

Assessing the Internal and External Factors Influencing Employee Absenteeism: A Case of the Ministry of Works and Transport in Windhoek and Swakopmund, Namibia

by

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DECLARATION

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March 2020

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ABSTRACT

This study has assessed the factors influencing employee absenteeism at the Ministry of Works and Transport in two large cities of Namibia, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund. The understanding has been that, the Ministry of Works and Transport is one of the arms of the Government of the Republic of Namibia. As such, problems affecting one public entity, save for certain specifics peculiar to a given entity, affect the entire public sector because these organisations operate in the same environment and under the same broader terms of reference.

Absenteeism which can be defined as the practice of being frequently away from work or school, is rampant in the Ministry of Works and Transport in Namibia. Due to its costly nature, there is a serious need to minimise it if not at all eradicate it altogether. The study approached the problem by separating the two subcomponents of absenteeism which are planned and unplanned absenteeism. More attention was given to unplanned absenteeism. The law provides for planned absenteeism and is silent on unplanned absenteeism. One defining characteristic is that the employer anticipates it and makes alternative arrangements and thus avoids the incurrence of unnecessary costs resulting from the worker's absence. The problematic one, however, is that one which occurs without any prior knowledge on the part of the employer. This is unplanned absenteeism. It usually results in disturbances in the organisation's work routines. Costs are usually likely to occur. It is no wonder that almost every organisation whether for profit or non-profit, should be wary of it.

For a clear understanding of the problem of absenteeism, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted by this research. The research's main findings should provide the rationale for the concerned authorities to take whatever appropriate steps to control the problem of employee absenteeism that exist in the Ministry of Works and Transport. This stems from various factors including motivation. If there is no motivation, the best out of a person cannot be realised.

In this study, the data were collected by means of questionnaire and interviews from the two selected stations namely Windhoek and Swakopmund in the Ministry of Works and Transport. The information collected were analysed and evaluated by using Microsoft Excel with the support of the statistician. The results were presented in the form of tables and figures.

The research's main findings are that, together with the lack of motivation among employees, the following various issues could also pose as stumbling blocks to the ministry's desire to fight worker absenteeism. Firstly, there is a scant understanding of the main issues concerning absenteeism including the government's established policy on it. This situation was prevailing among both management and employees. Secondly, communication on issues pertinent to the workers was generally poor. Additionally other influencing factors such as illness, family responsibility, transport challenges, work related stress, and weather conditions have been found to play a part in various

degrees to the absenteeism problem at the two selected stations. Thirdly, some of the contemporary management practices such as team based performance events are not being followed.

The law and procedures governing public sector employment, relating to absenteeism, are in place at this specific ministry, however, the application and implementation of these at the station level is of mediocre standards. A number of reasons have been suggested in the present study. The study has hence made a key recommendation for an equitable employee training and management development system as well as the application of modern management techniques. The study also recommended a periodic review of the remuneration system so that remuneration reflects the prevailing market trends.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie is 'n evaluasie van die faktore wat 'n invloed het op die afwesigheid van werknemers van die Ministerie van Werke en Vervoer in twee groot sentrums in Namibië, naamlik Windhoek en Swakopmund. Die uitgangspunt was dat die genoemde Ministerie deel is van die Regering van die Republiek van Namibië; as sulks is die veronderstelling dat (sekere faktore spesifiek tot 'n gegewe instelling uitgesluit), dieselfde sal geld vir alle staatsinstellings, aangesien alle Ministeries onder soortgelyke omstandighede werk en binne dieselfde verwysingsraamwerk val.

Afwesigheid, gedefinieer as 'n toestand van nie-teenwoordigheid by die werk of skool, floreer in die Ministerie van Werke en Vervoer in Namibië. As gevolg van die geweldige koste wat dit meebring, is dit noodsaaklik om hierdie praktyk drasties in te kort, indien nie geheel en al uit te roei nie. Hierdie studie het die probleem benader deur die twee subkomponente van afwesigheid, naamlik beplande- en onbeplande afwesigheid, van mekaar te skei. Daar is meer aandag gegee aan onbeplande afwesigheid. Die wet maak voorsiening vir beplande afwesigheid, maar daar word geen melding van onbeplande afwesigheid gemaak nie. Een duidelik onderskeidende kenmerk van beplande afwesigheid is dat die werkgewer dit kan voorsien en dus alternatiewe reëlins kan tref; daardeur kan onnodige kostes as gevolg van 'n werknemer se afwesigheid voorkom word. Die grootste probleem lê egter by afwesigheid wat geskied sonder enige waarskuwing of vooraf wete van die werkgewer: onbeplande afwesigheid. Hierdie afwesigheid lei gewoonlik tot versteurings in die normale roetine van die werkplek. Ekstra onkoste is nie uitgesluit nie. Dit is dus nie vreemd nie dat enige instelling, met of sonder 'n winsoogmerk, baie bedag behoort te wees daarop.

Om tot 'n duidelike begrip te kom van die probleem rondom afwesigheid, is van beide kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe navorsing gebruik gemaak. Hierdie navorsingsverslag behoort die rasionaal te verskaf vir enige betrokke gesag om die nodige maatreëls in plek te stel ten einde die probleem van afwesigheid in die Ministerie van Werke en Vervoer aan te spreek. Die probleem spruit uit verskeie faktore, insluitend gebrek aan motivering. Sonder motivering kan geen mens sy/haar hoogste potensiaal bereik nie.

Vir hierdie studie is data ingesamel by wyse van 'n vraelys asook persoonlike onderhoude by die twee aangewese entiteite, naamlik die kantore van die Ministerie van Werke en Vervoer in Windhoek en Swakopmund. Die inligting wat só verkry is, is met behulp van die statistikus ontleed en geëvalueer. Die program Microsoft Excel is vir dié doel gebruik en die uitslae word aangebied deur middel van tabelle en syfers.

Die belangrikste bevindinge van hierdie navorsing is dat daar, benewens die gebrek aan motivering, verskeie faktore is wat beskou kan word as struikelblokke in die Ministerie se pogings om die afwesigheid van werknemers te bekamp. Eerstens is daar 'n baie beperkte begrip van die dilemmas rondom afwesigheid, asook onkunde aangaande die regering se beleid oor afwesigheid. Hierdie was

die geval by beide die bestuur en die laer vlakke van werknemers. Tweedens was daar bewyse van swak kommunikasie oor kwessies rakende werknemers. Ander bydraende faktore (met wisselende grade) is siekte, gesinsverantwoordelikhede, vervoerprobleme en werksverwante stres. Derdens is sekere kontemporêre bestuurspraktyke soos spanbou geleenthede nie uitgevoer nie.

Dokumentasie rakende die toepaslike wetgewing en prosedures aangaande afwesigheid, soos uiteengesit in die staatsdiens se indiensnemingsbeleid, is wel beskikbaar by die betrokke Ministerie, maar die toepassing daarvan in die werkplek is maar middelmatig. Tydens hierdie navorsing is verskeie redes hiervoor aangevoer. Daarom is daar in hierdie navorsingsverslag 'n belangrike aanbeveling gedoen ten opsigte van 'n redelik haalbare werknemer-opleidingsprogram asook vir 'n stelsel vir bestuursontwikkeling, wat moderne tegnieke van bestuur insluit. Hierdie verslag beveel ook aan dat werknemers se vergoedingspakkette gereeld hersien word sodat dit die heersende neigings in die werksmark weerspieël.

ACRONYMY

NC:	Namibian Constitution
DOW:	Department of Works
MWT:	Ministry of Works and Transport
DOACSS	Department of Administration and Central Support Services
DOGATS	Department of Government Air Transport Services
DOT	Department of Transport
LL:	Labourer Law
LA:	Labour Act
PSA:	Public Service Act
PSSR:	Public Service Staff Rule
ECA:	Employees Compensation Act
AA:	Affirmative Action
ESA:	Employee Service Act
EC:	Employee Compensation
CRILO:	Convention and Recommendation of International Labour Organisation
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
POS:	Perceived Organisational Support
PM	Prime Minister
PS	Permanent Secretary
DPS	Deputy Permanent Secretary
DD	Deputy Director
GRN	Government of the Republic of Namibia
HRM	Human Resource Management
HR	Human Resources
HRP	Human Resource Practitioner
GM	General Manager
PA	Personnel Administration

HRS	Human Resource Specialist
AWOL	Absent Without Official Leave
HRD	Human Resource Department
PA	Personnel Administration
EE	Employment Equity
TB	Tuberculosis
TD	Training and Development

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

With the current emphasis on the need by the Namibian Government to deliver quality services to its citizens, greater demands are placed on the Ministry of Works and Transport to provide quality goods and services. For the Ministry of Works and Transport to provide such quality goods and services, it requires efficiency and a dedicated workforce. However, due to high employee absenteeism in the ministry, departments, directorates and divisions, these remain difficult to achieve.

A recent study conducted by Badubi (2017) on the subject have shown that employee absenteeism is one of the workplace challenges experienced by several employers in today's business industry. This predicament has been around for many decades and is still continuing. It depletes funds in the organisations and reduces output and the standard of accuracy, completeness, and cost and speed (Clare, 2016). According to Karanja (2008:10), non-attendance of workers at the workplace is a serious setback and a very expensive phenomenon. The cost of absenteeism has been ignored, misunderstood and miscalculated in most organisations, but the devastating cost is amounting to around 36 percent of the pay roll each year (Kacakulah, Kelley, Mitchell and Ruggieri, 2009). The price of absenteeism has indeed caused many organisations to close the doors of their businesses.

The business situation in both developed and developing countries has transformed to the level that every part of economic performance is vital to achieve national and international competitiveness. Consequently, employees' work attendance, production and dedication to the organisation have become an essential part of human resource performance. Managers and supervisors should be well-informed about non-attendance. It is important for the management staff in both public and private sectors to look at issues of workplace environment for the health of their employees (Australasian Report, 1999: 7).

This study, focused on employee absenteeism within the Ministry of Works and Transport in Namibia. The Ministry of Works and Transport is one of the government ministries with a substantial responsibility for the provision of services in the country. To realise this, the ministry needs dedicated and hardworking employees who are always present at work to accomplish the citizens' demand of goods and services.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and introduce the project which consists of the background of the problem, the reasons for the study, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions, research design and methodology, definition of concepts, strengths and limitations as well as the outlining of chapters.

1.2. Research problem

The ever growing problem of absenteeism at the workplace remains a grave concern, especially in the public sector, where citizens depend on public services. Despite previous studies that have been conducted on this topic, there are few trials tracking the reasons of employee absenteeism especially in the Ministry of Works and Transport in Namibia. Supervisors and managers in most public and private organisations around the world are facing difficulties to take action on the concrete needs and demands of the people due to employee absenteeism at the workplaces. Karanja (2008:16) states that unexpected non-attendance at work is displeasing and expensive when a worker is not available to execute his or her job as expected. This may result in poor service delivery due to the lack of knowledge and skill among the replacement workers on the job and is thus costly to the organisation.

The Ministry of Works and Transport's (MWT) strategic objectives are "to ensure modern and reliable infrastructure development. The organisation is responsible for the maintenance and the construction of government buildings" (MWT annual plan, 2015/2016). For the Ministry of Works and Transport to have a reliable infrastructure, it requires good organisational management and a workforce which is devoted to producing and providing quality goods and services in line with citizens' concrete needs and demands. Unfortunately, this is not the case as most of the supervisors and managers in regional offices are worried about the low productivity (Quarter report, 2013/2014:3).

Several employees in public institutions have developed a tendency of coming late, departing early, present at work, but doing nothing despite work schedule in place and not coming to work without any authorisation. The reasons given are either that he/she was sick or had transport problems. According to the specific experience of the researcher, it seems to have increased and supervisors are hesitant and fail to take action despite the existing rules and regulations on absenteeism. Even though absenteeism is alleged to be dwindling the financial resources of the company, little investigations on the internal and external factors that cause employees to be absent at work has been done in Namibia especially in the Ministry of Works and Transport.

According to the Quarterly report (2013/2014) of the sub-division of Horticultural Services within the Ministry of Works and Transport, 21 percent of absenteeism was recorded in the financial year. This percentage creates a grave concern and if not properly managed and controlled, it may be too costly to the organisation. Equally, there has been a general concern from the politicians, members of the public, private sector, senior government officials, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), that the services rendered by most public institutions in Namibia are very poor. This also applies to the Ministry of Works and Transport (Shifidi, 2016).

This worrisome proportion of absenteeism has the potential to influence the productivity and costs within the ministry and the entire Government. As such, it is therefore suggested that more research

on the internal and external factors that are causing absenteeism should be carried out on workers' perspective of absence, especially the views of those workers who have a habit of staying away from the workplace.

The focus of this study is on the internal and external factors that influence employee absenteeism. The reason for looking at these factors is that currently, the work activities in the Ministry of Works and Transport are labour intensive and the institution plays a significant role in the country's provision of services but has a high rate of 21 percent of employee absenteeism in Windhoek and 5 percent in Swakopmund respectively (Horticultural Services quarterly report, 2013/2014). It is therefore against this background that the researcher would like to follow the study from the employees' viewpoint and to answer the question: what are the internal and external factors causing absenteeism among the employees in the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected stations, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund.

1.3. Research objectives

The main research objectives of this study include the following:

1. To define and understand absenteeism.
2. To distinguish between planned and unplanned absenteeism.
3. To identify the external and internal causes (drivers) of absenteeism.
4. To understand the policy dealing with absenteeism in the Ministry of Works and Transport.
5. To profile the extent of absenteeism within the Ministry of Works and Transport in Windhoek and Swakopmund.
6. To observe if there is a difference between the factors influencing absenteeism at the two selected places.
7. To make recommendations on improving and decreasing absenteeism in the cases discussed.

1.4. Research design and Methodology

1.4.1. Research design

The exploratory design was applied to obtain information from the two selected places. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were engaged in order to establish the perceptions and understanding of employee attendance in the Ministry of Works and Transport. The choice of using a mixed-approach method such as "qualitative and quantitative" research methods is because it responds well to the factors and characteristics that contribute to absenteeism. Furthermore, the knowledge of the key respondents on absenteeism could best be articulated in language and figures.

1.4.2. Research method

1.4.2.1. Study population

According to Singh (2012:6), population means the whole populace that a researcher is interested in. Cottrell and Mckenzie (2010:1) define population as an entire set of objects or people with the characteristics one wishes to observe and understand. According to Jakobsen and Gluud (2013:6), the theory of sample suggests that the size of the sample greatly influences the ability to generalise results back to the population under the investigations. Cottrell and Mckenzie (2010:6) points that due to lack of time and money to collect information from everyone in a population, it is therefore necessary to find a representative sample of that population.

The total population in the study was 350 employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected stations. Out of this total population, 320 were non-managerial staff and 30 were managerial staff respectively. This means that 226 participants were from Windhoek and 94 participants were from Swakopmund. On the managerial part, 21 staff were from Windhoek while 9 were from Swakopmund.

To ensure the research ethics and anonymity of the targeted employees was maintained, the sample included both the employees who were regularly absent and those who were not offenders of absenteeism and were willing to participate. The human resource practitioners and supervisors from each selected station participated in the study. These formed part of the sample by virtue of their responsibilities in the departments.

All the participants were identified by means of the attendance register, a tool used to record the employees who are present and absent at work. The regulations in the Ministry of Works and Transport which include Public Service Staff Rule amendment notice of 1997 as contained in the Public Service Act of 1995, stipulate that all employees should record in the attendance register the time of their arrival and departure from work. Furthermore, The Public Service Act (PSA) states that the manager of each organisational component is responsible for the observation of workforce under his or her supervision during the official hours of attendance and may discipline the repeat offenders of absenteeism through warning letters and other authorised means (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1995).

1.4.2.2. Sampling techniques

Sampling techniques can be defined as a process of choosing the targets that represent the population to be considered (Singh, 2012). In this study one-hundred and eleven (111) out of the population size of 320 non-managerial staff and twenty four (24) out of a population size of thirty (30) managerial staff working for the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected stations formed the sample. Among the non-managerial, a sample of 68 which constitutes 30 percent of the population in Windhoek and a sample of 43 which constitutes 46 percent of the population in Swakopmund was

selected. The managerial staff had a sample of 16 in Windhoek which constitutes 76 percent of the population and a sample of 8 in Swakopmund which constituted 89 percent

1.4.2.3. Research instruments

The researcher made use of a survey questionnaire to determine the factors that influence workers absenteeism. The self-administered questionnaire and interviews were the main tools that were used to collect the data from the workers, supervisors and human resource practitioners. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher whereby existing survey questions suitable for the research questions of this study were used. Using survey questions from other sources guaranteed the validity and reliability of the data collected. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed-ended items and was based on the objectives of the study while the interview contained open-ended questions which allows the respondents to express their views freely. The main research question that directed this study was: what are the root causes of employee absenteeism in the Ministry of Works and Transport at Windhoek and Swakopmund. The type of secondary questions that were asked in this study are as follows;

- What are the perceived reasons for employee absence in the Ministry of Works and Transport?
- What are the internal and external factors contributing to employee absenteeism among the employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport?
- How do the root causes of absenteeism in Windhoek differ from those in Swakopmund?

