes, school visits by circuit managers, job creation through National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), inclusive education, provision of resources, and understaffing of adult education teachers (RSA, 2013/14-2017/18).

Another crucial area indicated by the report as an area of underperformance was on infrastructure delivery despite the grant received from Treasury, provision of water and electricity, provision of classrooms and specialised rooms and building of new schools. The consequences of these problems are that the education of children in the Limpopo Province is adversely affected, children are denied their right to access education which results in the high rate of poverty in the province. Little is known on the underlying causes of underachievement of set targets. The findings and recommendations of the study should assist the Limpopo Department of Education to address the serious challenge of underachievement and as a result improve the quality of teaching and learning in the province.

1.3 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the study is to investigate the causes of underachievement on the Annual Performance Plan targets in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education, Head Office.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Fouche and De Vos (2005:104) indicate that the objectives are steps one has to take, one by one, realistically at grassroots level within a certain time span in order to attain the dream. The objectives for this study were:

- To identify factors of underachievement in the Limpopo Department of Education;
- To explore the causes of underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets; and
- To formulate recommendations for the Limpopo Department of Education regarding possible solutions to address underachievement on Annual Performance plan targets.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

Babbie and Mouton (2006:73) indicate that a research problem is often formulated in the form of either a research question or a research hypothesis. A research question refers to some difficulty which the researcher experiences in the context of either a theoretical or a practical situation to which he/she wants to obtain a solution (Welman & Kruger, 1999:11). Maxwell (1998:80) describes a research question as “What specifically you want to understand as a researcher by doing this study”.

The following are the research questions for this study;

- What are the factors to underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education?
- What are the causes of underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets?
- What recommendations can be formulated for the Limpopo Department of Basic Education regarding possible solutions to address underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets?

1.6 DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

For the purpose of this study, it is necessary that the following concepts be defined in order to clarify the context within which they are used in the study.

- a) **Strategic Planning** is a long-term plan or formal document setting out an organisation's goals, budget and initiatives as well as the actions needed to achieve those goals over a given period of time (RSA, 2010: 6). According to Van der Walt & du Toit (1999: 286), strategic planning involves establishing the direction of the institution such as, the goal and mission, important clients and role players, barriers to overcome and alternatives for rendering services.
- b) **Performance Plan** – According to Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westhuizen and Wessels (2008:282), performance plan is defined as an organisation's plan that outlines different aspects of the work, such as specific tasks that the public sector manager should execute to ensure that the objectives are achieved, as well as duties and responsibilities related to the provision of advice and support.
- c) **Performance Management** - According to Armstrong (1994:23), performance management is a method of establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to managing and developing people in a way that increases the probability that defined outputs will be achieved in both short and longer terms. Whereas Williams (1997:7) indicates that the setting of objectives and measurements is the performance management activity which ensures that all employees know what results they need to achieve to maximise their contribution to the overall business plan.
- d) **Underachievement** - According to the Free Dictionary of English (2016), underachievement is defined as performance that is less and poorer than expected or poorer than might have been predicted from intelligent tests
- e) **Productivity** - is defined as the state of achieving institutional goals and objectives by transforming inputs (human, financial and material resources) into outputs at the lowest

cost (Robbins & Judge, 2011:58). To be precise, productivity means the quality, state or fact of being able to generate, create, enhance or bring forth goods and services.

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant because it is the first of its kind within the Limpopo Department of Basic Education. The findings of this study will provide insights to the Limpopo Department of Education Management team as it will provide answers to this big question “why underachieve on the set targets when there is a good strategic plan”. The Department will benefit from this study because recommendations deriving from this study will inform practice with respect to strategic planning and implementation thereof. The study will also inform policy makers and practitioners regarding issues related to best practice and lessons learned.

1.8 LIMITATIONS

In this type of a study conducted within the Department of Basic Education there were problems envisaged which are not limited to the following:

- The study is limited to the Limpopo Department of Education. The researcher takes cognisance of the fact that the study would have been richer if it covered about five provinces which are similar in terms of being rural in nature. .
- Secondly, lack of time and financial resources will be the major limiting factors for the scope of the findings, because the whole study will be conducted and funded by the researcher personally.
- The results could not be generalised as the findings will apply only to the Limpopo Department of Education.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS

The focus of the study was the Limpopo Department of Basic Education. The study focused on reasons that cause underachievement on the planned targets which results into underspending and poor service delivery. The study limited itself to the causes and factors that impact on the performance of the Department.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

According to Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 28) and Babbie and Mouton (2001: 104), the term “research methodology” refers to the various methods, techniques and procedures that are used to execute the research design or research plan.

According to Martin (2006:33), a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the study. Martin (2006) further states that research designs are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for collection of data in a manner that aims at combining relevance.

According to Welman and Kruger (2001), the appropriate research design is one which would be helpful in answering the research questions in order to achieve research objectives. A descriptive approach has been clarified as the process of streamlining complex issues through breaking them into smaller components (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003). The descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations. Neuman (2006: 35) maintains that descriptive research provides a detailed picture of the subject. It is undertaken to make systematic observations and detailed documentation of the studied phenomenon. Unlike casual observations, observations of descriptive research are based on the four criteria of establishing trustworthiness of study findings. Descriptive research seeks answers to the what, where and when questions of the studied phenomenon (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 9).

1.10.1 Qualitative approach

According to De Vos *et al.* (2007:269), in qualitative research the researchers’ choices and actions will determine the design and strategy. Qualitative research approach involves an in-depth understanding of participant’s behaviour and the reasons that govern the participant’s behaviour. Qualitative research relies on reasons behind certain behaviours and experiences of participants.

This study will use a qualitative research design as it would allow the researcher to identify and develop procedures necessary to undertake this study (Kumar, 2005:84).

Neuman (2003:137) distinguishes between a quantitative and qualitative research design. Creswell (1998) as cited in Fouché (2005:269) identifies five strategies of inquiry that could be used to design qualitative research namely, biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. According to Fouché (2005:272), the case being studied may refer to a process, activity, event, programme or individual, or multiple individuals.

The researcher intends to utilise qualitative designs for this study. The qualitative data are from records comprising essentially secondary data. The researcher intends to enhance understanding in terms of what causes underachievement on annual performance plans targets in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education.

In this study, the researcher shall use the qualitative research designs during the data collection, analysis and interpretation of data. The researcher is also a staff member within the Department of Basic Education, which is being researched and will be able to access required documents.

In line with the assertions by Flyvberg (2011), a Case Study is meant to be a holistic and “intensive analysis” of a chosen unit. Flyvberg (2011) goes on to illustrate that case studies are not necessarily meant to prove anything, but to allow the researcher to learn something. In this study the case study shall allow the researcher to learn about the causes and contributory factors to underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets in the Limpopo Department of Education. According to Yin (2004), the case study is suitable in a situation where the research addresses descriptive or explanatory questions and aims to produce a first-hand, close, in-depth understanding of people and events. In the same view Stake (1995) supports the view and is of the opinion that the case study method is quite useful where the researcher seeks to obtain descriptions as well as interpretations of others.

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014:23), Post-positivism research describes, control and predicts how the natural and social worlds work. Thus it makes sense to use more than one method to collect data. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:25) go further to illustrate that Post-positivism is of the view that the findings must be generalisable, which means that the findings need to be applicable beyond the sample of the study. This paradigm best suits this research because its findings should be able to provide some solutions to underachievement on performance plan targets in the public service as a whole.

1.10.2 Study Area

The study will be conducted at the Limpopo Department of Education Head Office which is situated in Polokwane, South Africa. The Limpopo Department of Education Head Office services five Districts, which are Vhembe, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Waterberg and Capricorn. The study focused on the head office, which is responsible for developing plans, ensuring implementation and compiling reports on oversight.

1. 10.3 Population

Seaberg (in Strydom & De Vos, 1998:190) defines “population” as the total set from which the individuals or units for the study are chosen. The researcher identifies with a definition of “population” as the group from which the researcher wishes to generalise the study and select the sample from. In this research, the population will be consisted of all the managers approximately 120 (Directors, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) at the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education, Head Office in Polokwane. For the purposes of this study secondary data obtained from the Limpopo Department of Education Annual Reports, Quarterly Performance Report, Auditor General of South Africa’s reports and Public Service Commission reports from 2013/14 to 2017/18 financial year will be utilised as opposed to empirical study.

1.10.4 Sampling Method and Sample Size

Strydom and Venter (2002:203) indicate that there are different kinds of sampling methods namely, probability and non-probability sampling. If the researcher is only interested in seeing how a small group, perhaps even a representative group, is doing for purposes of illustration or explanation, then non-probability sampling can be used (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995:88). According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:90), this sampling method is based on the judgement of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. Strydom (2005:202) adds that the sample is composed of elements that contain the most attributes of the population.

In the same vein Seaberg (in Strydom, 2005b:194) defines “sample” as a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons, which together comprise the subject of a study. Trochim (2001:20) describes a sample as being a group of people the researcher selects to be part of the study. The researcher sees a sample as the subset of the population. For the purposes of this study secondary data obtained from the Limpopo Department of Education Annual Reports, Quarterly Performance Report, Auditor General of South Africa reports from 2013/14 to 2017/18 financial year will be utilised, as opposed to empirical study.