1.4.2.4. Data collecting procedure

First of all, the researcher obtained permission from the Permanent Secretary where the study was planned to take place. Informed consent was obtained from the respondents before distributing the questionnaires. The researcher, with the help of a field assistant, distributed the questionnaires to the participants. The questionnaire was written in English since most of the participants understood the language.

The filling in of questionnaires lasted for four days. Meaning that the questionnaire was handed out at once to the participants and were collected after a period of four days by the researcher and the field assistant. All completed questionnaires were checked for completeness, marked with a black pen and filed. The questionnaire had a number of issues that described absenteeism in the workplace. Open and closed-ended questions enabled the participants to give more details on answers and to come up with other issues that were central to the study. Managers, supervisors, and human resource practitioners were interviewed individually and the session took about 10 to 20 minutes per participant. All the information collected was anonymous and the information was only used for research purposes.

The data management issues included both electronic as well as non-electronic. In this way, the research data were stored in two ways. First, the completed questionnaires were filed and kept in a secure place which was locked all the time, for example in office and file cabinet. Secondly, the electronic information was stored on a computer which was accessed by means of a password known to the researcher only.

1.4.2.5. Data analysis

The data on absenteeism was collected and evaluated by using easy methods such as Microsoft Excel with the support of a statistician. The results were presented in the form of diagrams, tables and graphs. The required resources like transport, funds and equipment such as computers for processing and storage of information have been provided by the researcher.

1.4.2.6. Validity and reliability

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:121) researchers need to develop reliable measures when asking individuals for information and should be careful to ask only things to which participants are likely to know the answer. The investigators should enquire about things pertinent to them and they should be clear on what they are querying. The authors further describe validity as an extent to which a realistic measure sufficiently echoes the actual meaning of the concept under deliberation. In this study, validity and reliability were guaranteed by the research questions contained in the questionnaires which were derived from other sources. This made it easier for the researcher to collect and analyse the relevant data. Furthermore having both questionnaire and interview provided for triangulation as well.

1.5. Outline of chapters

This research project attempted to review the assessment of internal and external factors influencing employee absenteeism at the workplace. It sought to identify the causes of employee absenteeism. The study consist of six chapters.

Chapter One discusses and introduces the project. It provides an overview about the general idea of the research study, including issues such as the research problems and the objectives of the study.

Chapter Two presents a wide-ranging literature review describing employee absenteeism as well as the model and variables. Subsequently, a detailed discussion on absenteeism is offered, with the focus on various factors influencing attendance and absenteeism as well as the consequences of absenteeism on the organisation. The notion of employee absenteeism is discussed with detailed reference to the theories around attendance and absenteeism. Possible approaches to deal with the problem of absenteeism are also offered.

Chapter Three presents a debate on the legislation and policies that guide the Ministry of Works and Transport on employee absenteeism. It illustrates how the regulations and acts are practised within the

departments to ensure work attendance. The chapter analyses the labour laws in Namibia and other guidelines with regard to employee absenteeism. It also looks at how these existing policies are used by the managers within the departments with the aim to reduce employee absenteeism at the workplace.

Chapter Four provides a case of the two selected places within the Departments of the Ministry of Works and Transport, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund. It presents the historical background to the two selected stations and the details of each department in the ministry. It also shows the organogram structure of the Ministry of Works and Transport especially the department of works as well as policies pertaining to absenteeism which include issues such as attendance, non-attendance, provision of leave, ministerial notification procedures and disciplinary action and termination of services.

Chapter Five provides an overview of the research methodology which was applied in the exploration of the research problem. The features that were covered included the research design, sampling methods, and the method in which information was collected and stored. The procedures followed during the data collection, measuring instruments and analysis are also presented in this chapter. This chapter further analyses the data collected and presents the results of responses as extracted from the research instruments used which are questionnaires as well as administered interviews. It presents findings on internal and external factors that influence employee absenteeism with a special focus on the departments of the Ministry of Works and Transport in the Namibian Government, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund. The results are analysed and presented in the form of graphs, tables and diagrams.

Chapter Six is a progression from chapter five on research methods, results and findings. It continues the discourse on employee absenteeism in the Ministry of Works and Transport. In this chapter, the conclusions are drawn and various recommendations that could be of significance are made.

CHAPTER 2: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature relevant to this study and draw conclusions based on this literature as well as on the findings of this research. The aim of the study is to determine the possible factors that influence absenteeism and to apply them to the case explored further in this study. The first section is divided into seven categories. The first category provides a theoretical overview of human resources management in the public sector. This is followed by definitions of the terms and concepts of absenteeism which is done in the second section. Absenteeism is defined according to two approaches. These include the economic perspective and the psychological model. As the chapter progresses, the model of absenteeism as well as its variables will be looked at. Thereafter, the main causes of absenteeism will be identified and discussed. The literature will end with a discussion on the costs and possible remedies of absenteeism while outlining the legal framework of the organisation.

2.2 The theoretical overview of human resource management in the public sector

Human resources management (HRM) in the public sector should be regarded as a subset of the broader area of personnel administration. Van Der Westhuizen (2016:4) defines personnel administration (PA) as an array of activities which political managers, human resource specialists (HRS) and line function staff undertake. The achievement of strategic objectives of the public sector is its main area. For its part, human resources management in the public sector has been depicted as “that part of management which is concerned with factors, principles, strategies, operations, practices, functions, activities, methods, processes and procedures related to employees in public institutions, and to the dimensions related to employment relationships and the dynamics that flow from them” (Van Der Westhuizen, 2016:4).

Van Der Westhuizen (2016:4) continues to characterise the concept in relation to the public sector. The activities’ main purpose is to establish a continued success of the public sector through (good fit) employment relationships in the ever-changing and turbulent business environment. This concept of HRM suggests a multi-faceted nature of the subject. It encompasses the different aspects or activities in an organisation which are geared at the manipulation of the organisation’s human resources for the good of the organisation. According to Grobler et al (2011) human resources management is a process where individuals in managerial positions make use of human and other resources as efficiently as possible. The end result should be to provide certain goods or service, and thus achieve the goals of the entity (Van Der Westhuizen, 2016:9).

DuPlessis, Chipunza, Gura, Keyser, Munyayeka, Naidoo and Samuel (2015:4) add that “HRM constitutes the management of people and relationships in an organisation in the form of recruiting, employing, developing, rewarding and utilising human resources in order to add value to the

organisation". In the context of the contemporary organisation, whether in the public sector or the private sector, Human Resource Practitioner (HRP) officials have to keep pace with the latest developments in the field of human resources management. To be successful for the contemporary organisation, the HRM needs to possess some key competencies.

Grobler, Warnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield (2011:9) include business mastery, human mastery and change mastery as competencies. A business mastery involves a knowledge of the business inside out. Human mastery involves a good understanding of business trends such as staffing, staff developments, appraisals, rewards, team building as well as good organisational and interpersonal communication. Change mastery is about the know-how that the human resource practitioner (HRP) should have in managing organisational change. The practitioner's personal credibility in front of all the organisation's stakeholders as well as being fair minded are also some of the characteristics of a good HR manager or practitioner.

DuPlessis et al. (2011:25) add more essential competencies human resource (HR) official needs to have such as flexibility and responsiveness in the face of the dynamic organisational processes, a good knowledge of the business and a keen insight of the industry as well as being good at "financial interpretations and analysis, good psychological insights and a desire and the ability to learn". Possessing emotional intelligence, the ability to listen and communicate persuasively, having consulting skills, self-leadership are also essential attributes of a good HRP.

Before analysing the defining characteristics of the public sector human resources management as compared to and contrasted with the approach followed in the private sector, below is an outline of the various changes and developments in the field of employee management of the workplace.

2.2.1 The changing face of human resource management in the organisation

According to Grobler et al. (2011:3), both philosophy as well as the approach to management of the employee has undergone evolutionary changes during the preceding century. Frederick Taylor, who is generally regarded as the father of scientific management, together with other social scientists, Frank and Lillian Gilbreth as well as Henry Gantt had a drastic approach to employee management (Grobler et al, 2011:4). They considered all workers to be on an equal footing before the employer.

Therefore, if an employee's performance did not measure up to what management regarded as satisfactory, then it meant that such an employee's involvement with the organisation should be abruptly terminated. The employee, thus needed constant supervision and always faced the threat of losing the job. This approach stemmed from the belief that the worker was, essentially motivated by economic gains. This also included that the worker's output could be increased through financial incentives" (Grobler et al, 2011:6). Fredrick Taylor and his compatriots regarded the employee as simply another factor of production alongside raw materials, machines and capital.

Taylorism was a system that regarded the achievement of the organisation's objectives as the primary reason for the existence of any business. Employee satisfaction or motivation did not feature as deciding factors in the organisation's productivity, and thus its achievement of its objectives.

Still around the first half of the twentieth century, Taylorism gave way to another concept of employee management which largely owes its birth to the Hawthorne studies conducted by the authorities such as Elton Mayo and F. J. Raethlisberger who postulated that "employee feelings, emotions and sentiments were strongly affected by such work conditions as good relationships, leadership styles and support from management". And the above would influence employee productivity (Grobler et al, 2011:7). This led to the widespread application of behavioural science methods at the workplace. Among them were supervisory training programmes which gave support and concern for workers.

This shift to human relations emphasis coincided with an increasing presence and influence of trade unionism and the demand for more employee empowerment. However, this system, according to Grobler et al. (2011:7) had its own weaknesses among which are the following:

- i. This approach became too much reliant on the concept that "a happy worker is a hard worker", and ignored other relevant issues which are generally regarded as necessary for achieving the objectivities of the entity.
- ii. Additionally, this system failed to incorporate the fact that each individual has some uniqueness.

It was partly because of the weaknesses mentioned above that the HRM philosophy emerged (Grobler et al, 2011:8). Grobler et al (2011:8) postulated that for HRM to be of benefit to organisations it should incorporate concepts, such as that the system of the organisation should first aim to achieve its objectives through increasing its effectiveness and secondly, there should be a way of satisfying each employee's personal needs. The HRM in the contemporary organisation should thus address goals of the entity and those of the employee as being mutual and compatible.

The following is a summary of the Human Resource principles which an organisation should adopt (Grobler et al, 2011:8):

- Employees should be regarded as invested assets and if effectively managed, they give back long-term rewards to the entity in the form of improved productivity.
- The entity should devise policies which end up satisfying economic and psychological needs of the employee.
- It should strive to establish a working environment which is conducive and which encourages employees to maximise their skills and capabilities.

- It should implement HR programmes which are capable of satisfying the needs of both employer and employee.

Given the HRM principles as outlined above, there are activities considered as key human resource manager's functions in the organisation. There is, however, a caveat that because each organisation is unique on its own right, HRM activities, therefore, vary from organisation to organisation. Grobler et al (2011:10) established an equitable employee compensation and benefits scheme, for example, insurance administration, remuneration, pension plans, holidays and leave processing. Creating an affirmative action scheme and ensuring that the organisation complies with the employment equity (EE) rules is another aspect. Creating job analysis programmes, especially during change management processes is another one as well as performing pre-employment testing.

It should be noted that the fore-going discussion on the different aspects of the HRM outlines the generality of issues generally applicable to organisations both in the private and public sectors. Factors which particularly relate to HRM in the public sector organisations will therefore be deliberated on in the following sections.

2.3 Management of people in the public sector

The general principles underlying the management of the organisation's human resources apply to both the private sector and public sector. However, public sector approaches to human resource management have their own unique characteristics being engendered by several factors such as the nature of its services, the type of its customers and other stakeholders of the public sector. On defining public management, Wissink (1992) as quoted by Van Der Waldt (2016:10), referred to it "as a part of public administration with the skill of converting resources such as raw materials, labour, capital and information into services and products to satisfy the desires of society and to achieve the aims and objectives of the public sector".

DuPlessis et al (2011:5), when specifically referring to HRM, adds that the HRP officials manages the principal resources in their institutions, namely employees - allowing them to attain their objectives. The question is, in what way does human resources management in the public sector differ from that of the private sector. Human resources management in the public sector has the following features which thus separate it from general management of human resources.

2.3.1. Stakeholders in the public sector

The stakeholders in the public sector consists of two aspects. These include the citizens and the government.

- **The citizens**

Arguably, the most important stakeholder in the field of the public sector services are the citizens of the country. These are regarded as the chief customers of the public sector. Van Der Westhuizen (2016:58) points that the citizens, as customers of public institutions “have in many instances no option but to use the services of that particular institution”. The same author continues and states that the citizens expect public institutions to “perform well”. This obligation by public institutions to the general public emanates from the generally observed relationships, sometimes referred to as the performance contract between the government of the day and its citizens. This unwritten contract obliges the government to provide those services which cannot be provided by the private sector to the people. In turn, the citizens pay back to the state in the form of taxes and other monies levied on the people by different government institutions.

- **The government**

As mentioned above, the government has an obligation to its citizens. While many services and goods are provided by the private sector, other services, partly due to their nature, e.g. health, education national defence or enforcement and maintenance of law and order, or due to the mere size of the financial outlay required, are provided by the government. In undertaking these services, the government uses these public institutions such as the Ministry of Works and Transport. It is asserted again that “the public sector has an obligation towards the public to increase general welfare” (Van Der Waldt, 2016:20).

2.3.2. Public sector employees

Public sector employees can be grouped in a number of categories. Van Der Waldt (2016:19) states that “the people who work in the public sector should constantly strive to act in a way which will lead to the improvement of the quality of service delivery by public institutions”. Van Der Waldt goes on to say that efficiency in the public sector entities is about the achievement of objectives, the economic use of resources and an equitable resource distribution between groups and projects. The author emphasises the role of public institutions which should use their resources to achieve certain objectives which are primarily “providing services and products to improve the general welfare of the public”.

Grobler, Warnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hartfield (2011:20) categorise human resources (HR) job levels in the organisational structure as including the head of the HR department who, in the private sector occupies a deputy general manager’s level. This HRM head occupies an influential position, and reports directly to the general manager (GM). In typical public institutions, this position of the HRM head can be a department.

This human resource department (HRD) is responsible for formulating personnel policies and creating important personnel programmes. The managers oversee the clerical and professional employees of the organisation as well as co-ordinating personnel activities. Below the managers are the professional employees whose duties include employee counselling, development of benefits systems and involvement in labour relations activities. At the base of the organisational ladder are the clerical employees who include clerks, typists, receptionists and lower level administrative assistants.

According to Grobler et al (2011:20), “the responsibility for performing the HR functions does not reside in the HR department only. All managers at all levels of the organisation share in that responsibility”. Grobler et al further observe that one of the HRD’s great challenges is to attract, retain, motivate and develop individuals with talent. In the public sector, this problem is more acute because generally, remuneration in the public sector is lower than in the private sector. DuPlessis, Chipunza, Gura, Keyser, Munyayeka, Naidoo and Samuel (2011:112) observe that those organisations offering the most attractive financial packages are rewarded with lower turnover rates on average. DuPlessis et al (2011:112) add that “organisations experiencing higher labour turnover, remuneration was the most common reason given for leaving. It is argued that organisations which experience high labour turnovers have a higher likelihood of having rates of absenteeism.

Branham (2014), Jacobson (2010) and Trice (2011) are quoted in Van Der Westhuizen (2016:79) commenting that “workforce planning is influenced by budgetary constraints, especially in the public sector”. Budgets that are lower have reduced capacities of attracting potential employees. The same author posit that the public sector is usually associated with lower rates of remuneration. Workforce planning involves activities of HRM such as talent management, performance management, learning and development as well as succession management. This is also a prerequisite for the entity’s ability to achieve its objectives since it results in better performing workers. Generally, in the public sector, such issues as above are a constant source of challenge.

2.3.3. Social responsibilities of the public sector

According to Buchliolz, and Wagley (1989), as quoted in Van Der Waldt (2016:116) “government and thus public sector managers, may be expected to meet certain requirements in terms of social responsibility”. This is because, if a government cannot deliver well on the social aspects of its obligation, this can be judged as a failure on its part in terms of fulfilling its duties under the social contract. An efficient public service is a responsibility to be fulfilled.

Included here are issues such as adhering to the requirements of basic human rights, enabling organisations to acquire a positive public image through ethical actions, to do according to the expectations of the community and as well as to transforming threats into opportunities. Social issues include the country’s population growth, urbanisation and housing, issues of pandemics such as

HIV/AIDS and general health issues. The public sector organisation is there to help government in achieving its objectives with regard to the above.

Lavigna (2013:5) outlines key environmental factors which “distinguish the public sector from the private sector and these include having to deal with the political leadership that changes frequently, hard to measure goals and impacts, complicated, rule bound and sometimes irrational decision-making, multiple external stakeholders with power and influence, an older and more educated and more white-collar workforce. This also advocates for the knowledge worker, as well as strong civil service rules and employee protection legislation, including heavy union influence in the labour market. This author continues the argument that the public sector is crippled with limited financial tools to influence and reward worker’s behaviour” (Lavigna, 2013:5).

2.3.4. Continuous improvement of the public employee

Again, Lavigna (2013:11-12) associates the public sector’s failure to engage and retain workers especially those with critical skills with the high demand in the job market. The public sector has to compete with the private sector in attracting high quality workers. According to Lavigna (2013:3), engaged employees are those with “a heightened connection to the work, the organisation, mission and the co-workers”. The “engaged workers have faith in their organisations and that the employer values them. Thus the workers are likely to go above the effort to deliver performance. It is observed that engaged employees “plan to stay in the institutions for what they give as compared to the disengaged who stay for what they get.” (Lavigna, 2013:3).

In addition, Lavigna (2013:14) asserts that the concept of engagement is linked to the concept of flow and a worker who is in the flow is fully immersed in the feeling of energised focus, full involvement and success. Flow in this respect refers to the fact of being involved in what the worker is doing in all aspects such as mentally and physically. Both engagement and flow require the existence of the following: clear goals, immediate employee feedback from the employer, the worker’s concentration and the belief that the present is what matters. Unfortunately the public sector scores very poorly on all of these.

As a contrast, Lavigna (2013:6) characterises most public sector employees as sleep walking through their workday. “Every day these disengaged employees are ticking time bombs who undermine what their engaged co-workers are trying to accomplish” (Lavigna, 2013). They are treated as time bombs, because they can involve themselves in actions which are detrimental to the organisation and usually influence negatively the committed workers.

2.3.5. An understanding of the employment legal framework

An emphasis on the understanding of the country’s legal framework on labour matters was stated to be essential for a successful HRM in the public service. According to Nicholas, Valock and Benavides

(2012:6), to be able to manage public agency workforces, public service managers should understand the legal framework that allows them to lead their workforce to produce the desired results, protect their employees' rights and contribute to an enriched work environment. The work should be challenging for it to motivate the workers. This is a strong statement on the public sector's need to be well-informed of the labour law in the country. This will be for the mutual benefit of the organisation and the workers.

2.3.6. Legislations related to the public sector

Van Zyl (2017:34) posits that the Labour Law of any country is the primary body regulating labour matters between the employer and employee as well as the society at large. This applies to both the private and the public employment fields. However, in addition to this general labour law, the public sector employment field is further guided by legislation peculiar to it. For instance, in various other countries, the country's Public Service Act is created and the main objectives include creating and managing the effectiveness of the civil service, setting rules of work, discipline and even termination of services. Hence, the enacting of Namibia's Public Service Act No. 13 of 1995 which will be discussed later was created under the same spirit.

With particular reference to Namibia, the Prime Minister (PM) is empowered to make certain decisions on Public Sector labour matters through issuing recommendations after recommendation by the National Commission. Finally, the Public Service Staff Rules (PSSR) are recommendations and directives which supplement the above-mentioned guidelines. They are also issued by the Prime Minister upon recommendation by the commission. All these apply specifically to the public sector.

The next section will be giving more attention to the various aspects of employee absenteeism.

2.4 Defining absenteeism

There are several definitions of "employee absenteeism". To understand the meaning of employee absenteeism, it is important to first define the two concepts separately. The term "employee refers to an individual who is recruited for cash as payment. Republic of Namibia (2004:1) characterises "the employee as an individual who works for another person and receives remuneration for that work". The Oxford dictionary defines a worker as a person working for payment. Powel (2012:4) describes absenteeism as an action of staying absent from workplace with or without the consent of the supervisor. Van Der Merwer and Miller (1988:6), Jacobs and Kritsonis (2007:4) define absenteeism as a failure of a worker to report for work as scheduled.

According to Farrell (2005:6), there are two types of employee absenteeism. These are planned and unplanned absenteeism. Planned absence is a type of absenteeism where a worker makes an arrangement with the supervisor and permission is given to him/her to be absent from the work while unplanned absence is the choice of an employee to stay home without making any arrangements with

his/her supervisor and it does not matter what the reasons may be.

Based on the above definitions, this research formulates and refers to “employee absenteeism” as a situation whereby an individual who is hired for payment simply takes a decision of not coming to work whether such a worker has a permission from the supervisor or not.

2.5 Perspectives of absenteeism

According to Farrell (2005:7), a model is a symbol of effort to find out known contributing and moderating factors that can be applied into an interpretable framework. In line with this definition, Gangai, Agrawal and Gupta (2015:1774), point out that over the last decades, several major conceptual models have been built and tested within absenteeism literature in an attempt to explain the decision taken by a worker to attend or not to attend work. In 1978 Nicholson constructed a model of attendance motivation which takes into account factors that influence both absence and attendance. According to Karanja (2008:21), Nicholson believed that attendance is a normal behaviour, and that the exploration for the reasons of absenteeism is a search for the consistency of attendance. Gangai, Agrawal and Gupta (2015:2) argue that in order to search for those reasons, there is a need to integrate the two competing models derived from the economic and psychological points of view.

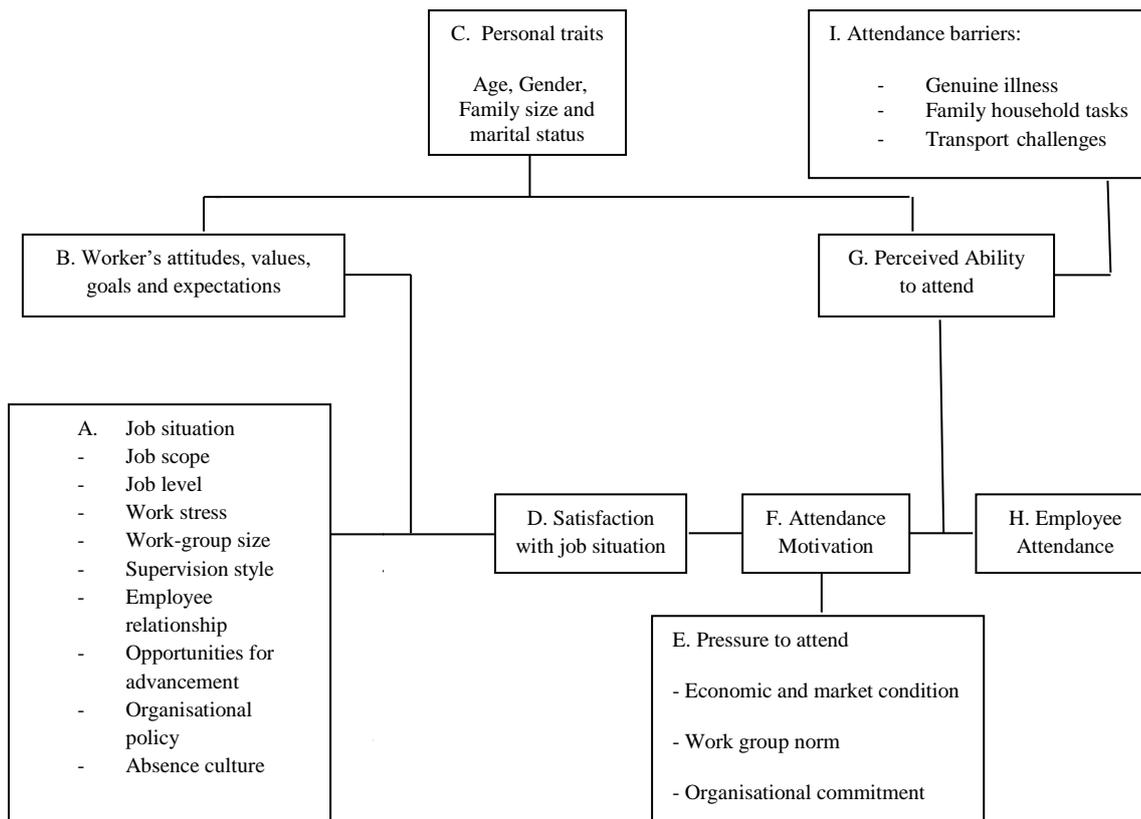
2.5.1. An economic perspective model

This view attempts to explain absenteeism from a labour choice outlook. It suggests that workers will be absent when the benefits of not working outweigh the costs of working. The economic view considers that pay, fringe benefits and policy issues are vital to explain work attendance. For example, lower rates of absence are associated with higher pay as well as the attachment of fringe benefits to working hours and lower levels of paid sick leave (Gangai, et al, 2015).

2.5.2. Attendance or psychological model

According to Farrell (2005:8), this model draws on the expectancy theory of worker’s motivation to explain absenteeism behaviour. The expectancy theory suggests that when people think about the future, they intend to create different expectations about what will happen. In this way, workers come in the organisation with predetermined cognitions, orientations and expectations which, if not met, will encourage absenteeism. As such, there is a need for the managers to understand the presumption on why workers miss work (Josias and Beverley, 2005:25). In line with this, the integrated model of attendance built by Steers and Rhodes (1978) is applied in the study because it offers a good framework on various factors influencing employee attendance and absence.

Figure 1: Integrated Model of Employee Attendance, (1978).



Source: Josias and Beverley (2005, p. 25)

According to Figure 1 there are two variables that determine employee attendance, namely employee motivation to attend (box F) and worker's ability to attend (box G). For a good understanding of this model, it is important for the reader to avoid regarding the various boxes as from A to I as if it is a progression of factors acting as predictors of absenteeism by the employee. Rather, this tries to explain how the totality of these variables do collectively influence employee absenteeism or attendance. As elaborated above, all the elements in box A of the model play a significant role in creating an individual's motivation to attend or, alternatively resulting in the absence of the individual's motivation.

The model requires the reader to recognise that the factors found in box A do not operate in isolation in being the deciding factors in the individual's behaviour towards attendance or absenteeism. Box B introduces attributes considered peculiar to the individual which, when factored in together in the model, with personal trait factors in box C, also exert a significant influence on the individual's overall satisfaction with one's job situation and thus on motivation as presented in box D. Other factors which may either militate against the individual's motivation to attend or not are as presented in box E. The culmination of all these is finally, the individual's motivation to attend, as observed in box F.

The model also presents factors which can act as a barrier for the employee to attend work. It then demonstrates how these potential barriers as in box I can work in conjunction with factors as depicted in box C in deciding whether the worker will be able to attend or will be absent. It is important to note that factors as depicted in box C can either act as positive drivers to employee motivation or concurrently act with the box I factors as influencing the individual's ability to attend or be absent. The authors, present box H as the culmination of all the factors which ultimately lead to employee's attendance or absence at the workplace. As already alluded to above, the individual factors are elaborated on hereunder.

2.5.2.1. Attendance motivation and ability to attend variables

Ability is a physical and mental power of an individual to do something whereas, motivation refers to factors that activate, direct and sustain goal-directed behaviour. It involves emotions, social, biological, and cognitive forces that stimulates behaviour (James, Thomas and Brooks, 2002). Attendance motivation and ability to attend variables are associated with factors such as workplace issues, social issues, personal characteristics, perceived ability to attend, as well as worker's attitude, values and expectation (Njambi, 2014).

2.5.2.1.1. Workplace Issues

Karanja (2008:13) states that there are nine factors associated with the job situation that could lead to increased or decreased job satisfaction. These include work stress, the work-group size, and job level, the type of job, supervision style, employee relationship, organisational policies, absence culture and opportunity for advancement.

- Work stress

According to Fox (2008:3), absenteeism due to stress is increasing in companies around Africa and 3.5% of all sick leave incidents were due to psychological illnesses such as stress, depression and anxiety. Josias and Beverley (2005:6) states that about one million workers around the world are absent every day due to stress. Leontaridi and Ward (2002:1) also found that 28% of workers globally reported stress related health problems. The authors' further state that employees experiencing work-related pressures and fears are more susceptible to developing stress related illness.

Birmingham (2018:14) describes stress as a mental, behavioural and physiological feedback by an individual when he/she observes a lack of balance between the demands placed upon his/her ability to gather those demands, which over a period of time, leads to poor health. According to Huey and Wickens (1993:4), the post-transition phase will enforce a considerable degree of stress, incorporating time pressure at a minimum, including danger and other environmental stressors. The stressors includes the type of the workplace environment such as noise, high temperature, vibration, repeated questions and poor visibility as well as psychological factors such as fatigue and anxiety.

The demands of the occupations can be enormous sources of stress among the workers. The most common factors that contribute to high demands in the job are task requirements which include time pressure and the amount of work taking into account its complexity. However, there is a favourable amount of stress, which is considered good and any deviation from this optimal is undesirable. The optimal level differs from one individual to another. For example, some individuals get stressed when they experience too much workload while others may take the workload as a challenge but with no stress.

- The size of the work group and organisation

The size of the organisation is another factor that causes absenteeism. The higher the number of employees, the more absenteeism rates are likely to increase compared to the small group of workers and companies. Babalola and Onabanjo (2008:43) report on a similar pattern that when the number and size of the work group increases, absenteeism also goes up. Equally, Egan (2011:21) concludes that the characteristics of large organisations or units lead to lower levels of involvement and personal satisfaction. In this perspective, organisations with a large number of workforce has observed high rates of absenteeism. This is because majority of workers in most big companies are not fully utilised and opportunities of advancement are scarce and as a result, employees feel left out in the business activities of the company and become dissatisfied.

- Type of work

The intrinsic nature of the work including repetitive tasks, monotony, same work daily tasks, danger and the role of ambiguity can influence absenteeism. The people who are exposed to danger every day are more absent, for at least two days per year, than those in safe working conditions. Similarly, people who have too much work every day tend to be absent at work. This is because workers who work under dangerous conditions and are exposed to poor working environments are more susceptible to diseases and sickness which may result in absenteeism. For example, people who work in mines have a high risk of getting infected with tuberculosis (TB) due to pollution than those in offices (Farrell, 2005).

- Management and nature of supervision

The supervision support, fairness and discrimination are also potential factors (Josias and Beverley, 2005). According to Egan (2011:47), the workers who have a good relationship with their superiors and who can discuss issues openly have lower frequencies of absenteeism. This means that the role of the management in engaging and communicating with workers with regard to work issues is very crucial as it boosts their morale and happiness. This in return enhances their commitment to the organisation and productivity.

Furthermore, absenteeism is not a personal problem but is associated with poor management and the failure of the manager to create a friendly work environment. Management issues that attribute to absenteeism include the failure of managers to hold workers liable for attendance, poor communication and management practices, poor supervision of workers and contacts with employees (Lotich, 2017).

- Absence culture

According to Martocchio (1994: 243-262), absence is a culture within organisations in which a certain level of absenteeism is accepted as the norm. It is a common belief among workers of organisations that they should be given more time off than they are actually permitted to have. Egan, (2011:47) points out that work-group absence culture may develop as a strong determinant of absence behaviour by workers.

McDonald (2015:3) notes that when new workers join a company, the way they behave is influenced by the co-workers, especially those who have been in service for a long time. People are social beings and strive to fit in the environment around them. For example, if the company supports workers to speak up without fear of retaliation, the new workforce will gain confidence in expressing their views. Equally, if a new worker sees the experienced workers being absent, come late or leave early from work, or present at work but, do not do any official work, such a worker will do the same.

- Work load

A positive relationship between workloads and absenteeism has been observed in most of the research. Workload is a number of task demands, which need to be done within the limited time. The daily work activities may be characterised as high workload. A worker may not perform well under heavy workload that does not vary rapidly. This is because when the workload is too much, a worker begins to make mistakes. These errors may be due to inability to cope with the task demand. This means that a worker does not have the capacity to apply extra effort in order to respond to the additional task demands and eventually, chooses to be absent (Huey & Wickens, 1993).

- Opportunities for advancement

Workers tend to move from one company to another with the aim to get promotion. Upward progression is perceived to be the most significant factor for a worker's happiness and retention in an organisation. According to Grobler et al (2011), career advancement is the most important element for workers' satisfaction in a company because job advancement is a powerful motivator to the employees. Majority of employees are interested in moving up in their work, and if a worker is not promoted for a long period, such a worker's morale is likely to be low. Workers who get promoted at the work are more satisfied than those who are stagnant in the same position.