1.10.5 Unit of Analysis

According to Martin (2006:565), the unit of analysis is the object of investigation which is determined by who or what the researcher wishes to draw conclusions about. For the purpose of this study, the unit of analysis is,

- Limpopo Department of Basic Education.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Strydom (2005c:57) defines ethics as a set of widely accepted moral principles that offer rules for and behavioural expectations of the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other research assistants and students. Babbie (2004:63) defines ethics as conforming to the standards and conducts of a given profession or group. Ethical issues that will be taken into consideration in this study

include the subjects' right to full disclosure about the research, handling of data as well as respect for right to privacy and confidentiality (Mouton, 2001). Utmost care will be taken to preserve integrity of data by ensuring accuracy in data capturing, data entering and analysis. The researcher will also ensure that data are only used for the purposes for which it is collected as per the request for permission to be submitted to the Limpopo Department of Education. All the sources used during this research will be recognised to avoid plagiarism as an approach in dealing with ethical issues. For the purposes of this study, secondary data which include documents such as Strategic Plan of the Department, Annual Performance Plan, the Limpopo Department of Education Annual Reports, Quarterly Performance Report, Auditor General of South Africa reports and Public Service Commission reports from 2013/14 to 2017/18 financial year as well as previous research on the subject will be utilised, as opposed to empirical study.

Strict adherence to accuracy would guard against any chances of the researcher's misrepresenting information obtained from secondary data. Overall, this would ensure that the data collected truly lead to a clear identification and understanding of causes and contributory factors to underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education.

1.12 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH

The outline of the research report are as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is the initial and introductory chapter wherein the background of the study which forms the basis of the understanding of the research study is outlined. It outlines the statement of the problem, the research questions and the objectives of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter outlines the views of various theorists, authors on strategic planning and implementation in organisations.

Chapter 3: Research methods

This is where the research techniques and the methodology of the study are explained as well as how the study will be carried out. As such the chapter covers research design, population, sampling, data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation of secondary data

The research findings are presented, analysed and interpreted in this section.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Conclusions and recommendations are outlined in this section.

1.13 SUMMARY

This chapter introduced the problem statement of the study. The chapter discussed the rationale for research questions. The chapter advanced the research objectives and definitions of terminology in the context within which they are used in the study. In chapter two, a critical overview of related literature is provided.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (chapter 1) outlined the general introduction to causes and contributory factors of underachievement on annual performance plan targets as well as methodological choices. Chapter 1 also outlined the objectives of the study, definitions of concepts and the problem statement. This chapter outlines the overview of the literature that is relevant to performance management and underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets. Literature review as a concept has been explained with the aim of providing clarity which informs the approach undertaken in this study. Definitions of performance plan and performance management by various scholars are detailed below to provide a broad understanding of the concept.

2.2 UNDERSTANDING LITERATURE REVIEW AS A CONCEPT

Literature review can be defined as the process that involves the findings, readings, understanding and forming conclusions about published research theories on a particular topic (Brink, 2000:76).

According to Fouche & Delport (2005:123), a review of literature is aimed at contributing towards a clear understanding of the nature and meaning of the problem that has been identified. Bless, Higson-Smith & Kagee (2006:24) share the same view that a literature review is defined as a critical evaluation of previously scholarly writings that are relevant to the research topic. Also in the same vein, Neuman (2000:446) argues that a good literature review places a research project in context and it shows the path of prior research and how the current project is linked to the former.

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999:43), a thoughtful discussion of related literature builds a logical framework for the research and sets it within a tradition of inquiry and a context of related studies. A literature review serves a number of broad functions which are outlined as follows;

- a) Literature serves as an excellent source when the research selects and even focuses on a topic because it reduces the chances of researching on an irrelevant or outdated topic/focus by investigating what has already been done on a particular problem.
- b) Literature review helps the researcher to ensure that nobody else has already performed what is essentially the same research. According to Mouton (2001:87), literature review saves time and avoids duplication and unnecessary repetition on the topic.
- c) In reviewing literature the researcher gets the opportunity to identify some deficiencies in previous research and thus argue that the proposed study will fill a proven need/gap.
- d) Literature review further demonstrates the underlying assumptions of the general research question, in that it displays the research paradigm.
- e) A thorough scanning of literature review will stimulate the identification of "evergreens" and thought, leaders in the field of study which enables a research to demonstrate knowledge on the most recent and authoritative theories, accepted definitions and key concepts in this field of study.
- f) In pursuing literature about the topic, the researcher may shape the research question/hypothesis through the identification of alternative concepts of the problem or variables that had previously occurred in the research.

A literature review is necessary in that it deepens the researchers' theoretical framework. However, a researcher must implement the best strategy to find the most important literature in the most expeditious manner.

Neuman (2006:111) reiterates that literature review is based on assumptions that knowledge accumulates and that people learn and build on what others have done,

whereas Mugenda (2003:29) argues that a literature review helps the researcher to avoid unnecessary and unintentional duplication and demonstrates the researcher's awareness of the existing body of knowledge on the subject.

According to Stilwell (2000:173), a good literature review needs to indicate the different views, agreements, disagreements and trends of thought on the topic of research and be accurately portrayed and acknowledged. In the same vein Leedy (2001:25) describes literature review as, to look again at the literature (the reports of what others have done in a related area and an area not necessarily identical with, but collateral to one's area of study).

Having understood what various authors say about literature review the researcher is in the best position to indicate that the purpose of literature review is to find out what other researchers are saying about the particular study so that a different approach would be introduced in order to close gaps on the previous studies in a different context.

In the following section a literature review on the underachievement in performance plans is described in the context of the discussion under the literature review as a concept.

2.3. UNDERACHIEVEMENT ON PERFORMANCE PLANS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

2.3.1. Performance Plan in the Public Service

According to Mello (2014:128), performance is an action preceded by a thought process and such action or activity has an objective to achieve. In the same vein, Viedge (2011) as quoted in Mello (2014) describes performance as any activity aimed at a specific institution output. The researcher is of the view that performance means the action or process of performing a task. Every thought process or activity of an employee should add value to the strategic objective of the institution.

According to Erasmus, Swanepoel, Schenk, Van der Westhuizen and Wessels (2008:282), a performance plan is defined as an organisation's plan that outlines different aspects of the work, such as specific tasks that the public sector manager should execute to ensure that the objectives are achieved, as well as duties and responsibilities related to the provision of advice and support. In essence performance planning is a formal process in an organisation for discussing, identifying and planning the organisational as well as individual goals which an employee can/would achieve in the coming review cycle. This is decided between the superiors and employee determining performance expectations and development objectives to be accomplished during the review period. To be precise, the superiors and employees discuss goals, objectives and expectations for the review period. The objective and need for a performance plan is for the following purposes:

- To come to agreement on the individual job responsibility;
- To remove any ambiguity of the goals and objectives that need to be achieved;
- To identify the competencies required for doing the job; and
- To create an appropriate performance and career development plan for the individual.

2.3.2. Underachievement in Public service

According to the Free Dictionary of English (2016), underachievement is defined as performance that is less and poorer than expected or poorer than might have been predicted from intelligent tests. Whereas Merger and Pipe (1990) argue that underachievement/inadequate performance can be caused by circumstances and conditions beyond the control of the employee which may include, poor policies and procedures in the organisation, inadequate job description, faulty measures of performance, ineffective communication of the performance standards, inadequate tools and materials, lack of knowledge or skills and finally ineffective training. In the same vein Davis (2009) shares the same view in that the lack of innovation and problems in the adoption of new health care methods as factors beyond the control of health care employees (Doctors and Nurses). Other factors are dictated by the patients' health care

plan and whether the patient adheres to the treatment plan; the health care employee can only do so much. These factors are beyond the control of the employer and need to be factored in the employee's performance management appraisal.

Marger and Pipe (1990) reaffirm that some of the causes of unsatisfactory work performance /underachievement that may be within the control of the employee include, poor relationships with other members of the work group or other work groups, dissatisfaction with the superiors, policies or procedures, lack of acceptance of the performance standards and problems at home. Motivational problems may also be due to a lack of social or monetary incentives.

2.3.3. Performance Management in the Public Service

According to Armstrong (1994:23), performance management is a method of establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved and an approach to managing and developing people in a way that increases the probability that defined outputs will be achieved in both short and longer terms. Williams (1997:7) indicates that the setting of objectives and measurements is the performance management activity which ensures that all employees know what results they need to achieve to maximise their contribution to the overall business plan. In the same vein Mubangizi (2011:08) states that in the South Africa public service, performance management is largely based on the employee's performance management and development system.

According to Munzhedzi (2011:14), a performance management system gives guidelines on how everything to do with performance management is to be done. Armstrong (2001:1) also defines performance management as a strategy and integrated process that delivers sustained success to organisations by improving the performance of the employees and by developing capabilities of an individual in contribution and teams.

In the same vein Layton (2002:27) defines performance management as a systematic approach to performance improvement through an on-going process of establishing

strategic performance objectives, measuring performance, collecting, analysing, reviewing and reporting performance data using that data to drive performance improvement.