- Organisational absence management policy

An absence management policy in the organisation also influences absenteeism. According to Karanja (2008:7), organisational policy can have an important effect in rewarding or discouraging absenteeism. Farrell (2005:11) reported that a return to work interview is one of the most widely applied tools of absence management. According to Bevan and Hayday (1998:10), managers should hold return to work interviews with a worker who has been absent on the day he/she returns to work. This kind of approach creates fear among the workers which may reduce regular absence.

The purpose of the return to work interviews is to discuss the cause for absence as soon as possible after the employee has returned in order to demonstrate that the absence of a worker has been noticed by the manager. During the interview, the manager should also take a chance to investigate if there are any personal or work related problems affecting attendance that could be resolved through counselling or other management actions. In addition, the authors conclude that the use of disciplinary action is the most appropriate and effective method in dealing with absentees (Bevan and Hayday, 1988).

Farrell (2005:13), on the other hand, observed that there is a need for the organisation to create positive measures that can encourage attendance. These are such as flexible work environments, team work and job redesigning and through rewarding good attendance. The author further stated that the advantages of awarding incentives for good attendance is that those workers who do not miss the work schedule every year will be highly motivated.

- Employee relationship

Employee relationship is another factor influencing attendance. This can come in the form of a positive relationship between a worker and supervisor whereby he/she may feel as part of the company. Once satisfied, a worker will feel valued and appreciated by his/her co-workers and supervisors in the organisation (Hassard, Teoh and Cox, 2018:7).

According to Coyle-Shapiro and Conway (2005:2), the perceived organisational support (POS) serves as a building block for communication with supervisors. The authors describe perceived organisational support as a degree to which a worker believes that the company cares about him/her and appreciates the contributions to the company. Workers tend to gauge relations with their supervisor as negative or positive to produce a perceived organisational support assessment of how they rank in their company. If a worker experiences a sense of support, it will encourage him/her to work hard for the company and hence likely to be absent.

In addition, good treatment and support from the supervisor, raises POS among the employees. POS is accomplished through better treatment of workers in areas such as equality, support, rewards and favourable working conditions. When workers sense that they are appreciated and get rewards for

service from their company, the levels of job performance increases. Managers who keep high levels of positive interaction and support for their subordinates will increase the perceived organisational support which acts as a reward for workers' fulfilment of work-related relations and the psychological contract (Coyle-Shapiro and Conway, 2005).

2.5.2.1.2. Workers' attitudes, values and expectations

Celik (2011:9) describes attitude as a summary of reasons, beliefs and thoughts that shapes a person in direction with perception about his or her environment. Ntshani (2014:21) provides the factors that influence attitudes and these include job satisfaction and individual lifestyles.

- Job satisfaction

According to Hassard et al (2018:4), job satisfaction is “ a pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving and the extent to which people like or dislike their job”. In other words, job satisfaction is a positive approach that workers apply towards their work. James, Kreitner and Kinicki (2007:55) point out that motivation to attend is influenced by a person's satisfaction with his/her job situation.

Celik (2011:9) notes that the degree to which work outcome meets or exceeds expectations determines the level of job satisfaction. Van Der Merwer and Miller (1988:4-5) agree that when employee's expectations are met, the greater the worker's satisfaction and the lower the rate of absenteeism. Thirulogasundaram and Sahu (2014:65) add that a worker who is not happy with his/her current work or organisation is likely to have a high absence rate. Once such a worker gets another job elsewhere, the absence rate will be reduced, while the labour turnover increases.

In line with this, Jacobs and Kritsonis (2007:4) point out that human beings behaviour rests on needs and motives. Egan (2011:48) believes that if the concrete needs of the workers are realised and satisfied, they will be more committed to their work, but, if not, they will not work hard. Karanja (2008:8) presents some theories that help to explain job satisfaction. These include Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Herzberg Motivator-Hygiene theory, fulfilment theory, Locke's range affect theory, discrepancy theory and disposition theory.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is based on the principle that all individuals have a diverse variety of concrete needs to satisfy. This means that all the people are motivated by a series of different needs that range from basic natural needs for sustenance, security and belongingness to higher order of needs such as esteem and self-actualisation needs (Karanja, 2013). According to Egan (2011:50-51), people tend to satisfy each need, starting with the basic need for survival itself. The author argues that only when the lower order needs of physical and emotional nature are satisfied is when a human being will get concerned with the higher order of needs for personal development. Egan (2011:51) further states that where a need is not satisfied, a worker will search for it out and if the need remains

unsatisfied, it will lead to de-motivation. Sylvester (2012:1) puts it clearly that many people are not happy with satisfaction of lower-order needs at work as such, they tend to look for the fulfilment of higher level psychological needs which are associated with positive motivators.

Herzberg Motivator-Hygiene theory suggests that when hygiene factors are low, a worker is dissatisfied but when motivators are met the worker is thought to be satisfied. The hygiene factors are those factors that cause dissatisfaction among workers in a workplace such as policies of the company, supervision and management style, work conditions, wages, safety, position and connection with supervisors while motivators, on the other hand, are those factors that cause happiness among the employees (Egan, 2011). These include challenging work, recognition for one's achievement, responsibilities, opportunities to do something and involvement in decision-making (Egan, 2011:52).

Fulfilment theory suggests that the basic rule of happiness of a worker is to satisfy his/her demands and getting the wishes to produce more. Workers are satisfied if their demands are fulfilled. For example, the more the worker earns money, the more he/she is satisfied and the less a worker earns, the less he/she is satisfied (Hassard et al 2018:7).

Equally, Celik (2011:7) states that Locke's range of effect theory suggests that satisfaction is determined by discrepancy between what a person wants and has in the job. Furthermore, the author argues that the level of independence in a position moderates how satisfied or dissatisfied a worker is, when his or her expectations are met or not realised. For example, if worker X values autonomy in the workplace and worker Y does not then, worker X would be more satisfied in a position that offers a high degree of autonomy and less satisfied in a position with no autonomy compared to worker Y.

- Individual lifestyle

According to Farrell (2005:27), there is a connection between the lifestyle behavioural factors such as smoking, and high intake of alcohol and absenteeism. The person who takes alcohol and drugs may decide to stay away from work due to a hangover. The author further states that a hangover is a kind of sickness where an individual feels weak and tires and may need alcohol again to recover and feel better. Bacharach, Bamberger and Biron (2010:1) found that "the frequency of heavy episodic drinking is positively associated with the number of days of absence". Too much alcohol use has an undesirable impact on a worker's health which may increase the chances of workplace absenteeism.

2.5.2.1.3. Personal characteristics

Akgeyik (2014:3) states that there are factors that are associated with personal characteristics when it comes to workplace absenteeism. These include age, gender, marital status, tenure, family size and the level of education and are discussed below.

- Age

Although the notion of age is a contested one, Egan (2011:34) points out that older workers have higher absence rates than the younger workers because of the illness which comes as a result of old age. Karanja (2008:25) confirms that young employees have less absence rates compared to the older aged employees and this is more evident at the age of fifty and above. Caine (2015:3) agrees that when workers get older, the rate of absenteeism rises.

- Marital status

Most women who are married have been observed to be more absent at work compared to the single ones. This is because of the household tasks such as caring for their young children who fall sick (Langenhoff, 2011). The author argues that dependent children cannot take care of themselves and thus require their mothers to take charge of the situation. Josias and Beverley (2005:23) confirms that married couples have more absenteeism at the workplace than the single ones. This is because people who are married have more responsibilities than single ones as a result they will miss work.

- Tenure

Tenure is described as the length of employment a worker has worked for an organisation. The workers with high experience in the job have low non-attendance rates than those with less experience (Josias and Beverly, 2005). This is because workers who have served for an organisation for a long time tend to express high levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment, resulting in lower rates of absenteeism (Josias and Beverley, 2005). According to Karanja (2008:6), workers with longer tenure usually have higher levels of organisational commitment and have high needs for job stability. A worker with long service may be promoted to higher positions or grades thus improve attendance.

- Gender

Karanja (2008:4) states that women are more absent than men. Langenhoff (2011:8) and Leijon note that women are expected to be absent time and again because they are customarily viewed as individuals who are more concerned with family responsibilities such as taking care of their families. According to Josias and Beverley (2005:21), women's preference is completely different to men that is why they like part-time jobs so that they can always have time to attend to the domestic affairs. The author further explains that working women have double responsibilities which include female home markers, carer of children and the elderly (Karanja, 2008).

- The number of dependants

Josias and Beverley (2005:23), point out that when a worker has a larger number of dependants he/she is likely to miss work because he/she would like to cut the costs incurred in after – care and day-care

facilities for the dependants. The author further reports that a worker who has small children between the ages of 0-6 years have higher rates of absenteeism than those with older children. This means that, if a small child gets sick, parents would normally stay home with the aim to take a child to the clinic or hospital for treatment.

- The level of education

Karanja (2008:27) states that the level of education has an influence on workers attendance. A worker who is educated is less likely to be absent compared to those that are less educated. According to Hatletveit (2009:4), the higher level of education decreases the chances of being absent, holding other factors like occupation, age and working hours constant. The author argues that highly educated employees increase the potential for flexibility between workers. They are more competent to alternate between tasks and creating a healthy work environment. This is an idea that can improve happiness at work and reduce absence.

2.5.2.1.4. Social factors

According to Josias and Beverley (2005:27), pressure to attend such as economic and market conditions, work group norms, incentives and organisational commitment have an influence on employee attendance.

- Economic and market condition

Josias and Beverley (2005:27) observed that during economic hard times when the unemployment rate is high, the relationship between absenteeism and satisfaction fades away and thus leads to the low level of absenteeism. According to Australasian report (1999:16), the effects of the labour market and economic recessions are more evident with low absence usually seen during the times of poor economic performance.

Hauscknecht, Hiller and Vance (2008:1225-1226) also agree that when the chances of getting a new job is low, workers will have concerns about job security and this compels them to support attendance over absence, while low regional unemployment and economy often translate into greater job opportunities in which a worker might find a job elsewhere. When work opportunities are overflowing in the external labour market, workers can easily move outside their organisation and become less concerned about the consequences of not attending to the current work.

- Work-group norms

According to Josias and Beverley (2005:25), employee relations have a positive impact on the degree of attendance. The culture of absenteeism amongst one group of workers might affect the values of work and commitment of other workers. New workers seem to adapt easily to the existing culture, norms, standards and values of the company they have joined and thus are exposed to the influence of

existing absenteeism norms. Egan (2011:26-30) found that organisations with high group absenteeism rates had a higher degree of workers' absence. The author further points out that several companies are faced with difficulties to manage the behaviour of absenteeism within groups since it affects the behaviour of new employees who have just joined the company (Egan, 2011).

- Incentives and reward system

Camp and Lambert (2006:9) also found that providing small cash awards every week to a worker who did not use sick leave results in a significant decline of employee absenteeism. According to Cherry (2018:1), people are pushed into actions by the external incentives. This means that a worker is pulled towards behaviours that direct to the rewards and pushed away from actions that might lead to negative opportunities.

- Organisational commitment

Josias and Beverley (2005:27) assume that work related attitudes, for instance, job involvement can play a crucial role in determining how the workers are committed towards their work. Sagie (1998) states that organisational commitment is dependent on the individual psychological attachment to the organisation. Other factors such as the role stress, improvements, job insecurity, and distribution of leadership have been shown to be connected to a worker's sense of organisational commitment.

2.5.2.1.5. Perceived ability to attend

Connor (2010:2) argues that ability to attend work is associated with absenteeism that is attributed to other circumstances beyond the individual's control. Gangai et al (2015:1773) confirm that this type of absence is involuntary as it is beyond the control of a worker himself/herself. Karanja (2008:21-24) added that circumstances arise even for the most highly motivated employee in which attendance is not possible. According to Farrell (2005:8), the perception of ability integrates factors which act as obstacles to attendance such as illness, accidents, family responsibilities and transport challenges. The author further states that personal sickness accounts for only less than 28% of unplanned time off and concludes that more than 75% of the time workers are out of the work due to other reasons of absence.

- Ill health

It is perceived that health-related issues are the most contributing factors to employee absenteeism. Ill-health is any medical condition that might lead to absenteeism (Ntshani, 2014:7-22). According to Langenhoff (2011:10-11), most indicators of absenteeism are linked to the health of a worker because of general sickness. Helal (2015:4) found out that diseases related to non-attendance are mostly seasonal. Helal further states that workers are likely to stay away from their workplace during winter

compared to summer time. This is because during winter months, the related infectious diseases such as cold and influenza are mostly common.

According to Farrell (2005:7), diseases account for 75% of work absence, in which the cold flu accounts for short absence of one to two days. The author further states that 62% of the people who are employed had experienced some illness in the past months or years. This means that every human being is susceptible to any disease which may lead to absenteeism. However, Helal (2015:4) found that repeated short-term sick leaves were not always connected to health issues. For instance, in Sweden, 25% of the individuals with frequency short-term sick leave excuses did not have any signs of bad health at a general health check-up but were found to be in good health. It is reported that 60% and 70% of the workers missed their work schedule due to other reasons than sickness (McDonough, 2000).

- Family related and transport challenges

Josias and Beverly (2005:27) state that the leading cause of absenteeism is personal and family related issues. Transport and travelling difficulty affect individual's ability to go to work despite their willingness to do so. Some of the factors associated with transport include the distance to work, long queues of traffic, and bad weather conditions. Long distances associated with bad weather and traffic congestions increase the chances of workers not to go to work. The employee who lives near the work premises has less absence than those who live far away from their workplace and will need transport in order to reach work. The external environment is another contributor to a worker's absence because unfavourable weather conditions affect workers who walk to work and those who commute over long distances (Karanja, 2008).

2.6 The causes of employee absenteeism

Jacobs and Kritsoni (2007: 4 - 5) state that employers must be able to identify what is causing their workers not to come to work in order to find a concrete solution. Ntshani (2014:7-22), Josias and Beverley (2005:21) and Leijon (2002:4) classified the causes of employee absenteeism into five groups, namely, medical reasons, domestic reasons, stress related issues, un-avoidable reasons, planned and agreed reasons

2.6.1. Medical causes

Illness is a challenge faced by both public and private sectors, but the public sector has observed the utmost degree of absenteeism. According to Egan (2011:26), involuntary absence is influenced by health issues such as illness, accidents and injuries. Ntshani (2014:21) agrees that medical causes are as a result of employee's ill-health. Darr and Johns (2008:296) describe illness as "individual's psychological and physical feedback to initiate perception of threat or work strain".

2.6.2. Domestic responsibilities

Family demands have been also found to be one of the key causes of employee absenteeism. For example, more women are absent from the work due to other tasks such as taking care of their children and other dependants at home. According to Erickson, Nichols and Ritter (2000:247), work and family - associated variables are now interrelated to such an extent that the inclusion of family issues is acceptable to the employer. This is because the necessary time to raise a child, especially young children, often interferes with work schedules. The authors' further state that the effect that family responsibilities have on work life, which was long considered only a women's concern, may be a common reason for both men and women's inability to attend work.

The combined effect of work and family matters contributes to the burnout of workers which in turn, may cause them to miss work. Equally, the amount of time spent on performing housework activities may also lead to increased absenteeism. Thirdly, the difficulty experienced by the working parents to arrange for child care have been associated with high levels of parental stress. Finally, making arrangements for child care has an effect on one's ability to attend work (Erickson, Nichols and Ritter, 2000:247).

The shortage of child care facilities or services forces the parents who are working to remain home and take care of their young children. In the past years, women were much more likely to have extended families nearby who could provide various types of assistance for a mother who combined the roles of work and parenthood. However, nowadays, it is common for women to live away from their families and hence face the challenge of raising children alone (Smith, 2008).

2.6.3. Stress related issues

Stress is one of the factors that influence absenteeism. According to Egan (2011:296), stressful events trigger psychological and physical changes in an individual that weaken the immune functioning and give rise to diseases. People are believed to exhibit adoptive coping mechanisms that have the capacity to reduce or increase strain depending on their effectiveness. Tadesse, Ebrahim and Gizaw (2015:1) observed that workers who work long hours are likely to experience illness-related absence because working above normal working hours affects muscular activities and causes mental fatigue which might lead workers to increased risk of accidents and injuries. Caine (2015:1) confirms that extra workload has the potential to lead to stress and result in illness and absence.

2.6.4. Planned and agreed

There are two main types of absenteeism namely planned and unplanned absenteeism. Planned and agreed type of absenteeism seems to work well with the employer due to the arrangements which are done on time in terms of leave application and this gives the manager a chance to plan ahead for the replacement of workers.

Farrell (2005:6) points out that planned and agreed absence is a type of absenteeism where permission is given to a worker to be absent from the work. These include statutory leave under which the employer has obligations such as vacation leave, sick leave, study leave, compassionate leave, special leave, sports leave and maternity leave. Ntshani (2014:21) agrees with Farrell that planned absence is a situation where authorisation has been granted for the worker to be absent. This type of absenteeism provides an opportunity for the management to plan well ahead for substitution of workers.

2.6.5. Unavoidable

Unplanned absence has been found to be very upsetting to the management because of the workers who miss scheduled work and activities without permission and thus it is costly to the organisation. Unavoidable absence occurs unexpectedly and it is beyond the control of a worker. For example, accidents, illness, family responsibilities and injuries cause the worker's inability to attend work and the manager can understand the worker's absence based on this reason. According to Ntshani, (2014) if a worker travels from home to work and happens to be involved in a car accident, such a worker will not be able to attend work. Similarly, a worker who is sick and whose children or other dependants are sick, will definitely not attend work no matter how committed and loyal they are to the organisation.

In view of the above theories, the model of Steers and Rhodes (1978) provides a suitable framework that enables the management to better understand the internal and external factors of employee attendance and absenteeism. This model takes into account two variables that influence both absence and attendance. These include motivation and the ability to attend. The researches have shown that in order for the management to search for the reasons of employee absenteeism, there is a need to integrate the two competing models derived from the economic and psychological views. The economic view suggests that issues such pay, fringe benefits and policies are very important approaches to explain work attendance while the psychological view draws on the expectancy theory of worker's motivation to justify employee absenteeism behaviours.

2.7 Costs and strategies to manage absenteeism

According to Craig (2016:3) workers' absenteeism remains a costly problem for most employers, especially big companies with large numbers of personnel where unplanned absenteeism is estimated to cost businesses billions of dollars each year. The author further states that 75% of the organisations in general have spent more income due to non-attendance. Goldberg and Waldman (2000:1) point out that in the United States of America, on average, four million working days are lost due to absenteeism.

In Africa, both public and private sectors have experienced fast growing expenditures and reduced production. According to Skosana (2014:2), in South Africa, about 15% of workers are absent on a given day, costing companies more than R12 billion per year. Equally, Heard and Walters (2007:ii)

point out that in Namibia, teachers' absenteeism has contributed to a loss of around N\$2, 700,000 in the Erongo region alone due to the number of absent days and this has put stress on the sector's resources. If this figure is put across the entire country, the cost of absenteeism could have exceeded N\$60, 000,000.00 per year (Heard and Walters, 2007).

These costs described above are associated with worker's salaries for sick leave, followed by vacation leave, alternative labour resources, maternity and domestic affairs respectively (Heard & Walters, 2007). The spending continue to rise due to health care costs while revenues are reduced because of absenteeism emanating from illness. According to Tawfik and Kinoti (2003:2), in the year 1990, 67% of the Government total health expenditure was spent on HIV/AIDS treatment in countries like Rwanda and it was over half of the health spending in Zimbabwe alone. Absenteeism associated to ill-health such as HIV/AIDS continue in increasing the cost of labour in Southern African countries (Rosen, Vincent, Macleod, Fox, Thea and Simon, 2004).

In order to ensure that costs incurred as a result of absenteeism are minimised, there is a need for the management staff to understand the circumstances around the phenomenon. Van Der Merwer and Miller (1988:26), Karanja (2008:7), Byrnes (2012:11), Egan (2011:6) and Rao (2013:3) present key strategies that address absenteeism in any workplace. These include the setting up of a clear policy about absenteeism, applying efficient and effective supervision, record keeping, adequate transport facilities, provision of leave, counselling of workers, monitoring of absence trends among the workers, rotation of workers, reducing office stress, understanding of workers' values, attitudes and goals as well as verification of a worker's previous service history and attendance.

2.7.1. Developing an absence control policy

Farrell (2005:7) states that organisations can drastically reduce the extent of employee absenteeism by adopting policies which deter and not encourage absence. Van der Merwer and Miller (1988:2) put it clearly that employers should consider to reduce employee absenteeism by creating a clear attendance policy if there isn't any in place. Byrnes (2012:1) illustrates that the policy of the organisation should be simple to understand and it should provide sufficient information including when a worker is allowed to be absent from the workplace, the time a worker must notify the line supervisors or managers that he/she will be absent as well as the organisational structure in which a worker must follow when looking for assistance.

The Departments, under the Ministry of Works and Transport provides a clear legislative framework of absenteeism at the workplace. The framework includes the Labour Act of 2007, Public Service Act of 1995, Public Service Staff Rules (Amendment Notice No.4 of 1997) which contain the provision of leave (Heard and Walters, 2007).

According to Josias and Beverley (2005:45), absence control policies require supervisors, including managers, to apply legal techniques such as support of workers and reinforcement of punishment. Positive support of workers consists of factors such as recognition, motivation, rewards and values while punishment reinforcements on the other hand, encompasses disciplining of workers with more than recommended days of absence. Yorges (2016:6) provides three categories of absence control options namely, disciplining, positive reinforcement and combination approach.

2.7.1.1. .Disciplinary approach

Disciplinary approach is practised by many employers whereby workers who fail to report on duty for the first time receive a verbal warning. Continuous absence of such a worker may result into a first written warning, followed by a final written warning. If an employee does not comply with the issued warning letters, this may lead to a disciplinary hearing which may be tantamount to a deferral and dismissal (Yorges, 2016).

According to Parker (2012:43), in the Public Service of the Republic of Namibia, a worker is guilty of misconduct if he/she absents himself/herself from work without leave or valid reasons. Heard and Walters (2007:12-13) warns that workers should not be absent at work without the consent of their supervisors or the head of the organisation. An employee who is absent without permission for 30 consecutive days will be discharged from the public service. However, some of the organisations employ punitive actions as a suitable way to deal with chronic absenteeism e.g. whereby the name of a worker is published in the company's house magazine, accompanied by fines, withholding pay, increments and denial of opportunities for advancement or promotion. Egan (2011:3) argues that the most efficient way to deal with absenteeism at the workplace is when the management allows their workers to apply for vacation leave with pay or without pay and allow employees to attend their personal affairs, thus normalise non-attendance instead of applying disciplinary actions.

2.7.1.2. Positive reinforcement

Positive reinforcement is a method of giving workers cash, recognition, time off or other rewards for good attendance standards. Offering rewards for good attendance, giving bonuses to those workers who miss work for less than two days and buying back sick leave days that were not utilised are all positive methods of reducing absenteeism (Yorges, 2016). Byrnes (2012) also observed the same thing where several companies have taken on the approach called "reward attendance". Reward attendance is when workers are given bonuses for not being absent in a year. Special bonuses, cash prize and preference in promotion usually encourage normal attendance and minimises absenteeism (UK, Essay, 2015).

The employer also should make production a realistic goal as this will increase the intrinsic motivation of a worker. It is important for the employer to introduce more work responsibilities and good working conditions (McDonough, 2000). Egan (2011:3) adds here that the best way to remove employee absenteeism, is to create a suitable environment of work, sufficient amount of money, safety against accidents, diseases and facilities as well as provision of vacation leave for relaxation. All these variables are efficient means of reducing non-attendance. According to Afzal (2010:1), absenteeism can be tackled if workers are receiving proper training, good salary, high-quality working conditions and employers appreciate their job.

Barnes (2012:3) adds that when attendance is integrated into a yearly performance appraisal method, workers will see that rewards are awarded according to a meritorious basis. The managers should provide enough paid time-off so that workers have the options of planning for absence. Van Der Merwer and Miller (1988:5) conclude that keeping workers motivated and engaged increases satisfaction.

2.7.1.3. Combination approach

The combination approach is a strategy that rewards the necessary behaviours and punish undesired performance. According to Rao (2013:2-3), the interventions that offer bonuses and fines enhance attendance. Incentive perspectives, suggest that a worker who is committed to the affairs of a company deserves management support and encouragement. According to Josias and Beverley (2005:46), attendance oriented culture and policies create a conducive job situation where the employees want to work, including rewards for good attendance, recognition, promotion and improved work environment.

Punishment and fines on the other hand, suggest that managers should take a serious decision for workers who regularly miss work. Rao (2013:3) demonstrates that if a worker did not report for duty, it is necessary for the managers to call a meeting upon the return of such a worker. This should be done in the presence of their immediate supervisor. During this meeting, the worker is given an opportunity to give explanations if there were any genuine causes for not coming to work. Once found that a worker's absence was in contravention of the workplace policies, the manager should take a serious decision and it must be done in writing (Karanja, 2008).

2.7.2. Applying effective supervision and management training

The management and supervisory factors contribute considerably to the development of job satisfaction. The development of group cohesion, consultative and participatory decision management strategies, provision of feedback and importance of valuing workers are vital long term strategies in any workplace development. Supervisory practices which lead to more open expressions of opinion and participatory problem solving, may result in reduced ambiguity, role conflict and stress and

increased job satisfaction, with a consequence of a reduction in absenteeism. Supervisory and management training are therefore an important strategy that can influence supervisory and management style (Australasian report, 1999:25).

2.7.3. Implementing a job rotation

Some of the reasons why workers do not attend their work are due to inadequate work. This means that if there are not enough activities to challenge them and keep them busy, they get bored and choose to stay away from work. The best way an employer can improve a worker's perspective of his/her position is to provide opportunities by rotating workers among different duties. This will assist workers to acquire more knowledge and skills in the area of personal and professional interest and thus improve work performance and attendance (McDonough, 2000).

2.7.4. Making transport facilities available

The taxi fare to go and come back from work is very costly to the workers with low salary. According to Republic of Namibia (1999:7), a worker must be paid transport allowance subject to the approval by the Minister through circulars and ministerial directives. This will enable workers to pay for the taxi fare to work thus reduces absenteeism.

2.7.5. Counselling workers

Awareness creation about smoking and drinking habits helps the worker to be more responsible in the job. Guidance and counselling eliminate workers' bad lifestyles such as drinking, gambling and the abuse of alcohol and drugs. In order to ensure that the workers develop a sense of responsibility, education and training are the best tools to take on (UK essays, 2015).

2.7.6. Absence record keeping

The managers should take records of their employees at the workplace on every official work day of the week. The details on the records of absence should be maintained and carefully analysed, taking into consideration, the gender and age (UK, Essays, 2015). Several companies have introduced the attendance register in order to record work attendance. When attendance of workers is recorded at the workplace, the chance of workers to be absent is low.

2.7.7. Introducing a health promotion programme

The failure of workers to participate in fitness and health promotion programmes is associated with high rates of employee absenteeism. As such, many employers have introduced quite a number of health promotion programmes in workplace settings. According to Aldana and Pronk (2001:36), these programmes can reduce employee health care costs, turnover and improve workers' productivity.

Employee Wellness Programmes help workers with matters on how to maintain healthier lifestyles so that they do not miss work. This is a programme where workers learn how to minimise the risks of

getting sick, accidents and also reduce the stigma to those who are infected with pandemic diseases such as HIV/AIDS (UK essays, 2015).

2.7.8. Reducing work stress

There is a need for management to create an environment where workers feel secure to discuss issues with their managers, supervisors and the entire workforce about the work situation and provide tools for decreasing stress (Yorges, 2016). In this view, one example could be where the management provides sports facilities where the employees can physically exercise their bodies and sports sessions where workers could be counselled against drinking and smoking in order to improve their health lifestyle.

2.7.9. Provide reward incentives

Although the value of incentives may vary according to time and circumstances, Bonner and Sprinkle (2002:303) observed that money incentives are believed to be the technique for inspiring and refining the performance of an individual. According to Mikander (2010:1-16), a well-established and working reward system can enhance workers' satisfaction and motivation. Reward is a benefit gained from rendering a certain service. For example, prize giving is the most significant and motivating benefit that is received upon the completion of work. Hence, incentives is a way to reward effort and behaviour which the company wishes to encourage. If the incentive is paid to acknowledge the behaviour that contributes to the organisational goals, it will enhance the organisations effectiveness and productivity for a quite long time.

2.7.10. Help workers return to work

Returning to work after injuries or illness is very difficult for many individuals, but the employers are reluctant to help their workers to return to work after health associated absence. The significance of supporting an early return to work following work related accidents and injury has been well accepted. A complete prolonged absences assessment may lead to the development of an effective rehabilitation programme or workplace intervention. Managers should change the workplace atmosphere to allow the workers who are struggling with injuries, illness and disability to consult their health care providers during official time of work. Larger organisations often have internal resources that provide rehabilitation services (Kaig, 2015).

2.8 Summary

In summary, human resource management is regarded as a subset of personnel administration which is described as an array of activities which political managers, human resource specialists and line function staff undertake. Human resource management was depicted as a process where individuals in managerial position make use of human and other resources as efficiently as possible. It constitutes the management of people and relationships in an organisation in the form of recruiting, employing, rewarding and utilisation of human resources in order to add value to the organisation. As such,

human resource officials have to keep pace with the latest development in the field of human resource management.

It possess some key competencies which includes business mastery and involves knowledge of the business inside out, human mastery which encompasses a good understanding of business trends such as staffing, reward and interpersonal communication while change mastery is about the know-how that the human resource practitioner should have in managing the organisations. The HR official needs to have competencies such as flexibility, responsiveness and good knowledge of the business.

The approach to management of the employee has undergone evolutionary changes during the past years where all the workers were considered to be on an equal footing before the manager. If the performance of a worker was not satisfactory, then such a worker's service would be terminated. The employees needed supervision and always faced the threat of losing the job. This approach emanated from the belief that an employee was motivated by economic gains. This also regarded the workers as another factor of production together with raw materials, machines and capital. However, it was discovered that the workers' feelings, emotions and sentiments were affected by work conditions, good relationships, leadership styles and support from the management.

The shift to human relations emphasis coincided with an increasing presence and influence of trade unionism and the demand for more employee empowerment. As such, the system of the organisation should first aim to achieve its objectives through increasing its effectiveness and satisfy each worker's personal needs. The human resource management should address the goals of the organisation and those of the workers since their needs are mutual and compatible. The human resource management should adopt principles which include policies that satisfy economic and psychological needs of a worker, the working environment which is conducive and human resource programmes which are capable of satisfying the needs of both employer and employees.

The human resource manager's function in the organisation is to establish an equitable employee compensation and benefits scheme, for example, insurance administration, remuneration, pension plans, and holiday and leave processing. Creating an affirmative action scheme and ensuring that the organisation complies with the employment equity rules. Establishing job analysis programmes, especially during change management process is also a necessity.

The general principles underlying the management of the organisation's human resource apply to both the private and public sector. Public sector management is a part of the public administration and concerns the skills and practice of converting resources such as raw materials, labour capital and information into services and products to satisfy the desires of the society and to achieve the aims and objectives of the public sector. The human resource practitioners manage the principle resource in their institutions, such as employees in order to obtain the objectives. HRM in the public sector has

the following features which separate it from general management of human resources. These include stakeholders which encompass citizens and government, public sector employees, as well as social responsibilities of public sector.

However, to be able to manage the public sector workforce, public service managers should understand the legal framework that allows them to lead their workforce in order to produce the desired results, protect their employees' rights and contribute to an enriched work environment. The work should be challenging for it to motivate the workers thus reduce absenteeism. Absenteeism therefore is described as a serious problem encountered by many employers due to its impact on the productivity of the organisation.

The psychological and economic views established several factors that influence employee attendance and absence. These include, workplace issues, workers' attitudes, values and expectations, personal characteristics, social factors and perceived ability to attend. Workplace issues consist of work stress, the size of the work group and organisation, type of work, management and nature of supervision, absence cultures, work load, absence management policy and employee relations. Work attitudes, values and expectations include job satisfaction and individual life-style while personal traits encompass age, marital status, tenure, gender, number of dependants and the level of education. Social factors consist of organisational commitment, economic and market conditions as well as incentives and rewards.

The main causes of employee absenteeism are classified into five categories which include medical, domestic, planned or agreed, motivation, stress related issues, and unavoidable causes. Medical causes are type of absenteeism influenced by health issues such as accidents, illness and injuries while domestic absenteeism is influenced by other tasks such as taking care of children and other dependants. Motivation, on other hand, results from the inside influence that drives a worker to start evaluating cognitive processes whereby principal needs are chosen and implemented. Stress related issues have been found to be the main causes of absenteeism as they activate psychological and physical changes in a person that weakens the immune system and give rise to diseases.

To ensure the problems of absenteeism are resolved, the literature review has found several successful strategies to address and manage employee absenteeism. These include developing an attendance control policy, applying effective supervision, implementing a job rotation, making transport facilities available and counselling workers, absence record keeping, introducing health promotion programmes, good supervision and reducing work stress, rehabilitation of workers and provision of incentives.