Wilson (1999:138) also adds his view that performance management as a concept or philosophy should ideally be a systematic approach that covers, motivation of employees to perform, vision by employees on what performance standards are expected of employees, ownership of management of performance at a variety of levels within organisations, and monitoring and measurement of the performance achieved by employees.

To be specific and in relation to the actual situation in public service performance management is a process that starts with goal setting, regular reviews until accomplishments and underachievement are at an end. During the process motivation and guidance is required on a continuous basis.

The researcher shares the same view with various authors in that good performance refers to performance of individual employees wherein he/she achieves the set performance targets in the performance plan. However, failure to achieve the set performance targets will result in underachievement which will then affect the performance of the whole organisation.

Several studies about performance in public services have been undertaken focusing on various areas of performance plans in public services which entail causes and contributory factors for underachievement on performance plans. According to Van der Walt (2004:75), it is usually difficult to measure performance improvement and productivity in the public service because the outputs are also intangible. David (2009) argues that strategic planning affects all organisations and it is considered to be the most complicated stage in the strategic management process as it requires discipline, commitment and sacrifice, and if desired goals are not achieved as planned the organisation might be doomed to fail.

Munzhedzi (2011) undertook a study for his Qualification in a Master of Public Administration degree with the topic "Performance management system and improved productivity: A case of the Department of Local Government and Housing in the Limpopo province". The research problem under investigation was to investigate and understand whether the performance management system of the Department of Local Government and Housing contributes to improved productivity. The purpose of the study was to address the issue of the performance management system as a strategy used to enhance performance in the public service and to address the issue of productivity with its link to performance management.

In his study Munzhedzi (2011) also highlights that although the performance management system plays a significant role in the improvement of productivity, it has not contributed to the improvement of productivity of the Department of Local Government and Housing in the Limpopo Province. The study also reveals that although the department received several awards, such as the best Department in the province, most of the performance targets set in the Annual Performance Plan (APP) from April 2007 to March 2011 were not achieved. The need for regular and thorough training of departmental officials about the performance management system in the public service and its impact on productivity is imperative.

Munzhedzi (2011) also makes some relevant recommendations on actions that the department should take to improve its performance and productivity, which include the following:

- Monitoring of performance should not only be limited to quarterly and annually, but be extended to monthly so as to detect weaknesses as soon as possible.
- Performance targets of both the individual employees and the Department should be clearly defined.
- Good communication and relations between subordinates, supervisors and management should be facilitated.

- The PMS division, training division and employee assistance programme division should work together to address the lack of skills and other problems associated with underperformance.

Munzhedzi's (2011) study enriches a body of knowledge in relation to performance of the individual and the Department. The study does provide answers to some extent to the challenges of underachievement on the performance plan that the organisation experiences.

Another empirical study by Yambwa (2014) for a Masters of International Business degree to investigate "The reasons for failing to implement the strategic plan in the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development". The study was aimed at finding a solution on how best the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development in Namibia can improve the implementation of the strategic plans, which is currently a burning issue on the Ministry agenda. The study also has as one of the objectives "to investigate why strategic plans' goals and targets set are not achieved".

The findings of the study record that competing or ad hoc activities distracted attention from implementing the strategic plan. Deviating strategic plan implementation from its originally planned activities and the plan not communicated or understood by all employees were also major challenges during the implementation. Budget allocation which is not allocated to set priorities also contributed to underachievement of set targets. Among the findings, the organisational structure was not aligned to the strategic plan. It was also found that the budget was not enough for the Ministry to execute its priorities and activities as set out in the strategic plan. Staff members were found to be incompetent to implement the strategic plan and the lack of appropriate technology systems at operational level hampered the successful implementation of the strategic plan in the ministry. It was also found that there was a lack of leadership skills to direct or to spearhead strategic plan implementation (Yambwa, 2014).

Based on these findings, Yambwa (2014) further recommends that the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development should provide capacity building and training programmes to ensure good performance, since some managers seem not to take strategic plan implementation very seriously. Other relevant recommendations include the need to conduct an urgent skills audit and revise the organisational structure and allocation of budget including donor funding.

However, it must be cautioned that the issue of donor funding may not be possible since donor partners have their own social responsibilities and priorities through which they provide funding which might not have the same priorities that the department has. However, it has been noted that the Yambwa (2014) study does not sufficiently address the question asked in chapter one "What are the challenges experienced during strategy implementation at the Ministry of Regional and Local Government, Housing and Rural Development?"

In the same vein on performance in the public sector Masoga (2007) also conducted a study on the implementation and management of human resource management development programmes to promote the performance of public servants in the Department of Roads and Transport in the Limpopo Province. Since the focus was on the need for training and development of public servants, the study finds that the newly appointed public service employees do not receive sufficient orientation or training.

Based on the findings, Masoga (2007) concludes that there is a need for a systematic orientation and training of newly appointed employees if the overall performance is to be improved. Performance evaluations should be conducted to determine the training outcomes and also link such to the institutional results.

Ehlers and Lazenby (2007:230) argue that the reward system should be utilised effectively to motivate and encourage good performance and completion of tasks and achievement of certain targets. This view is also shared by Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2007:43) when they indicate that managing the strategy execution process

should include the tying rewards and incentives directly to the achievement of performance objectives and good strategy execution.

Erasmus *et al.* (2005:269) argue that when the performance level of an employee is weak and lacks certain competencies, the performance management system should provide the required training and development interventions. In supporting this view also is Mubangizi (2011:08) who states that the South African public service performance management is largely based on the employee performance management and development system.

Fulmer (1990) mentions that human resource management plays an important role in the effective implementation of performance plans. It is crucial for both organisations/ departments and employees to be enthusiastic about the strategy implementation. Getting people involved and having a motivating rewards system will have a positive influence on the implementation of strategy and achievement of targets as set out in the performance plans.

Kaseke (2011) conducted a study on challenges facing the Limpopo Department of Public Works with regard to service delivery. The study deals with the service delivery challenges facing the Limpopo Department of Public Works with regard to the discharging of its mandates "Provision of government infrastructure, management and maintenance of government immovable assets". The research question undertook to find out what challenges the department is facing and their causal factors. The findings reveal that the root causes of the challenges and the challenges themselves that the department of Public Works in Limpopo is facing are internal and are as follows, unavailability of work tools, low morale, budget constraints and long supply chain management processes and a lack of skilled personnel.

In this regard, Kaseke (2011) recommends that in order for the Department of Public Works to incorporate Government Infrastructure, management and maintenance successfully, it should develop human resource capacity coupled with a good human

resource plan, availability of a proper budget, business process re-engineering, the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system, a custom relationship management system and lastly a change of organisational culture.

The study by Kaseke (2011) provides several significant lessons to public sector institutions in that public sector institutions are increasingly recognising that the budget constraints challenge attests to the numerous service delivery problems that the department is facing, for instance targets are not met as a result of unavailability of cars, work tools and to some extent inability to recruit and retain skills within the specified period.

It is therefore crucial for departments to adopt a fresh approach to service delivery, an approach that will put pressure on systems and processes, attitudes and behaviour within the public service and re-orientate them towards placing citizens at the centre of service delivery. It is also of paramount importance that, for departments even though there may not be sufficient budgets to satisfy all needs, attention must be given to the core functions of the department.

Watson (2005:04) reiterates that lack of capacity in low income countries is one of the main constraints to achieving the sustainable development goals, capacity continues to hit hard on the pace and quality of services that government is supposed to deliver to the people. In most cases failure to meet targets and deliver certain basic services is attributed to a lack of capacity in those relevant sectors. Merger and Pipe (1984:355) argue that many critics of inefficiencies in the public service hardly mention the impact of poor supervision and performance management and monitoring on the non-delivery of public services as well as delivery of poor services. The reality in both public and private sector is that the crucial nature of supervision, monitoring and performance management cannot be over-emphasised in ensuring the effective and successful implementation in service delivery and executing programmes and achieving planned performance targets.

Various studies and approaches were made in order to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding performance and productivity in the public sector. Some of the

studies were conducted as early as before 2000 aiming at addressing performance problems in the public service and improving service delivery to the public.

David (2009) maintains that performance planning affects all organisations and it is considered to be the most complicated stage in the strategic management process as it requires discipline, commitments and sacrifices, and that if desired goals are not achieved as planned the organisation might be doomed to fail.

The literature review that has been conducted in this study provides an enriched body of knowledge on aspects of performance management in the public service as a major field of study. However, it is also clear from the literature that there is still a wide scope for the scientific investigation of the performance management in the public sector to be undertaken. These areas include investigations such as whether organisational culture contributed to increased performance in the public sector. It is crucial to evaluate the role of organisational culture, leadership in the achievement of performance plan targets in the public sector. This study focused on examining the causes of underachievement on annual performance plan targets.