CHAPTER 3: THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF EMPLOYMENT IN NAMIBIA

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two sections. Section one discusses the general historical development of Labour Law. Section two deals with the sources of Labour Law in Namibia.

3.1.1 Historical development of the Labour Law

According to Adugna (2010:6), the discourse on Labour Law started back in the 18th century. The Labour Law was developed as a result of the industrial uprising which took place in Europe between 18th and 19th centuries when the employment relationship in small communities failed to provide enough protection against the abuses of mining and manufacturing workers.

The Health and Morals of Apprentices Act of 1802 was the first ground spot of labour law which safely guarded young workers against abuse and exploitation by the employer. This Act was taken into account between 1815 and 1841. In 1848, the first law that restricts the working hours of employees was accepted by the Landsgemeinde. Sickness Insurance and Workers' Compensation Act were launched in Germany in 1884. In the 1890s, New Zealand imposed a dialogue on industrial labour disagreements between the employer and employees (Adugna, 2010).

The progression of labour legislation outside Europe, New Zealand and Australia was sluggish until the end of the 19th Century when the industrialised state such as the United States of America began to support the legislation. During the 20th Century, labour law became popular and accepted by several countries around the world. According to Barker (2014:3) the structure of legal principles and standards were established in order to provide the workers with minimum protection against any mistreatments and manipulations by the employer while taking into account their working conditions. As a result, the content and scope of the Labour Law expanded to include the small, medium and large industries.

3.1.1.1 The concepts of Labour Law and the objectives

By definition, Labour Law is an industrial order which initiates the terms and conditions of work. It steers the employment relationship that usually occurs in business and industrial activities. In essence, the Labour Law is the main source of rules that puts in place the minimum labour standards and allows for the establishment and activities of labour institutions including the set of laws that create ways for state involvement (Adugna, 2010).

Its main objective is to govern and observe the relationship between the employer and workers. According to Adugna (2010:8), the labour law is required to ensure that workers and manager's relations are controlled by the basic principle of rights and obligations. The idea is to enable workers and employers to uphold industrial peace and work in the spirit of agreement and support towards economic development of a country. The Labour Law guarantees the rights of workers and employers

to form associations and use their own representatives in collective bargaining and establishments for the process of resolution in labour disagreements. In other words, the main principles of Labour Law is to give an individual, protection in the labour market which includes the basic rights when bargaining for salary and working conditions.

3.1.1.2 The sources of the Labour Law in Namibia

There are two sources of the law, namely the primary and secondary sources such as regulations acknowledged by the executive organs of the government. According to van Zyl (2017:34), the primary legislation is a law passed by Parliament while secondary legislation consists of regulations which are declared by an executive organ of Government, authorised by the Parliament. The recognised grounds of labour law in Namibia include amongst others the Legislation, Communal Law, Convention and Recommendation of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). Other sources measured to be very important from a labour viewpoint include Family and Medical Act, Disability Act, and the Civil Rights Act (Miller, 2015).

3.1.1.2.1 Legislation

Legislation is a law which is crafted by an organ of the Government in order to address the employment related issues in the country. It involves the Namibian Constitution (NC), Labour Act 11 of 2007, Labour Amendment Act 2 of 2012, Social Security Act 34 of 1994, Employees' Compensation Act 30 of 1941, as amended, Affirmative Action (Employment) Act 29 of 1998, regulations relating to the Health and Safety of Employees at work, 1997, employment Services Act 8 of 2011, Public Service Act 13 of 1995.

- The Namibian Constitution (NC)

The Constitution and other International Agreements to which Namibia is a member, are the highest laws of the country. As such, all regulations, directives, verdicts and decisions taken by the public officials should be in agreement with the Constitution, otherwise there will be no approval in this regard. The Constitution comprises of articles which are suitable for employment and unique in addressing labour issues. These include Articles 9, 10, 14, 21 and 95.

- Article 9 instructs that no individuals shall be asked to perform forced labour.
- Article 10, prohibits discrimination of people based on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status.
- Article 14, endorses the family as an important group unit of society entitled to protection by individuals and the state.
- Article 21, allows every individual to have the liberty of association which includes independence to form and join associations, including trade unions and political parties.
- Article 95, positively encourages and supports the wellbeing of the people by implementing policies aimed at the following;

- Endorsement of laws to ensure equal opportunities for women so that they can contribute in the sphere of Namibian society. The Government gives guarantee to non-discrimination in remuneration of men and women and offer maternity and related benefits to both men and women.
- Enactment of legislation to ensure that the health and strength of the workers are not abused.
- Active support for the formation of autonomous trade unions to protect workers' rights and interests and to encourage labour relationships and reasonable employment practices.
- Becoming a member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) where the international conventions and recommendations of ILO are obeyed.
- Ensuring that workers are paid enough salaries so that they can maintain a decent standard of living.

- The Labour Act, 2007 (Act No. 11 of 2007)

According to Muller (2007:34), the Labour Act is the primary law that checks the relationship between the employers and employees in the labour environment. The author describes the Labour Act as a legal source of labour laws that derive its power from the Constitution and other international labour laws. The main objectives of the Act, is to ensure adherence with the Constitution by promoting and maintaining the welfare of the people.

Since independence in 1990, the Namibian Labour Law has been reshaped many times. The continuous adjustment and transformation of the Labour Act is due to the fluctuating of economic growth and increased radical pressure from workers unions and industrial society. Following the introduction of the Labour Act No. 6 of 1992 which could not effectively address the problems of employment arguments in the labour market, the Labour Act No. 11 of 2007 was launched and resulted in a major reassessment of service dealings and labour practices (Muller, 2007).

➤ Perspectives of the Labour Act of 2007

The Labour Act of 2007 which corrected the Labour Act of 1992, consists of many elements. Van Zyl (2017:34) summarised the Labour Law to include service contracts, provision of essential labour rights and responsibilities of the managers and workers, basic terms and circumstances of services, fair contracts of employment and reasonable employment relationships, safety, health and welfare of workers, protection against unjust labour practices, fundamental freedom of association, ordinary hours of work, records and returns, termination of services, unfair dismissal, payment on termination and collective agreements. These will be further elaborated on below.

- Service Contract

Service contract is an agreement signed between the employer and employees with regard to the supply of goods and services. The Act demands the types of employment contract which covers the agreement of fixed-term, short-term, casual and seasonal employment (Law Society of Namibia, 2007).

- Equitable employment relationship

According to the Labour Act of (2007), whereas the contemporary employment relations are managed and demonstrated from several sources such as common law, collective bargaining, custom, statute, contractual agreements and that the labour market depends on both workers and employer (Law Society of Namibia, 2007). This means that the work relationship between the employer and employees depends on a mutual trust and understanding which is based on the legal agreements.

- Rights and responsibilities of employers and workers

According to the Law Society of Namibia (2007:3), it is the responsibility of both the employers and workers to carry out their duties which are in accordance with the contractual agreements. The Labour Act instructs the employer to perform tasks such as payment of employees and provision of safe working conditions while on the other hand, the Act demands the employees to render the service in good faith, with discipline and competence.

- Payment

In common law, for the contract of employment to be valid, the employer should pay workers their salary every month after the work has been completed. The employer is required to pay a worker who always attends to his or her scheduled work even though the employer does not utilise such services. The Labour Act of 2007, creates the way in which basic wages must be designed and paid, what deductions are permissible when a worker may be absent from work with pay such as, compassionate leave, sick leave, annual leave and maternity leave subject to the provision of section 26 and Social Security Act (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007).

- Safe working place

The Labour Act instructs every manager who is in charge of a company whereby workers are employed to make available a working atmosphere that is safe, without putting risk to the health of the workers. Depending on the amount of risk, the employer is required to supply special training, specialised equipment and protective clothing for his/her workers. The Labour Act, further demands the employer to ensure that the administrative work, together with hours of work and mealtimes, do not negatively affect the safety or health of workers. On the other hand, the Labour Act demands the workers to work together with the employer and take responsibility of their own safety and health when carrying out tasks at the workplace (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1995).

In addition, the Act stipulates that a worker has a democratic right to leave the place of work which is not safe and dangerous until such time the effective measures have been put in place. Otherwise, a worker may choose to leave such a dangerous workplace. If a worker makes a decision to leave the workplace, he or she must immediately inform the managers of his or her belief that it is not safe to continue working around the place. A worker who decides to leave the place of work because of the poor working environment is allowed the same conditions of service and receives the same salary during the period of non-attendance (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007).

- Service

According to the Labour Act, it is the responsibility of a worker to attend the scheduled work regularly once he/she accepts employment. A worker must make himself or herself available to the employer even if there is no work to perform (Law Society of Namibia, 2007). In other words, an employee is required to report himself or herself at the place of work during the official hours of work even if there is no work to be done.

- Discipline

Although the sources of common law relationship between employer and employee has been controlled by the introduction of labour legislation, it is the responsibility of a worker to obey the lawful instructions of the employer. This is because no businesses can flourish unless there is an administration in place to make decisions and shape the workers who carry out their duties with the required discipline (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007).

- Good faith

The Labour Act instructs the workers to refrain from doing anything which will have the effect of obstructing the employer's business and not to conduct private business during official hours of work as it will negatively affect the employer's business interests. It further demands the workers not to produce a secret commission and profit from the job. It also prohibits the disclosure of private information or trade secrets obtained during the official hours of work (Law Society of Namibia, 2007).

- Competence

The Labourer Act requires a worker to demonstrate all the necessary know-how, capability, ability, diligence and skills to carry out the work for which he or she has been appointed and being paid for. However, if a worker does not have experience, knowledge and skills, this will result in the negligence of work (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007).

- Basic terms and circumstances of employment

The basic conditions of service is a law contract which regulates the employment of individuals. For example, the provision of a collective agreement is one such condition. The term and conditions of work include issues such as ordinary hours of work, overtime work and provision of leave (Muller, 2007).

- Ordinary hours of work and attendance

According to the Labour Act of 2007, an employer should not allow a worker to work for more than 45 hours in a week and not more than nine hours per day. The ordinary hours of a worker employed by the public sector may be increased up to 15 minutes in a day, but should not go above sixty minutes in a week, so that workers are allowed to continue with those extra duties after the completion of ordinary hours. Workers are also entitled to a sixty minutes break after every five hours of work of which the break is not calculated towards the working hours (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007). In this way, workers are expected to report to duty depending on the nature of work from 08:00 o'clock to 17:00 o'clock which equates to eight hours per day.

Equally, the Labourer Act instructs managers of each organisational component to observe and monitor the workforce under their supervision during the official hours of attendance approved under regulation 21 that "a staff member shall at all times, during his or her official hours of attendance, be present for duty at the place of work and give full attention to the duties entrusted to him or her". Furthermore, the Labourer Act demands employees to refrain from staying away from place of work during official hours of attendance without the consent of their supervisor or head of the organisational section. In addition, the Act urges all the workers to personally record the time of arrival and departure from work place in the attendance register (Government Gazette, 1995:11).

- Overtime work

According to the Labour Act, a worker may accept to work after normal hours, but such work should not go over three or maximum of ten hours a day, unless the Accounting Officer allows it. All workers who participate after normal hours must be paid a rate of at least 2% of the basic salary if working during weekdays and at least 1.5% of the basic pay if such a worker works on a Sunday or public holidays.

- Provision of leave

Fichat (2003:110) describes leave as a condition of service that allows an employee to be absent from work. The Labour Act gives provision for recognised reasons of absence which can be with pay or without pay. These include vacation, sick, compassionate and maternity leave.

i. Vacation leave

Vacation is a type of leave called scheduled absenteeism, since proper arrangements are made with the immediate supervisor, days before going on leave. According to Fichat (2003:111), all employees especially those employed by the Government are allowed for 24 days paid vacation leave each year. The author further states that every worker is allowed to apply for a maximum of sixteen weeks annual leave at the end of each leave cycle. However, it is the responsibility of the employer to choose when the annual leave application should be considered.

In this way, the immediate supervisor should carefully consider the leave application of workers as the Labour Act requires the employer to pay the salary owed to a worker in respect of annual leave which is in accordance to a workers' normal pay schedule. The employers are instructed to award a worker an additional day of paid leave if a public holiday falls on that day and restricts the employer to allow a worker who is on vacation leave to perform official duties (Government Gazette, 2007).

ii. Sick leave

According to Fichat (2003:111), every employee who works for a public sector has 132 days sick leave, fully paid, and 132 days at half pay, in a cycle of three years. The author further stated that a worker who has been absent for more than three days because of illness is required to provide a medical certificate signed by the doctor to support the claim. On the other hand, the Labour Act permits a worker to take a maximum of ten days sick leave without a medical certificate, whether that leave is fully paid or at half pay within a year. For example, a worker may decide to go to work but will be just sitting despite the scheduled activities. If the immediate supervisor asks such a worker the reason why he or she does not work, the response will be likely that of a mild headache or stomach-ache. This type of condition does not need the validation of a medical certificate. However, the Accounting Officer has a prerogative to request a medical certificate in this regard.

Under sick leave, the employer is required by the Labour Act to pay a worker an amount equal to the employee's daily salary for each day of non-attendance while on sick leave. Furthermore, it prohibits the employer to pay a worker for sick leave as a result of him or her being absent from work for longer than two consecutive days and failed to submit a medical certificate signed by a medical practitioner or other proof of illness. In the same vein, the Labour Act instructs the employer not to pay for a worker who is entitled for payment in terms of the Employment Compensation Act of 1941. A worker who is absent from work due to the inability arising from an accident or industrial disease qualifies to claim the funds. Equally, the Act requires an employer to stop paying a worker who is entitled to sick leave under any other legislations (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1995). For example, if a worker gets injured at work, it is the responsibility of the Social Security Commission to pay the salary of a worker in this regard.

iii. Compassionate leave

Compassionate leave is a type of leave used by a worker to stay absent when the member of a family gets sick or the death. A worker is allowed to take a compassionate leave for the maximum of two weeks with the full payment each year. When an employee wants to make use of a compassionate leave entitlement, he or she is required by the Labour Act to complete a form either before or when returning to work. This type of leave is accompanied by valid documents which include a death certificate of a deceased, the medical certificate where illness is the cause of absence and an oath in the case of death. It elapses if it is not used within twelve month each year (Fichat, 2003).

iv. Maternity leave

Maternity leave is a type of leave designed for a worker who is expecting a baby and its arranged 30 days before delivery. A woman who has been employed for six months is allowed to 90 days maternity leave. She is therefore required by the Labour Act to provide the employer with a medical certificate signed by a doctor endorsing the expected date of delivery and the actual date of return from leave. This arrangement is done before a worker goes on leave. During the period of maternity, the employer is required to pay a worker the salary, except for the basic wage. In this case, the Social Security Commission established by the Social Security Act of 1994 (Act No. 34 of 1994) pays a portion of the basic income during the period of absence while on maternity (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 1995).

v. Unauthorized absences from duty

Given other circumstances, it is always possible to obtain absence permission from work. For example a worker might wake up feeling sick one morning or having an emergency that needs the attention of a supervisor. In this case, a worker is instructed by the Labour Act to inform his or her supervisor as early as possible on the day that a worker will not be at work. If a worker does not notify his or her supervisor of the planned absence, it means that such a worker did not get the necessary permission to stay away from work, thus it is considered unauthorized. Depending on the discretion of the supervisor, a worker may be given a leave without pay for the time he or she was not at work (Fichat, 2003:116).

- Fundamental rights to freedom of association

The Labour Act provides a worker the fundamental rights to freedom of association in which he or she may take part in the legal activities of the trade union, either during the official hours of work with the permission of the employer or outside of ordinary hours of work. The employer is prohibited to take any actions against a worker who misses work for such purposes.

- Protection against unjust labour practices

According to the Labour Act, termination of employment is considered as unfair dismissal when the employer dismisses a worker for the following reasons:

- Without appropriate reason and fair basis
- When a worker exercises any right given by the terms of employment contract and collective bargaining.
- If a worker is dismissed based on colour, gender, ethnic origin, religion, social or economic status, political opinion or marital status (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007).

- Records and returns

In terms of the Labour Act, every company must keep a record of its workers for a period of five years and should consist of the following information:

- The name, gender, age and profession of each worker.
- The date of assumption of duty.
- The date of termination of the contract of service.
- The payment of each worker.
- The period of absenteeism, including annual leave, sick leave, compassionate leave or maternity leave taken by an employee.
- Keep the records of workers for a period of five years after the termination of service.

- Fundamental rights and protection

The Labour Act provides some universally recognised rights and protection. These include child labour, forced labour, discrimination and sexual harassment in employment.