2.4. SUMMARY

Existing literature about performance management in the public service was reviewed. Areas of studies that were pursued by various scholars were explored in detail. A literature review as a concept was described in order to get a holistic understanding before the actual discussion using the views of various scholars. The performance plan, underachievement and performance management was also described. Therefore, this study tried to establish the views of programme managers regarding causes and contributory factors to underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets. The next chapter presents the methodology used, research design and data collection methods

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter reviewed the available literature and previous studies that are relevant to underachievement on annual performance plan targets in the public service. This chapter focuses on the research design that was employed in this study. It is in this chapter wherein the study outlines and motivates for the choices made regarding research design and methodologies to be applied in this study. This chapter also outlines data collection methods and also details the ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Brynard and Hanekom (1997: 28) and Babbie and Mouton (2001: 104), the term “research methodology” refers to the various methods, techniques and procedures that are used to execute the research design or research plan.

According to Martin (2006:33), a research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the study. Martin (2006) further states that research designs are plans that guide the arrangement of conditions for collection of data in a manner that aims at combining relevance.

According to Welman and Kruger (2001), the appropriate research design is one which would be helpful in answering the research questions in order to achieve research objectives. A descriptive approach has been clarified as the process of streamlining complex issues through breaking them into smaller components (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003). The descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations. Neuman (2006: 35) maintains that descriptive research provides a detailed picture of the subject. It is undertaken to make systematic observations and

detailed documentation of the studied phenomenon. Unlike casual observations, observations of descriptive research are based on the four criteria of establishing trustworthiness of study findings. Descriptive research seeks answers to the what, where, and when questions of the studied phenomenon (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 9).

3.2.1 Qualitative approach

According to De Vos *et al.* (2007:269), in qualitative research the researcher's choices and actions will determine the design and strategy. Qualitative research approach involves an in-depth understanding of the participant's behaviour and the reasons that govern the participant's behaviour. Qualitative research relies on reasons behind certain behaviours and experiences of participants.

This study will use a qualitative research design as it would allow the researcher to identify and develop procedures necessary to undertake this study (Kumar, 2005:84).

Neuman (2003:137) distinguishes between a quantitative and qualitative research design. Creswell (1998) as cited in Fouché (2005:269) identifies five strategies of inquiry that could be used to design qualitative research namely; biography, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. According to Fouché (2005:272), the case being studied may refer to a process, activity, event, programme or individual, or multiple individuals.

The researcher intends to utilise qualitative designs for this study. The qualitative data are from records comprising essentially secondary data. The researcher intends to enhance understanding in terms of what causes underachievement on annual performance plans targets in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education.

In this study, the researcher shall use the qualitative research designs during the data collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. The researcher is also a staff member within the Department of Basic Education which is being researched and will be able to access the required documents.

In line with the assertions by Flyvberg (2011), a Case Study is meant to be a holistic and “intensive analysis” of a chosen unit. Flyvberg (2011) goes on to illustrate that case studies are not necessarily meant to prove anything, but to allow the researcher to learn something. In this study the case study shall allow the researcher to learn about the causes and contributory factors to underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets in the Limpopo Department of Education. According to Yin (2004), the case study is suitable in a situation where the research addresses descriptive or explanatory questions and aims to produce a first-hand, close, in-depth understanding of people and events. In the same view, Stake (1995) supports the view and is of the opinion that the case study method is quite useful where the researcher seeks to obtain descriptions as well as interpretations of others.

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014:23), post-positivism research describes, controls and predicts how the natural and social worlds work. Thus it makes sense to use more than one method to collect data. Bertram and Christiansen (2014:25) go further to illustrate that Post-positivism is of the view that the findings must be generalisable, which means that the findings need to be applicable beyond the sample of the study. This paradigm best suits this research because its findings should be able to provide some solutions to underachievement on performance plan targets in the public service as a whole.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Study Area

The study will be conducted at the Limpopo Department of Education Head Office which is situated in Polokwane, South Africa. The Limpopo Department of Education Head Office services five Districts, which are Vhembe, Mopani, Sekhukhune, Waterberg and Capricorn. The study focused on the head office, which is responsible for developing plans, ensuring implementation and compiling reports on oversight.

3.3.2 Population

Seaberg (in Strydom & De Vos, 1998:190) defines “population” as the total set from which the individuals or units of the study are chosen. The researcher identifies with a definition of “population” as the group from which the researcher wishes to generalise the study and select the sample from. In this research, the population will consist of all the managers approximately 120 (Directors, Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors) at the Limpopo Provincial Department of Education, Head Office in Polokwane. For the purposes of this study secondary data obtained from the Limpopo Department of Education Annual Reports, Quarterly Performance Report, Auditor General of South Africa reports and Public Service Commission reports from 2013/14 to 2017/18 financial year will be utilised ,as opposed to empirical study.

3.3.3 Unit of Analysis

According to Martin (2006:565) the unit of analysis is the object of investigation which is determined by who or what the researcher wishes to draw conclusions about. For the purpose of this study the unit of analysis was as follows;

- Limpopo Department of Basic Education

3.4 SAMPLING

3.4.1 Sampling Methods and Sampling size

Strydom and Venter (2002:203) indicate that there are different kinds of sampling methods namely; probability and non-probability sampling. If the researcher is only interested in seeing how a small group, perhaps even a representative group, is doing for purposes of illustration or explanation, then non-probability sampling can be used (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995:88). According to Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:90) this sampling method is based on the judgement of the researcher regarding the characteristics of a representative sample. Strydom (2005:202) adds that the sample is composed of elements that contain the most attributes of the population.

In the same vein Seaberg (in Strydom, 2005b:194) defines “sample” as a small portion of the total set of objects, events or persons, which together comprise the subject of a study. Trochim (2001:20) describes a sample as being a group of people the researcher selects to be part of the study. The researcher sees a sample as the subset of the population. For the purposes of this study secondary data obtained from the Limpopo Department of Education Annual Reports, Quarterly Performance Report, Auditor General of South Africa reports from 2013/14 to 2017/18 financial year will be utilised, as opposed to empirical study.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION

According to Leedy (2001:120), data collection is the way in which facts about a problem and its outcomes are collected. The study will make use of multiple data collection strategies in order to collect the necessary data. This includes the literature review, observations, analysis of statistics already produced by others, official publications and correspondence discussion documents, official papers presented at workshops and conferences, speeches and debates, newsletters and pamphlets, newspaper surveys, theses and dissertations as well as material from the internet. These qualitative methodologies will allow the researcher an opportunity to gain an in-depth understanding of performance in the department. Sources of data to be used in this study are secondary. Secondary data refer to data that are already in existence and include books, journal articles and research papers. These data can be retrieved from sources such as databases or libraries (Mouton, 1996:25).

Mogalakwe (2009:222) refers to documentary analysis as the analysis of documents that contain information regarding the subject matter. Payne and Payne (2004) add by describing documentary analysis as a technique that is used to categorise, investigate, interpret and identify the limitations of physical sources. These are textual sources and commonly include written documents in the private or public domain. Scott’s (1990:1–2)

view in Ahmed (2010) is that there are general principles of handling documentary sources to maintain originality of data. These general principles consider issues of authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaningfulness. In this study, the researcher will analyse official documentary sources that included the Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance Reports (APRs) for 2013/14 to 2017/18 financial years and the Limpopo Department of Audit opinion outcomes issued by the Auditor General of South Africa for the 2013/14 to 2017/18 as supplementary data source. The choice of these documentary sources is premised on their outcomes on the Department's performance and service delivery assessment undertaken by the Limpopo Department of Health's Internal Audit and Compliance Unit.

3.5.1. Secondary data / Documentary analysis

According to Strydom and Delport (2007:317), official documents or non-personal documents compiled and maintained on a continuous basis by large organisation such as government institutions include minutes and agendas of meetings, memos, financial records, statistical reports, annual reports and process records are secondary data which can be used in qualitative research .

The researcher shares the same view in that secondary data refer to data collected from a source that has already been published in any form. For the purposes of this study, relevant documents in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education that were found necessary for this study and for the researcher to answer the research question posed in chapter one were thoroughly perused. These documents include the Strategic Plan of the Department, Annual Performance Plan, Limpopo Department of Education Annual Reports, Quarterly Performance Report, Auditor General of South Africa reports and Public Service Commission reports from 2013/14 to 2017/18 financial year as well as previous research on the subject will be utilised, as opposed to empirical study.

These documents are relevant as they outline the performance plan targets and the achievement level by the department as well as reasons for underachievement on planned targets.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

According to De Vos (2005:336), data analysis is the first step in data analysis away from the site. At an early stage in the analysis process, researchers “organize their data into file folders, index cards or computer files”. The transition between fieldwork and analysis is one point of transition between data collection and analysis.

Data analysis usually involves two key steps, namely, (a) reducing the collected data to manageable proportions and (b) identifying patterns and themes in the data (Mouton, 1996:161). Erlandson *et al.* (in De Vos, 2005:335) state that data analysis in a qualitative inquiry necessitates a twofold approach. Data analysis is the process of determining the meaning of data and filtering out irrelevant information with the purpose of reducing final information to a manageable proportion (Babbie & Mouton, 2009:103). The aim of data analysis according to De Vos *et al.* (2011:282) is to produce a detailed and systematic set of records about the matter under investigation. In the context of this study, examining causes of underachievement on annual performance plan targets in the South African public service how data analysis is able to make a provision of themes in accordance with data derived from the relevant sources is considered.

Thematic analysis is a type of qualitative data analysis method that seeks to identify patterns (commonalities, contrasts, etc.) in the contents of the data. The analysis proceeds through a series of well-defined steps that include category-building, coding and categorising that are useful not only for those who are in this type of analysis, but also for general understanding of the nature of qualitative analysis (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). The documents were analysed and the information was categorised into each study objective for the purposes of analysis. Therefore, the documents yielded both qualitative and quantitative data which were then integrated.

The documentary analysis will be conducted based on under-performance outcomes per financial year. For instance, the documentary sources include the Limpopo Department's Annual Performance Plans for 2013/14 to 2017/18 as well as annual reports for 2013/14 to 2017/18.

3.7 SUMMARY

Chapter three dealt with a description of the process that will be undertaken to conduct this study. The researcher chose a mixed research approach in order to gain insight into the views of managers regarding causes of underachievement on Annual Performance plan targets within the department.

The next chapter provides an analysis of the responses given by participants. The interpretations arising from it will be used to generate themes and sub-themes and linked with the literature reviewed in chapter two of this report.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter (chapter 3) outlines the research design and methodology together with the data collection methods. In this chapter (chapter 4) the ultimate purpose is to present the analysis and interpretation of findings. In this chapter, the results from data collected from Limpopo Department of Education documents are presented. Several documents within the Limpopo Department of Education were analysed as well as minutes of Top Management Performance review sessions and strategic planning sessions. The presentation will firstly be presented on the results of the documents analysed followed by the information from the minutes of performance review session and strategic planning sessions.

4.2 RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The study solely relied on secondary data obtained from the following documents:

- a) Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance Reports(APR) 2014/15-2018/19 Financial Years
- b) Auditor General of South Africa reports on Limpopo Department of Education 2014/15-2018/19 Financial Years
- c) Limpopo Department of Education Annual Financial Statements 2014/15-2018/19 Financial Years
- d) Performance Review Sessions Minutes 2014/15-2018/19 Financial Years
- e) Public Service Commission Reports 2014/15-2018/19

The results are from the above mentioned document analyses and they are presented according to the type of document that was analysed.

In view of the fact that this is a case study, the first part of the analysis will give a picture of the country.

4.2.1. National Perspective based on the Public Service Commission reports and Auditor General of South Africa Reports released during 2014/15 through to 2018/19.

4.2.1.1. Public Service Commission reports released during 2014/15 through to 2018/19.

An analysis of the Public Service Commission reports which cover nine provinces in the Republic of South Africa released during the period 2014/15 through to 2018/19 was done in order to obtain the National Perspective with regard to extent of achievement and underachievement of Learner Teachers Support Material provisioning targets aimed at improving quality of learning.

Table 4.1. Number of schools and rate of availability of textbooks per Province

Province	Number of schools that received textbook orders in time for the 2016 school year	%	Number of schools that found their textbooks to be sufficient	%	Causes and Contributory factors for underachievement on the target
Eastern Cape	0	0	0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late orders and late confirmation of delivery addresses • Delays in payment by Departments • Shortage of teachers in critical subjects(Maths and Science) in KZN and Limpopo • Delays in filling of educators posts which are prevalent in Limpopo and Free state • Majority of schools were old and dilapidated in Limpopo, KZN and Eastern Cape • Shortage of class rooms in Limpopo
Free State	10	100%	4	40%	
Gauteng	3	50%	3	50%	
Kwazulu Natal	12	100%	6	50%	
Limpopo	12	92%	6	46%	
Mpumalanga	10	100%	4	40%	
North West	10	100%	9	90%	
Northern Cape	10	56%	7	39%	
Western Cape	10	100%	6	600%	

Total	77	78%	45	46%	• High vacancy rate across the system
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Source: Public Service Commission Report, 2016

Table 4.1 above reveals that Provincial Departments of Education continue to underachieve on their targets for providing Learner Teacher Support Material (LTSM) to each and every school and learners. The Department of Basic Education developed an Annual Performance Plan (APP) target for all Provinces to provide each and every learner with textbooks for all subjects and grades (100% coverage). It is also crucial to note that failure to achieve this target infringes on the rights of all the learners to basic education as enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1966)

From the table above it is interesting to note that Gauteng Province (50%), Limpopo Province (92%), Eastern Cape (0) and Northern Cape (56%) failed to achieve their target (100%) to ensure that all schools receive textbooks orders in time for 2016 school year.

The study further reveals that on average only 45(46%) of the sampled schools found their textbooks to be sufficient. It was also revealed that there are various causes and contributory factors to this underachievement on the planned APP targets for Provinces. These causes are firstly, schools experienced an increase in admission; secondly, late and/or insufficient budget allocation; and thirdly, on delivery by service providers.

The study went on to reveal causes and contributory factors for failure to achieve quality education for all in South Africa. These causes are firstly, shortage of teachers in critical subjects(Maths and Science) which has been found to be common in Limpopo and Kwazulu Natal Provinces; secondly, delays in filling of vacant posts in Limpopo and Free state; thirdly, the majority of schools were old and dilapidated in Limpopo, Kwazulu Natal and Eastern Cape; and lastly, shortage of classrooms in Limpopo.

These findings concur with Merger and Pipe (1990) who argue that underachievement/inadequate performance can be caused by circumstances and conditions beyond the control of the employee which may include, poor policies and procedures in the organisation, inadequate job description, faulty measures of

performance, ineffective communication of the performance standards, inadequate tools and materials, lack of knowledge or skills and finally ineffective training. In the same vein Watson (2005:04) reiterates that lack of capacity in low income countries is one of the main constraints to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, capacity continues to hit hard on the pace and quality of services that Government is supposed to deliver to the people. In most cases failure to meet targets and deliver certain basic services is attributed to lack of capacity in those relevant sectors.

4.2.1.2 Auditor General of South Africa reports for 2015/16 to 2016/17

Table 4.2. Education Sector Audit for 2015/16 through to 2016/17

Auditee	Outcomes 2015/2016 FY			Outcomes 2016/2017 FY		
	Audit Opinion	PDOs	Non Compliance with Laws	Audit Opinion	PDOs	Non Compliance with Laws
Eastern Cape	Qualified	Yes	Yes	Qualified	Yes	Yes
Free State	Qualified	Yes	Yes	Qualified	Yes	Yes
Gauteng	Unqualified with findings	No	Yes	Unqualified with findings	No	Yes
Kwazulu Natal	Unqualified with findings	Yes	Yes	Unqualified with findings	Yes	Yes
Limpopo	Qualified	Yes	Yes	Disclaimer	Yes	Yes
Mpumalanga	Qualified	Yes	Yes	Qualified	Yes	Yes
Northern Cape	Unqualified with findings	Yes	Yes	Unqualified with findings	Yes	Yes
North West	Unqualified with findings	Yes	Yes	Unqualified with findings	Yes	Yes
Western Cape	Unqualified without findings	No	No	Unqualified without findings	No	No
Department of Basic Education	Unqualified without findings	Yes	Yes	Unqualified without findings	Yes	Yes

Source: Auditor General of South Africa; 2015/16 and 2016/17

The National Auditor General of South Africa reports for Sector Education which is comprised of National Head Office and nine Provinces for 2015/16 through to 2016/17 Financial Year were analysed in order to obtain the National perspective and also to

compare Provinces with similar characteristics in relation to audit outcomes and causes for poor audit outcomes on both performance information (Predetermined Objectives) and Annual Financial statements.

Table 4.2. above reveals that seven (7) Provincial Departments out of nine(9) Provinces were found to be in a poor state characterised by non-compliance with laws and regulations. It was interesting to note that Limpopo Department of Education was the only Department which obtained a Disclaimer of Audit Opinion in 2015/16 financial year whereas the Western Cape Department of Education was the only province which obtained Unqualified without findings Audit opinion in 2015/16 through to 2016/17 Financial Year.

The study further reveals that there are causes and contributory factors to underachievement of a target of clean audit opinion. These causes are: firstly, certain departments did not have enough capacity to implement projects, relying heavily on consultants, secondly, lack of consequence for poor performance and transgression resulted in matters previously reported being repeated and action plans developed not being implemented as desired, thirdly, projects were not planned and managed effectively by the Provincial Department and their implementing agents.

This National picture concurs with Yambwa (2014) assertions that, lack of leadership commitment hampers the successful implementation in the organisation. In the same vein Kaseke (2011) recommends that in order for the Department of public works to implement Government infrastructure, management and maintenance successfully it should develop human resources capacity coupled with a good human resource plan, availability of a proper budget, business process re-engineering, the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system, a custom relationship management system and lastly a change of organisational culture.

4.2.2. CASE STUDY: CAUSES OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT ON ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN TARGETS: A CASE OF THE LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION.

4.2.2.1. Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance Report 2014 Financial year through to 2018/19.

These documents were analysed in order to determine the planned targets compared to the extent of achievement during the financial year 2014/15 together with reasons for underachievement thereof as indicated by programme managers.

The Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance report is a document that contains the performance information of the Department with regard to planned targets, actual achievement and underachievement of the targets as set out in the Annual Performance Plan. The Department reported underachievement on all key programmes of the Department.