- Child labour

The Act restricts not only the age at which a child may be hired for employment, but also regulates their working conditions. It protects children from abuse and ensures that their legal rights to attend school until the age of 16 years is adhered to. A child under the age of 16 years of age may not be recruited in any circumstances. It is required under Article 15 (2) of the Constitution that no child should be employed as it interferes with the education of a child and poses a risk to his or her healthy, psychological, ethical, mental and spiritual wellbeing (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007).

- Forced labour

In terms of the Act, forced labour amounts to a criminal offence and is defined as any work carried out by an individual under the fear of punishment. However, the services rendered by the members of police force, defence force and prison services are excluded by Article 9 of the Namibia Constitution from the expression of forced labour. This is because their services are required to be executed during the period of public emergencies and calamity (Law Society of Namibia, 2007).

- Discrimination in employment

The Labour Act prohibits favouritism in employment based on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed or social or economic status. Furthermore, the Act rejects discrimination in employment on the basis of HIV/AIDS, marital status, people with disability, family responsibilities, and political opinion as well as current and future pregnancies (Law Society of Namibia, 2007).

- Sexual harassment

According to the Labour Act, any form of sexual harassment towards a worker is prohibited and if a worker resigns as a result of the harassment then it is a constructive dismissal, which constitutes unfair dismissal of the victim.

- Inequitable dismissal

The significance of job security of a worker has been recognised over the previous years due to the growth of the industrial economy. The practice of hiring and firing workers at will has been eliminated by labour law legislation. In terms of the Labour Act, a worker cannot be discharged whether a notice is given or not, without a lawful, valid and fair reason and without following a fair procedure.

In the event of discharging a worker, the employer is required by the Act to provide reasonable evidence for dismissing such a worker. A worker who loses the job as a result of restructuring is eligible to one month notice as well as the chance to re-negotiate in order to reduce the effect of such retrenchment (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007).

- Imbursement on termination

According to the Labour Act, when ceasing the employment of a worker, the employer must pay the employee as follows:

- All the money owed to him or her for the work done including overtime worked during the period.
- Payment of accumulated leave days of which a worker is entitled.
- Any benefit due to him or her.

- Transport allowance if a worker was taken into service within a year before the date of dismissal.
- Combined agreement

There is a severe disagreement on concrete needs between employer and a worker in the labour market. This disagreement may lead to unnecessary consequences such as the downfall in the local economy. In order to avoid such conflicts between the management and organised labour, collective agreements have been introduced with the aim to formalise the relationship between the employer and workers. In terms of the Act, a combined agreement is done in writing stipulating circumstances of employment. It includes key factors such as strikes, labour disputes and conciliation (Law Society of Namibia, 2007).

- Strikes

In common law, strikes and lockouts constitute violations of the contract of service. In recent years, the policy-makers observed that strikes are the only bargaining power of the workforce, as such it was vital to introduce the law that controls, allows and manages both strikes and lockouts in certain situations thus reducing damage to the local economy.

In terms of the Labour Act, a party to a labour disagreement has the right to strike or lockouts if the matter was referred to conciliation but has not been resolved within 30 days. A party to a dispute is forbidden by the Act to get involved in a strike or lockouts if the disagreement is still in the process of conciliation and arbitration. A worker is entitled by the Act to engage in a strike and lockouts, but it inhibits the employer to pay a worker the hours lost while he or she was involved in a strike (Law Society of Namibia, 2007).

- Labour disagreement

The Labour Act has introduced a system and methods whereby disagreement in the employment market place may be resolved without the parties choosing for the proceedings in Courts of Law or creating violence and unlawful strategies in order to accomplish their plan.

- Conciliation

Conciliation is a development of arbitration. The process whereby an independent and neutral third party is chosen in order to help the parties to reach a voluntary settlement. An independent person (Mediator) is empowered by the Act to mediate the process of negotiation, but has no decision making powers. The parties themselves must reach the necessary decision to establish the outcome of the conciliation (Law Society of Namibia, 2007).

Any party which is not satisfied with the outcome may refer the dispute to the Labour Commissioner or Labour Office. If the Labour Commissioner is satisfied that all reasonable steps have been taken by

parties to settle the dispute that might lead to absenteeism, a conciliator is appointed. In conciliation proceedings, a party may be represented by a member of the trade union or a director of the limited liability company if the party is a juristic person (Law Society of Namibia, 2007).

- Arbitration

An arbitrator is not only in charge of the negotiation process but also establish the outcome of the disagreement. In this regard, the arbitrator is the same position like judicial officers such as a magistrate or judge in a court case. Arbitration is applied in disputes arising from the following;

- Violation of contracts of service and combined agreements
- Inequitable labour practices, unfair discharge and unfair disciplinary action
- Disagreement necessary to be referred to arbitration in terms of the Act.

In arbitration proceedings, a party may be represented by a person who is endorsed to represent parties in conciliation enquiry. Legal Practitioners and other persons may also be allowed to stand on behalf of parties during the case of conciliation proceedings. Any party to a disagreement may appeal to the Labour Court against an arbitrator's conclusion on question of law (Government of the Republic of Namibia, 2007).

- **Public Service Act No. 13 of 1995.**

The Public Service Act (PSA) is one of the legislations that derive its power from the Labour Act of 2007 and National Constitutions. Along with the Labour Law, public service employees are further governed by the PSA. The main objectives of the PSA is to create and manage the effectiveness of civil service, setting rules of work, environment, discipline and expulsion of workers from the Public Sector.

The PSA deals with personnel administration, misbehaviour and general provision. Personnel administration consists of payment of employees, protection against salary reduction, duties of the employees and staff as well as deferment of workers. It also contains the general provision which encompasses issues such as political rights of an employee, labour relations, regulations and public service staff rules.

- Personnel administration

Personnel administration (PA) involves various issues which include payment of workers, protection against salary reductions, duties of employees, circumstances with regard to filling of vacancies, arrangements, advancement and relocations, age, retirement and expulsion of workers.

- Payments of workers

The Public Service Act of (1995) states that all the workers who are employed by the government shall be paid in accordance. The Prime Minister (PM), upon the recommendation of the commission, may approve first, any employee of the civil service on employment, elevation and relocation to have remuneration which is higher than the current minimum scale of salary. Second, the PM may approve workers in the employment to be advanced within the scales of salaries applicable to them. Third, the PM may approve any employees and staff of the service with excellent skill or hold exceptional qualifications or any worker who has provided a commendable job which is in the interest of the public service to be advanced within the scale of salary applicable to him or her. Furthermore, the Act instructs the employer to pay a worker higher salary than his or her current scale of salary or should be given any other suitable benefits or rewards (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995:12).

➤ Protection against salary reduction

The Act instructs that no salary of any workers employed in the public service will be deducted without his or her knowledge, unless if it is in accordance with the provision of the PSA of 1995. This means that a supervisor has no right to instruct the salary office to deduct the salary without the consent of the employee.

➤ Duties of the employees and staff

The PSA stipulates that every employee shall give his or her full attention in serving the government. The Act further states that no worker shall be allowed to perform or engage himself or herself to execute work for his or her own benefits at any time outside the employment in the “Public Service”. The Permanent Secretary of any particular organisation may give permission to an employee to engage in such activities in his or her organisation (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

➤ Circumstances in filling of vacancies

The Public Service Act of (1995) instructs that every recruitment, advancement and relocation within the Public Sector shall be embedded in the contract of service and should be permitted by the Prime Minister on recommendation by the commission. Furthermore, the Act states that no individual shall be recruited permanently as an employee in the government, unless such individual is a Namibian and is suitable for permanent appointment in a post and he or she is free from any diseases, physical or psychological sense which may likely interfere with the proper performance of his or her duties. In addition, only the educational requirement, job knowledge and skills, level of training, effectiveness and suitability of an individual being considered for employment, advancement and transfer shall be taken into account (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

➤ Misconduct

By definition, misconduct refers to the act of any worker who does not comply with any provision of the Labour Act of 2007. Or any worker who violates, disrespects or makes unruly default to carry out any order given by him or her by any individual who is authorised to do so is liable for misconduct. He or she is careless in carrying out his or her duties, or a worker operates without the approval of the PS any private work in regard to any matter directly or indirectly related to performance of her or his official duties; or any employee who was absent from his or her office without leave or valid reasons makes himself or herself guilty on any charge of misconduct. The misconduct consists of two issues. These include misconduct and suspension of employees and the manner in which notices should be given (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

➤ Misbehaviour and deferment of workers

The Act gives provision to the PS of any ministry or agency to expel an employee, if he or she trusts that such an employee has contravened the Act and he or she is therefore guilty on the charge of misconduct. However, the PS concerned may not suspend an employee under his or her ministry or agency without a recommendation from the Public Service Commission. An employee who is expelled from the service due to delinquency may not be eligible to any salary, until such a time when the PM approves or rejects the suspension based on the recommendation of the commission. The approval is given after the worker concerned has appealed in writing against non-entitlement of his or her remuneration within a period of seven days (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

An employee who has been suspended may be allowed by the PS concerned to restart his or her duties. In this way, an employee shall be compensated from the date of the expulsion, provided that the charge against such an employee was not brought to the committee within fourteen days after the suspension. Or an employee has not been found guilty on the charges brought against him or her. And his or her appeal is allowed against the findings that he or she is guilty on the charge brought against him or her (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

The deferment of an employee maybe withdrawn by the PS who has suspended the worker, if in his or her opinion, believes that the reasons for suspension have elapsed and the PM's opinion also found no valid reason to suspend the worker or if the commission has recommended that the PM withdraws the suspension. In the case, if an employee denies the charge, the PS concerned shall establish a disciplinary committee within seven days. The committee will consist of one staff member from the management levels in which the charged employee is employed and shall be the chairperson of the convened committee. This will be joined by one staff member from the head of the organisational component who will be responsible with the personnel administration and other additional members (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

According to the annual report of the Ministry of Works and Transport, the challenges the ministry is faced with include lack of disciplinary hearings as the chairpersons are reluctant to convene the meeting with regard to disciplinary actions. Furthermore, the ministry finds it very difficult to get members for disciplinary hearing committees (MWT, 2014/2015:12).

➤ Political rights of an employee

The Labour Act of 2007 gives the right to a worker to be a member of any political party of his or her choice, as well as to attend and speak at the public political meeting or gathering and may become an office bearer of any office designation, provided that such a worker would be required to carry out his or her official duties in the Public Service (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

➤ Labour relations

The PSA requires the PM to give recommendation through the commission which involves all the processes of dialogues and joint bargaining. This means that before the PM takes a decision on suspension of an employee as per the recommendation of the PS concerned, the Act instructs that the PM should submit the suspension letter to the relevant bodies such as the labour office or labour commissioner for further deliberations (Government Gazette, 1995)

➤ Regulations

The Public Service Act of 1992 instructs the PM upon the recommendation of the commission to formulate regulations which include contracts of employment, appointments, promotion and transfer of workers, discipline, policies, hours of attendance, conditions of service, and privileges, the methodology to be observed in the process of a dispute and collective negotiating with recognised trade unions and the methodology to be observed in investigating and dealing with allegations of inadequacy of misbehaviour by an employee (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

➤ Public Service Staff Rules

The Public Service Staff Rules (PSSR) contains recommendation compiled by the commission and directives issued by the PM to supplement guidelines which are not contradicting this Act. These include the rules called the PSSR. The provision of the PSSR are binding to the employees hired by the government. According to Muller (2007:7), Public Service Staff Rules misconduct and disciplinary action give details on certain matters which are not prescribed in the Public Service Act and therefore it serves as a guideline for the offices, ministries and agencies to apply in the case where a worker has contravened the Act (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

For example, the PSSR offers some of the guidelines that deal with actions that constitute a misconduct. These include main offences, severe offences and slight offences. The main offences

consist of burglary, fraud, bribery, falsifying of information and documents which include medical certificates and educational qualifications while serious or severe offences include abuse of sick leave, sleeping on duty, and repeated absence from workplace while on duty, repeated un-communicated absenteeism and the use of abusive language. The slight or minor offences encompassing issues like poor time control, improper conduct and carelessness.

The actions that a supervisor should take in dealing with the above offences include, the main offence in which the immediate supervisor should charge a worker with misconduct for the first time when such a worker commits an offence, followed by the serious offence where a manager is required to produce a first written warning, then final warning and charge with misconduct if a worker has committed a similar offence more than once. In the case of slight offences, a worker must be given a verbal warning in the first offence, followed by first the written warning in the second offence and charged with misconduct in the fourth offence (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

- Labour Amendment Act 2 of 2012 (LAA)

This Labour Amendment Act of 2012 was established with the purpose to improve the Labourer Act No. 13 of 2007 by replacing and introducing certain definitions. Equally, it controls the employment situation of a person hired by private employment agencies. Furthermore, the Act offers protection to an individual employed by the private employment agency. This means that those agencies that look for employment on behalf of other people, may levy a certain percentage on the salary of the worker once the job is secured and this is against the law.

- Social Security Act 13 of 1994 (SSA)

The SSA provides revenue support systems designed for every working Namibian. The Social Security Act offers maternity leave to every working female, sick leave and death benefits to all registered working individuals and other dependent members. For example a woman who has a job is entitled for maternity leave benefits and it is the responsibility of the employer to pay a worker such benefits provided there is a proof from the medical doctor that indeed, such an employee is expecting a baby or he/she is seriously ill. This Act is based on the principle of 50:50 contributions from both the employer and employee. The Act allows workers to claim certain benefits, but if not registered, such a worker will not benefit (Government of Republic of Namibia, 1995).

- Employees' Compensation (EC) Act 30 of 1941

The EC Act exists with the aim to strengthen the laws concerning the payments to cover the claims of workers emanating from the industrial diseases, injuries, accidents and death resulting from such accidents and diseases. According to Muller (2007: 3), the principal target of the Employee's Compensation Act, 1941 (Act No. 30 of 1941 as amended) is to provide funds of reasonable medical expenses and payment with regard to work associated with injuries and industrial diseases acquired by a worker out of or in the course of employment (Government Gazette, 1995).

The EC Act gives workers compensation insurance which consists of the accident fund administered by the Social Security Commission (SSC). The accident fund under this Act, provides payments for accidents arising from the employment. The compensation is given in respect of short and long term injuries as well as death. The Act demands every employer who employs one or more workers to pay annual assessments fees to the accident funds and such contributions should not be deducted from the employee's salary (Government Gazette, 1995:29).

- Affirmative Action Act 29 of 1998 (AA)

By definition, Affirmative Action is a set of action measures taken to ensure that the disadvantaged people enjoy fair employment opportunities at all levels of employment and are fairly represented in the workforce of the employer. In other words, the Act is limited to the identification and removal of employment obstacles against the chosen disadvantaged groups. It makes reasonable effect in the workplace to accommodate women, physically disabled and people with disabilities. The AA urges managers to design affirmative action plan of their organisation. Any employer who fails to comply with this Act commits a major offence in this regard (Government Gazette, 1995).

- Employment Service Act 8 of 2011 (ESA)

The Employment Service Act of 2011 was enacted to establish and provide national employment service. It re-enforces reporting and other commitment on certain industries and institutions. The Act provides licenses and regulates private employment agencies and deals with related matters. This Act prohibits individuals to conduct any private business unless such an operator is in possession of a licence (Government Gazette, 1995).

3.1.1.2.2 The Conventions and Recommendation of International Labour Organisation

The Conventions and Recommendation of the International Labour Organisation (CRILO) is an important source of international labour standards. There are several ways in which the Convention and Recommendations of the (CRILO) can play in a labour market and industries. For example, when the ILO has approved a Convention, member states are requested for the endorsement. This means that a country's legislative authority formally adopts the tool and incorporates the requirements of the Convention in its administration, regulations, programmes and practices. The CRILO is one of the essential international guidelines taken into consideration by the judiciary institutions in terms of labour disputes and resolutions (Muller, 2007).

In addition, Namibia is a member state of the International Labour Organisation and has signed most of ILO's treaties. These include Forced Labour Treaty, 1930 (C. 29 of 1930), Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Treaty, 1948 (C. 87 of 1948), Rights to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (C. 98 of 1949), Equal Remuneration Treaty, 1951 (C. 100 of 1951), Abolition of Forced Labourer Treaty, 1957 (C. 105 of 1957), Discrimination Treaty, 1958 (C. 111 of 1958), Minimum Age Treaty, 1973 (C. 138 of 1973), Labour Administration Treaty, 1982

(C. 150 of 1978), Termination of Employment Treaty, 1982 (C. 158 of 1982) Worst Forms of Child Labour Treaty, 1999 (C. 182 of 1999) and International Labour Standards Treaty, 1976 (van Zyl, 2017:34).