Table 4.3. Planned targets and actual achievements for 2014/15 through to 2018/19

Financial year	Total number of Indicators	Total number of Indicators target for reporting	Total number of targets achieved	Total number of targets not achieved	Achievement in percentages
FY 2014/15	70	66	20	46	30.3%
FY 2015/16	71	61	28	33	46%
FY 2016/17	71	68	38	30	56%
FY 2017/18	71	69	41	28	59.4%
FY 2018/19	54	52	34	18	65%

Source: Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance Report 2015/15-2018/19

Table 4.3 above shows the summary of planned targets for Limpopo Department of Education from 2014/15 through to 2018/19 and the extent of achievement and underachievement on the planned targets. The target setting for the department was informed by the Presidential and Premiers' pronouncement at the beginning of the electoral cycle. It is interesting to note the improvement recorded from 2014/15 (30.3%) to 2018/19 (65%).

4.2.2.2. Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance report 2014/15 Financial Year

The Annual Performance report for 2014/15 Financial year was analysed in order to determine the planned targets compared to the extent of achievement during the financial year together with reasons for underachievement thereof as indicated by programme managers.

Table 4.4. LDOE performance for the financial year 2014/15, causes and contributory factors to underachievement

Programme	Number of Targets	Planned Targets	Actual Achievement	Number of Targets underachieved	Reasons/ Causes for underachievement
1.Administration	11	11	2	9	-Insufficient Budget -Delays in obtaining approval
2.Public ordinary schools	21	21	9	12	-Inadequate budget to support planned interventions -Poor subject content knowledge by teachers
3.Independent schools	1	1	1	0	N/A
4.Public special schools	5	5	1	4	-Insufficient Budget -High vacancy rate -Shortage of Maths and Science educators
5.Further Education and Training	Programme moved to Higher Education				
6.Adult education and training	3	2	1	1	-Financial constrains
7.Early Childhood Development	7	4	3	1	-Financial constrains
8.Infrastructure	6	6	0	6	-Projects put on hold due to budgetary constrains
9.Auxilliary Services	16	16	3	13	-Inadequate budget to support planned interventions
Total	70	66	20(30.3%)	46(70%)	

Source: LDOE APR 2014/15

Table 4.4 above, shows the performance of Limpopo Department of Education regarding the achievement on the planned targets as well as underachievement and the causes for non-achievement thereof. Table 4.4 reveals that the Department achieved 20 (30.3%) of its planned targets at 100% during the 2014/15 financial year. It was also revealed that amongst the reasons for underachievement mentioned, what has been common is that “Insufficient budget to support interventions causes underachievement on the planned targets”.

The managers’ views reflected on the Annual Report correlate with Kaseke’s (2011) views when he recommends that in order for the Department of Public works to provide Government infrastructure management and maintenance successfully it should develop human resource capacity, coupled with a good human resource plan, availability of a proper budget, business process re-engineering, the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system, a custom relationship management system and lastly a change of organisational culture.

4.2.2.3. Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance report 2015/16 Financial Year

The Annual Performance report for 2015/16 Financial year was analysed in order to determine the planned targets compared to the extent of achievement during the financial year together with reasons for underachievement thereof as indicated by programme managers

Table 4.5. LDoE performance for the financial year 2015/16, causes and contributory factors to underachievement

Programme	Number of Targets	Planned Targets	Actual Achievement	Number of Targets underachieved	Reasons/ Causes for underachievement
1.Administration	7	7	5	2	-High vacancy rate -Delays in obtaining approval for shifting of funds
2.Public ordinary schools	26	22	13	9	-Financial constrains -Shortage of teachers

					-Poor subject content knowledge by teachers -Delay in finalisation of procurement processes
3.Independent schools	3	3	0	3	-Poor learner performance in Grade 12 -High vacancy rate
4.Public special schools	4	4	4	0	N/A
5.Early Childhood Development	7	7	3	4	Delay in finalisation of procurement processes
6.Infrastructure	11	11	1	10	-Projects put on hold due to budgetary constrains - Delay in appointment of service providers
7.Examination and related services	13	7	2	5	- Shortage of teachers -Poor subject content knowledge by teachers
Total	71	61	28(46%)	33(54%)	

Source: LDOE APR 2015/16

Table 4.5 above demonstrates that 2015/16 financial year continued to be a very bad year for Limpopo Department of Education with only 28(46%) targets achieved at 100%. It became very clear that more effort still needed to be exerted if the department wanted to achieve 100% of its planned targets. Perhaps an important consideration would be to check the reasons for variance which are similar to what has been identified as causes for underachievement in 2014/15 financial year. Insufficient budget to support planned targets and delays in finalising procurement processes appears to be recurring as causes for underachievement on planned targets. This is in line with the views of Kaseke (2011) whose study revealed that several significant lessons to public sector institutions in that public sector institutions are increasingly recognising that the budget constraints challenge attests to the numerous service delivery problems that the department is facing, for instance, targets are not met, unavailability of cars, unavailability of work tools and to some extent inability to recruit and retain skills in the specific period.

4.2.2.4. Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance report 2016/17 Financial Year

The Annual Performance report for 2016/17 financial year was analysed in order to determine the planned targets compared to the extent of achievement during the financial

year together with reasons for underachievement thereof as indicated by programme managers.

Table 4.6. LDoE performance for the financial year 2016/17, causes and contributory factors to underachievement

Programme	Number of Targets	Planned Targets	Actual Achievement	Number of Targets underachieved	Reasons/ Causes for underachievement
1.Administration	7	7	4	3	-High vacancy rate -Delays in obtaining finalising procurement processes
2.Public ordinary schools	25	22	15	7	-Non adherence to policies -Non-attendance to training -Non-compliance by service providers
3.Independent schools	3	3	1	2	-Poor learner performance in Grade 12 -High vacancy rate
4.Public special schools	5	5	4	1	-Inability to attract critical professional skills in the special schools due to unavailability of incentives in education
5.Early Childhood Development	7	6	5	1	-Merger of non-viable schools
6.Infrastructure	12	7	2	5	-Procurement delays -Non-payment of contractors -Late approval -Late start of projects
7.Examination and related services	13	7	2	5	-Poor implementation of policies -Inadequate subject content knowledge by teachers -Dispute between DBE and Teacher unions
Total	72	57	33(58%)	24(42%)	

Source: LDOE APR 2016/17

Table 4.6 above shows performance of Limpopo Department Limpopo Department of Education on the planned targets rising to above 50% at 33(58%) of targets being achieved with 100%, whilst the underachievement drops to 24(42%) targets. It is

concerning to note that even in 2016/17 financial year, the causes and contributory factors to underachievement are still similar to the ones raised in the previous years. This revelation raises questions on the leadership commitment and ability to deal with the challenges raised which are impacting negatively on performance.

These revelations above concur with Yambwa's (2014) assertion that lack of leadership commitment to direct and spearhead strategic plan implementation hampers the successful implementation of the strategic plan in the organisation. These views are also supported by David's (2009) view that performance planning affects all organisations and is considered to be the most complicated stage in in the strategic management process as it requires discipline, commitments and sacrifices and that if desired goals are not achieved as planned the organisation might be doomed to fail.

4.2.2.5. Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance report 2017/18 Financial Year

The Annual Performance report for 2017/18 financial year was analysed in order to determine the planned targets compared to the extent of achievement during the financial year together with reasons for underachievement thereof as indicated by programme managers.

Table 4.7. LDoE performance for the financial year 2017/18, causes and contributory factors to underachievement

Programme	Number of Targets	Planned Targets	Actual Achievement	Number of Targets underachieved	Reasons/ Causes for underachievement
1.Administration	8	8	6	2	-Inadequate systems to coordinate reporting -No qualifying bidders
2.Public ordinary schools	28	27	18	9	-Non implementation policies -Budget constrains
3.Independent schools	3	3	2	1	-Deviation from policies
4.Public special schools	5	5	4	1	-Inability to attract critical professional skills in the special schools due to unavailability of incentives in education

5.Early Childhood Development	6	5	3	2	-Merger and closure of non-viable schools
6.Infrastructure	12	12	2	10	-Budgetary pressures due to over commitment of projects
7.Examination and related services	9	9	6	3	-Shortage of Maths and Science teachers -Inadequate subject content knowledge by teachers -
Total	71	69	41(59.4%)	28(40.6%)	

Source: LDOE APR 2017/18

Table 4.7. above reveals that non-implementation and incorrect implementation of policies caused underachievement on the planned targets in 2017/18 financial year. This revelation supports Fulmer's (1990) view that human resource management plays an important role in the effective implementation of the performance plan.

It also becomes very clear in Programme 6 that the worst underachievement in infrastructure provisioning was due to budget constraints. In the same vein Kaseke (2011) recommends that Government departments, to successfully implement strategies, should develop human resource capacity coupled with a good human resource plan, availability of proper budget, business process engineering, the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system and lastly change of organisational culture .

4.2.2.6. Limpopo Department of Education Annual Performance report 2018/19 Financial Year

The Annual Performance report for 2018/19 financial year was analysed in order to determine the planned targets compared to the extent of achievement during the financial year together with reasons for underachievement thereof as indicated by programme managers.

Table 4.8. LDoE performance for the financial year 2018/19, causes and contributory factors to underachievement

Programme	Number of Targets	Planned Targets	Actual Achievement	Number of Targets underachieved	Reasons/ Causes for underachievement
1.Administration	7	6	6	0	N/A
2.Public ordinary schools	23	23	17	6	-Non reporting -Budget constrains
3.Independent schools	3	3	3	0	-N/A
4.Public special schools	3	3	1	2	-Inability to attract critical professional skills in the special schools due to unavailability of incentives in education
5.Early Childhood Development	3	3	1	2	-Merger and closure of non-viable schools
6.Infrastructure	10	9	3	6	Late allocation of new projects to implementing agents due to reprioritisation of projects
7.Examination and related services	5	5	3	2	-Shortage of Maths and Science teachers -Inadequate subject content knowledge by teachers -
Total	54	52	34(65%)	18(35%)	

Source: LDOE APR 2018/19

Table 4.8 above reveals that the Limpopo Department of Education is improving in terms of achievement of planned performance plan targets as outlined in the 2018/19 Annual Performance plan and 2018/19 Annual Performance Report. The Limpopo Department of Education recorded an achievement of 34 (65%) targets which were achieved at 100%. It is however concerning that budget constraints, inability of the Department to recruit and retain professionals, late start of projects continues to be the reason for underachievement which directly talks to issues of leadership and management of the organisation. This is in line with the view of Yambwa (2014) when he concludes that budget was not enough for the Ministry to execute its priorities, activities as set out in the strategic plan, staff members were found to be incompetent to implement the strategic plan and lack of appropriate technology systems at operational level hampered the successful implementation of the strategic plan in the Ministry. It was also found that there was lack of leadership skills to direct or spearhead strategic plan implementation.

4.2.2.7. Auditor General views on causes and contributory factors to underachievement on planned Audit Outcomes (2014/15-2018/19)

The Auditor General of South Africa's reports on Limpopo Department of Education for 2014/15 through to 2018/19 financial year were analysed in order to determine the planned targets in terms of audit outcomes as compared to the extent of achievement during the financial years together with reasons for underachievement thereof as indicated by the Auditor General.

Table 4.9. LDoE performance in terms of audit outcomes for the financial year 2018/19, causes and contributory factors to underachievement.

Financial Year	Planned Audit Outcome	Actual Audit outcome	Causes for underachievement
FY 2014/15	Unqualified Audit	Disclaimer	-Indicators not relate logically to mandate of the Department -Lack of Monitoring systems -Insufficient leadership provided
FY 2015/16	Unqualified Audit	Disclaimer	-Inadequate review and monitoring of the financial and performance reporting -Lack of consequence management -Lack of MOVs
FY 2016/17	Unqualified Audit	Qualified	Inadequate review and monitoring of the financial and performance reporting -Lack of consequence management -Lack of MOVs to support reported performance
FY 2017/18	Unqualified Audit	Qualified	-Material misstatements of AFS and AOPO -Lack of evidence to support reasons for variance -Non achievement of target
FY 2018/19	Unqualified Audit	Qualified	-Department incorrectly disclosed commitments -Irregular expenditure -Lack of MOVs to support reported performance -Non achievement of targets

Source: AGSA reports on Limpopo Department of Education 2014/15 – 2018/19

The Auditor General of South Africa's reports on Limpopo Department of Education for 2014/15 through to 2018/19 were analysed to compare audit opinion over the years and also to identify the reasons for underachievement of the targeted unqualified opinion.

Table 4.9 above reveals that the Limpopo Department of Education has shown some improvements from disclaimer of opinion obtained in 2014/15 to qualified opinion in 2018/19.

According to this study, there are several causes and contributory factors to the poor audit opinion obtained by Limpopo Department of Education during the period 2014/15 through to 2018/19. These causes include firstly, performance indicators do not relate logically to mandate of the Department; secondly, inadequate review and monitoring of the financial and performance reporting; thirdly, lack of consequence management; fourthly, lack of evidence to support reported performance which limit the Auditor General from expressing an opinion and lastly, failure by the Department to achieve planned targets .

These revelations are in consistence with the view by Kaseke (2011) that recommends for Government departments to successfully implement strategies they should develop human resource capacity coupled with a good human resource plan, availability of proper budget, business process engineering, the introduction of a monitoring and evaluation system and lastly change of organisational culture. Erasmus (2005:269) indicates that when the performance level of an employee is weak and lacks certain competencies, the performance management systems should provide the training and development interventions.

The Auditor General's concerns regarding lack of leadership contributing to poor audit opinion and poor implementation of strategies is also shared by Yambwa (2014) when he concludes that competing or ad hoc activities distracted attention from implementing the strategic plan. Deviating strategic plan implementation from its original planned activities and the plan not communicated or understood by all employees were also major challenges during the implementation.

4.2.2.8. Limpopo Department of Education Annual Financial Statement (2014/15-2018/19)

Limpopo Department of Education Annual Financial Statements for 2014/15 through to 2018/19 financial year were analysed in order to determine the planned targets in terms of Budget and Actual Expenditure as compared to the extent of achievement during the financial years together with reasons for underspending thereof as indicated by programme managers.

Table 4.10.Limpopo Department of Education AFS for the financial year 2018/19, causes and contributory factors to underspending.

Financial Year	Budget (R)	Actual Spending(R)	Underspending(R)	%	Causes for underspending
FY 2014/15	25338434	24934333	404 101	1.99%	-Non filling of attrition posts -Delays in finalising procurement processes
FY 2015/16	25264705	25118175	146530	0.6%	-Delays in filling of posts -Delays in finalising tender process
FY 2016/17	27389772	26842698	565471	2.1%	Delays in filling of posts -Delays in making payments due to protracted strike by employees
FY 2017/18	29030494	29020420	10074	0.3%	-Invoices not paid -Tender for outdoor equipment cancelled -Delays in filling of posts at MASTEC
FY 2018/19	30834506	30679064	155 442	0,38%	-Delays in making payments due to unavailability of invoices -Delays in finalising procurement processes

Source: Limpopo Department of Education Annual Financial Statements for 2014/15 through to 2018/19 Financial year

The Annual Financial statements for Limpopo Department of Education during 2014/15 through to 2018/19 were analysed to determine the allocated budget together with the actual spending in order to check the extent of underspending and causes thereof.

From the table above the financial year 2016/17 was the worst in terms of underspending at 2.1%. According to this analysis there are several causes and contributory factors to underspending on the allocated budget. These causes include, firstly, non-filling of attrition posts as and when they become available, secondly, delays in supply chain processes when directorates are procuring goods and services, and thirdly, non-payment of invoices on time due to delay in submission from cost centres. The study also reveals that the Department has a huge backlog in providing sanitation to schools at the same time there is underspending.

4.2.2.9. Limpopo Department of Education Minutes of Performance Review sessions (2014/15-2018/19)

Limpopo Department of Education Minutes of Performance review sessions for 2014/15 through to 2018/19 financial year were analysed in order to determine the reasons for underachievement as raised during the Departmental performance review sessions.

Fig. 4.1.Limpopo Department of Education factors attributed to underachievement as reflected on the minutes of Performance reviews sessions

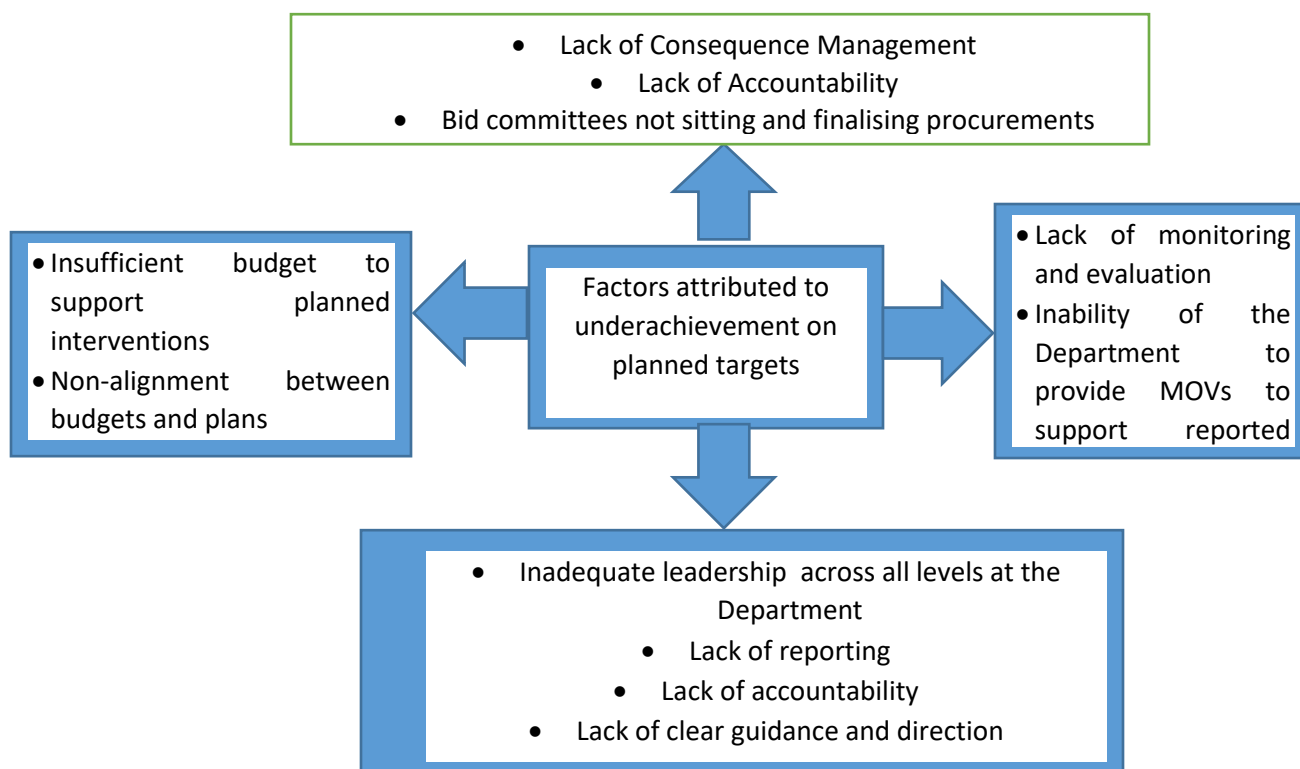


Figure 4.1. above shows the various factors attributed to the current underachievement on planned targets. According to the current study there are several factors that had contributed towards underachievement on planned performance targets. These factors include, firstly, inadequate leadership across all levels from Head office to schools level, secondly, insufficient budget to support planned interventions which clearly indicated lack of leadership to ensure that there is alignment between budget and plans, thirdly, lack of consequence management in the Department which led to lack of accountability and non-compliance to prescripts, fourthly, lack of monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of programmes.

The study also reflects that the Department failed to produce Means of Verification to support reported performance as requested by the Auditor General and Internal Audit.

4.3 SUMMARY

The study aimed at investigating causes of underachievement on Annual Performance plan targets in the Public Service, a Case study of Limpopo Department of Education. The Data analysed were contained in the strategic documents in the form of Public Service Commission reports, Annual Performance Plan, Annual Performance Reports, Auditor General's Reports of South Africa and Minutes of the Departmental review sessions 2014/15 through to 2018/19.

The results were presented in line with the objectives of the study as outlined in the 1st Chapter of the study as well as analysing views of the Auditor General on Causes of underachievement on the planned performance targets.

The next chapter (Chapter 5) will present the overview of the study, recommendations, summary of major findings and conclusions.

CHAPTER 5

MAJOR FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the causes of underachievement on the annual performance plan targets in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education at the Head Office. This chapter serves as the final evaluation of the research process and results. The chapter concludes by providing a summary of the whole study. Also, in order to enable the researcher to design a coherent and effective research report, the following findings, recommendations and conclusions will be necessary in line with the following objectives of the study:

- To identify factors of underachievement in the Limpopo Department of Education;
- To explore the causes of underachievement on Annual Performance Plan targets; and
- To formulate recommendations for the Limpopo Department of Education regarding possible solutions to address underachievement on Annual Performance plan targets.

5.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study is structured into five (5) chapters namely;

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is the initial and introductory chapter wherein the background of the study which forms the basis of the understanding of the research study is outlined. It outlines the statement of the problem, the research questions and the objective of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review and Theoretical Framework

This chapter outlines the views of various theorists, authors on strategic planning and implementation in organisations.

Chapter 3: Research methods

This is where the research techniques and the methodology of the study are explained as well as how the study will be carried out. As such the chapter covered research design, population, sampling, data collection and analysis.

Chapter 4: Analysis and Interpretation of secondary data

The research findings are presented, analysed and interpreted in this section.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Conclusions and recommendations are outlined in this section

5.3. SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The following are the summary of the major findings based on the analysis of results from chapter four, which emanated from analysis of the secondary data;

- The results show that the Department of Education needs to involve all levels of management in planning and implementation of programmes. Line management is directly responsible for day-to-day implementation of plans and programmes.
- There should be a clear link between the departmental performance plan and the individual employee performance plan.
- From the findings, it is revealed that that there is a lack of knowledge and skills on Programme implementation, therefore skills development should be implemented to address the skills gap.
- The results show that some of the major causes of underachievement in the Limpopo Department of Basic Education is that there is a high vacancy rate, lack of monitoring and low morale amongst employees.
- Top management can play an important role in the achievement of planned targets by being committed and providing guidance on implementation of plans and programmes.

- Monthly and Quarterly performance reviews to be prioritised to track performance challenges and intervene accordingly.
- Shortage of resources poses a serious challenge on implementation of plans and achievement of targets. Also revealed was the allocation of insufficient budget which impacted negatively on achievement of planned targets.
- Strategic planning to provide guidance and support to Programme managers on planning and implementation of plans. The unit is the custodian of planning and reporting, it should be comprised of experts.
- Performance Management and Development System implementation in the Limpopo Department of Education seems to be characterised by inconsistencies and also lacks the development part of it.
- It is necessary for the Department of Education to strengthen monitoring and evaluation of programmes.

The study found that the Limpopo Department of Education fails to achieve the Annual performance plan targets successfully due to the following reasons:

- Insufficient budget allocated to programmes is not enough to successfully implement the planned programmes.
- Insufficient leadership provided at all levels
- Delays in finalisation of procurement processes
- Lack of monitoring and support contributes to underachievement.
- Lack of knowledge and skills amongst staff contributes to underachievement.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study focused on investigating the causes of underachievement on the annual performance plan targets. Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made:

- The Department of Basic Education to fully implement the new organisational structure and to ensure recruitment of skilled personnel. The organisational structure which is aligned to the mandate of the organisation should be

implemented and placement of staff according to the skills be done in order to ensure that the Department achieves its mandate.

- The Department should strengthen alignment of budget and plans of the Department to ensure successful implementation of programmes. According to the planning framework priorities and plans inform the allocation of resources to enable the Department to achieve its set targets
- The Department of Basic Education to review the implementation of planning processes within the department to ensure line managers' involvement. This will ensure ownership of the plans and successful implementation thereof.
- Capacity building and skills development programmes should be enhanced to ensure a skilled workforce and improved performance.
- The Department to capacitate managers and all staff on implementation of Performance Management and Development System to ensure a common understanding, because it is a useful tool to enhance performance and boost morale. A Performance Management and Development system should be implemented in line with the policies to ensure that it achieves its intended objectives of improving performance and development of staff.
- The Department should ensure implementation of consequence management at all levels in order to strengthen accountability, which is crucial in achievement of planned targets.

5.5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion: the study investigated and analysed the causes of underachievement on performance plan targets in the public service utilising a case of Limpopo Department of Basic Education. Literature reveals that performance planning affects all organisations and it is considered to be the most complicated stage in the strategic management process as it requires discipline, commitment and sacrifices, and if desired goals are not achieved as planned the organisation might be doomed to fail.

The researcher believes and agrees with the statement by David (2009) that says “if desired goals are not achieved as planned, the organisation might be doomed to fail”. Based on the findings and analyses of the study, there should be regular monitoring and evaluation on the implementation of programmes if the department is to achieve its performance plan targets. A review of the departmental annual performance plan and annual performance reports reveals that the challenges mentioned under major findings are recurring every year. It is also recommended that leadership development programmes for those in supervisory positions should be done in order to ensure proactive leadership as opposed to reactive leadership.

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APPENDIX A:
FACULTY APPROVAL LETTER



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Faculty of Management and Law
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Tel: (015) 268 2558, Fax: (015) 268 2873, Email: frikkie.ponelis@ul.ac.za

17 October 2019

Ugoda T.O (201529623) MPAM
TURFLOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP
MASTERS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (Course Work)

Dear Ugoda T.O,

FACULTY APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I have pleasure in informing you that your Masters proposal served at the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee meeting on **15 October 2019** and it was approved as follows:

"Examining Causes of Under-Achievement on Annual Performance Plan Targets: A Case of the Limpopo Department of Basic Education, Head Office-Polokwane, Limpopo".

Note the following: The study

Ethical Clearance	Tick One
Requires no ethical clearance Proceed with the study	✓
Requires ethical clearance (Human) (TREC) (apply online) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	
Requires ethical clearance (Animal) (AREC) Proceed with the study only after receipt of ethical clearance certificate	

Yours faithfully,

Msc G. / 17/10/2019
Prof MP Sebola

Chairperson: Faculty Higher Degrees Committee

CC: Supervisor, Prof S.K Mokoena, Acting Programme Manager, Dr E Zwane and Prof MX Lethoko, Acting Director of School.

Finding solutions for Africa

**APPENDIX B:
LANGUAGE EDITING LETTER**

N J Nel
PO Box 365,
BENDOR PARK
0713

Tel: 0741849600

CERTIFICATE

This serves to certify that I have language edited the Dissertation of

Mr TSHIFHIWA ONISMUS UGODA

Student number: **201529623**

entitled:

**“EXAMINING CAUSES OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT ON ANNUAL
PERFORMANCE PLAN TARGETS: A CASE OF THE LIMPOPO
DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION, HEAD OFFICE-
POLOKWANE, LIMPOPO PROVINCE.”**



N J Nel

Lecturer of English, Department Applied Languages
Tshwane University of Technology
(Retired)

13/ 07/ 2020