3.1.1.2.3 Other sources of laws on employment absenteeism

Family and Medical Act covers both the employer and employee non-attendance related to serious health status as well as the absence to care for family members with serious health conditions. The disability Act requires the employer to grant the employee leave to accommodate the needs of a worker with disability and should not discriminate them against employment because of the said conditions. Workers Compensation laws permit workers to be absent from the workplace in order to heal from workplace injuries and illness. Civil Rights Act regulates non-discrimination and allows workers to be absent for spiritual reasons. Jury Duty Act, tolerates workers to be absent in order to attend the court of justice.

3.2 Summary

The discourse on International Labour Law started back in the 18 century. The industrial revolution of Europe between the 18th to the 19th centuries led to the refining of the Labour Law. During the 20th century when the Labour Law became popular worldwide, the International Labour Organisation was established as a body that regulates and controls international matters related to labour issues. Labour law is the most important law regulating relationships between the different role players in the labour field

Labour Law is defined as an industrial legal tool concerned with the terms and conditions of work. Its objectives are to govern and monitor the relationship between employer and employees. The main principles of Labour Law is to give protection to an individual in the labour market and to guarantee the rights of both employer and employee to form associations and use their representatives such as trade unions in collective bargaining and disputes.

There are two sources of law, namely primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprise of laws that have been passed by Parliament while secondary sources, on the other hand, contain laws which have been created by an organ of Government endorsed by the Parliament. The recognised foundation of labour law in Namibia, include legislations, the conventions and recommendations.

Legislation as a law crafted by the Parliament and contains crucial laws that deal with employment related issues. This includes the Constitution, Labour Act of 2007, Labour Amendment Act of 2012, Social Security Act of 1994, Employee Compensation Act of 1941, Affirmative Action Act of 1998, and regulations concerning health and safety of employees at work of 1997, Public Service Act of 1995 and Public Service Staff Rule Act of 1999. There are other employment laws that put pressure

on the manager when administering absenteeism. These include Family and Medical Act, Jury Duty Act, Disability Act and the Civil Rights Act.

The Constitution, together with other international agreements in which Namibia is a member state, is the supreme law in the country and encompasses articles 9, 10, 14, 21 and 95 which address the employment issues for both public and private organisations. The conventions and recommendations of the ILO are an important source of international labour standards and Namibia has endorsed many of these conventions which include among others the rights to organise and collectively bargaining convention of 1949 and termination of employment treaty of 1982 as well as the Safety and Health of workers, 1999.

The Labour Act of 2012, as amended replaced and introduced the meaning of certain subsections under the Labour Act of 2007. The perspectives of Labour Act of 2007 consist of elements that can address employment issues. These include service contract, provision of labour rights and responsibilities for both workers and employers, equal employment opportunity, basic terms and conditions of employment, fundamental rights and protection, termination of employment, payment on termination, combined agreement and provision of leave.

The Employee Compensation Act of 1941 gives insurance to the employees such as accident fund administered by Social Security Commission. The Social Security Act provides payment support systems of 50:50 contribution from both employer and employee. It offers maternity leave and sick leave benefits. While Affirmative Action, on the other hand, sets out action measures taken to ensure that disadvantaged people also enjoy fair employment.

Generally, all employees hired by the public sector are regulated by the Public Service Act of 1995 (Act No. 13 of 1995) while the Labour Act of 2007 administers both public and private employers and employees in the country.

CHAPTER 4: BACKGROUND OF THE CASE STUDY

4.1. Introduction

This chapter is divided into four sections. Section one provides a historical overview of the Ministry of Works and Transport and its objectives. Section two presents the organogram structure of the organisation of the ministry. Section three highlights the key facts about the two selected cases, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund. The last section, Section four, outlines the internal policies pertaining to absenteeism which include attendance, non-attendance, and provision of leave, ministerial notification procedure, disciplinary action and termination of service.

4.2. Historical background of the case study

The Ministry of Works and Transport is one of the key ministries in the Government of the Republic of Namibia. It consists of 2500 employees on its staff establishment. Its headquarters are located in Windhoek, the capital city of Namibia. It has several regional offices which are situated across the country including Swakopmund Regional Office. The mandate of the ministry is to develop, implement and regulate sectoral policies and ensure infrastructure development and management of transport and state assets. The vision of the ministry is to be the leading provider of Namibia's socio-economic infrastructure and services that realise Namibia's vision 2030 while its mission is to develop sectoral policy and regulations, including maintenance of government properties (Ministry of Works and Transport Annual plan, 2018/19). The main objectives of the Ministry of Works and Transport include:

- Firstly, to develop infrastructure in order to ensure modern and reliable infrastructure that is well maintained.
- Secondly, to ensure the optimal use of Government properties.
- Thirdly, to improve institutional image and to provide quality goods and services.
- Fourthly, to enhance organisational performance and to promote employee wellness
- Finally, to ensure compliance to the policies and the Public Service Act.

The Ministry of Works and Transport consists of four departments namely, the Department of Works (DOW), the Department of Administration and Central Support Services (DOACSS), the Department of Transport (DOT) and the Department of Government Air Transport Services (DOGATS). All these departments have different aims and roles within the ministry. These Departments consist of Directorates which comprise of Divisions, Sub-divisions, Sections and Sub-Sections across the country.

The DOW's role is to deliver, manage and uphold government facilities and associated infrastructure, to enable offices, ministries and agencies to execute their functions. It also controls experts in the

construction industry by administering laws governing the Architects, Quantity Surveyors and Engineering Professional Act. It is divided into two Directorates. These include, Directorate of Maintenance Services and Directorate of Capital Project Management. The role of DOACSS is to give qualitative support and services to the ministry and user offices including agencies. It also has two legs of directorates namely, the Directorate of Administration and the Directorate of Central Support Services.

The DOGATS's responsibility is to provide a protected and well-organized air transport services to the members of cabinet. These include his Excellency, the President of the Republic of Namibia, the Prime Minister, Ministers and top government officials to local and world-wide destinations. It consists of two directorates namely, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and the Directorate of Flight Operations. The DOT's role is to improve, put in place and control sectoral policies on transportation and ensure infrastructure growth and supervision of transport. It is divided into five directorates namely, the Directorate of transportation policy and regulations, the Directorate of transportation infrastructure, the Directorate of Civil Aviation, the Directorate of Maritime Affairs and the Directorate of Aircraft Accidents.

4.2.1 The organogram of the Ministry of Works and Transport

The Ministry of Works and Transport is headed by the Permanent Secretary (PS) being answerable to the relevant Minister. This Permanent Secretary is supported by four Deputy Permanent Secretaries (DPS) who head each of the departments. These Deputy Permanent Secretaries are deputised by the Directors who head the directorates.

For example, the Directorate of Administration, the Directorate of Central Support Services, the Directorate of Quality Assurance, the Directorate of Flight Operations, the Directorate of Transportation Policy and Regulation, the Directorate of Transportation Infrastructure, the Directorate of Civil Aviation, the Directorate of Railway Affairs, the Directorate of Maritime Affairs, the Directorate of Aircraft Accident Investigation, the Directorate of Maintenance Services and the Directorate of Fixed Asset Management. The directors of the mentioned directorates are deputised by the Deputy Directors (DD), a level responsible for formulating medium term plans and policies for the different directorates.

Below the Deputy Directors are the controllers. Regional offices such as the Windhoek and Swakopmund stations which have been the areas of the study's enquiry are headed by such controllers. All staff, which comprise junior managers such as the chiefs, the immediate supervisors and the non-managerial employees report to the station controller. Although the human resource section is not a line function and not directly answerable to the controller, it is incumbent upon the station human resource practitioner, together with support staff to work co-operatively with the line

management. The differing managerial levels and the spans of control continue cascading down to the station levels of the departments.

Furthermore, although there is no statistical data on absenteeism rates within the ministry, the department of works is perceived to have lower rates of attendance both in Swakopmund and Windhoek. According to the annual report of the sub-division of horticultural services, it is indicated that it has twenty one percent of absenteeism in Windhoek and five percent in Swakopmund. Presented below is the middle and lower levels of the Department of Works. It starts at the departmental level.

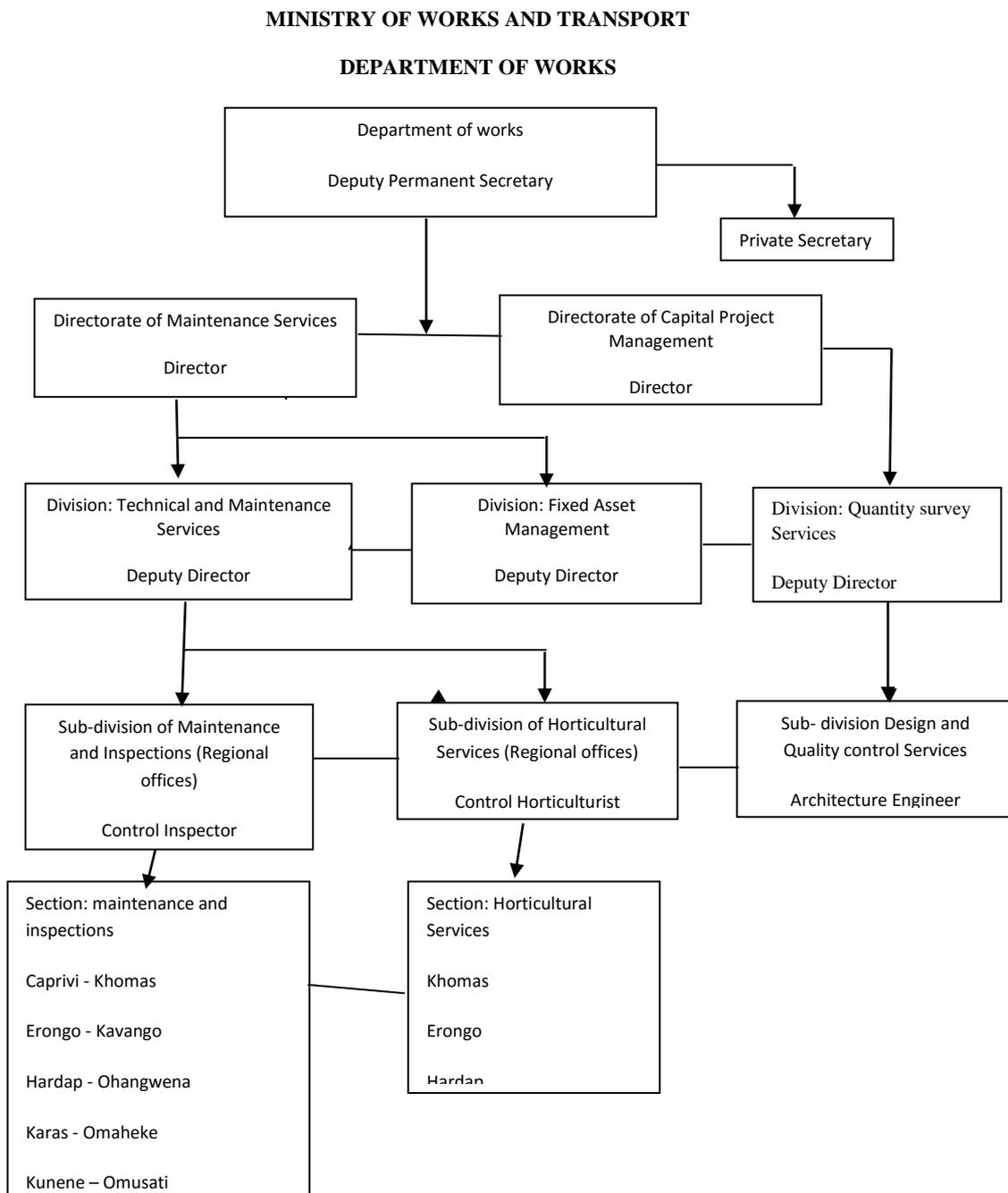


Figure 2: Organogram of the Department of Works in the MWT (Source, MWT Annual Plan, 2015/2016)

4.2.1.1 The Historical background of Windhoek Station

Windhoek is the Capital City of Namibia where the Head of State resides. It is situated in the Khomas region, the central part of the country, Namibia. Windhoek was established in 1890 with 500 residents only. Currently, the city has a population of 326, 000, representing an ethnic cross-section of all groups of Namibians. These include the Himbas, the Hereroes, the Namas, the Damaras, the Owambos, the Caprivians, the Kavangos, the Sans, the Batswana, the Baster, the Afrikaners, the Germans as well as other international communities, the city has a total area of about 5,134 square kilometres. The weather pattern in Windhoek ranges from 17 to 32 degree Celsius during winter season and increases during summer with the humidity of about 33% (Kruger, 2010).

4.2.1.2 The Historical background of Swakopmund Station

Swakopmund, which is found in the Erongo Region is one of the coastal towns in Namibia. The town is located in the Namib Desert and lies about 360 Kilometres the western direction of the capital city of Windhoek. It is the fourth biggest town in the country with a population of not exceeding fifty thousand. The town has a total area of about 194 square kilometres with its sand dunes facing the Atlantic Ocean. The weather pattern in Swakopmund ranges from 16 to 30 degree Celsius with the humidity of about 72% (Gondwana collection Namibia, 2018).

4.3. The internal policy pertaining to absenteeism

The Ministry of Works and Transport has an attendance and absenteeism policy in place. The purpose of the policy is to spell out what is required from the employees of MWT in terms of their work attendance and what they are expected to do if they miss work. There are five elements embedded in the MWT attendance and absenteeism policy. These include attendance, non-attendance and provision of leave, ministerial notification procedures, disciplinary action and termination of service.

4.3.1 Attendance

Consistent attendance is very important as it enhances production and the smooth workflow of the organisation (MWT). The Public Service Act, of 2007, stipulates that a worker who fails to report on duty as required may lose his/her salary according to the actual time he or she has been absent other than be given authorised paid leave. Furthermore, workers are required to record their actual hours worked in the attendance register from 08:00hrs to 17:00hrs taking into consideration the meals and tea breaks. The recommended minimum hours of work for a worker who works for 5 days in a week is eight hours excluding hours for lunch and tea break.

4.3.2 Non-attendance

Workers are required to adhere to all the agreements and requirements as set out in their contract of employment and deals with attendance and non-attendance. If a worker decides to stay away from the workplace due to other circumstances, such an employee should inform his/her supervisor or manager

about the reason for absence. A worker who wishes to extend his/her absence for more than one day while being absent, such a worker should update his or her immediate supervisor regularly about the circumstances for going absent. According to the Public Service Act of 2007, if a worker discovers that he/she cannot report on duty as per schedule, such a worker should inform the supervisor immediately.

Depending on the reasons of absenteeism, the manager may reject, approve paid or unpaid leave of absence. In this case, the evidence to support the reasons for being absent is required. Where a worker is absent for a period of 30 consecutive days, such a worker is dismissing him or herself from public service because the law says all staff members must not be absent continuously without a permission or without contacting their supervisors, informing them about the problem. Workers are required to adhere to the requirements contained in the policy (Government Gazette, 1995).

4.3.3 Provision of leave

The Public Service Act gives all the workers provision of leave which include vacation leave, sick leave, compassionate leave, study leave, maternity leave, and unpaid leave (Government Gazette, 1995). Detailed explanations of these types of leave are thoroughly discussed in chapter 3.

4.3.4 Ministerial notification procedures

Workers are required to follow departmental procedures if they plan to be absent or come late for work. Workers need to request in advance from their supervisor if they intend to arrive late to or leave early from work. Workers are required to notify their supervisor at least one month ahead of the time of absence in terms of vacation leave. The leave needs to be approved by the supervisor before a worker goes on leave. In the case where the need for leave is beyond a worker's control, such an employee must still inform the supervisor as soon as possible.

4.3.5 Disciplinary action and termination of service

According to the Public Service Staff Rule of 1999 as amended, supervisors should monitor their workers' attendance on a regular basis and resolve unsatisfactory attendance in a consistent manner. If the supervisor notices poor work attendance, he/she must discuss the issue with the employee concerned. Absence occurrence is taken into consideration when applying discipline. For example, if an employee continues to be absent for more than two to three working days, the manager should give a verbal warning to such a worker. And if a worker does not change, a first written warning followed by a final written warning letter are issued against such a worker. Failure to comply with this policy calls for a disciplinary hearing which may result in the termination of services (Government Gazette, 1995).

4.4. Summary

The Ministry of Works and Transport is one of the ministries of the Republic of Namibia that play a crucial role in a country. Its main mandate include: the development of infrastructure in order to ensure modern and reliable infrastructure that are well maintained; the optimal use of government properties; improvements of the institutional image; the provision of quality goods and services; the enhancement of organisational performance and the promotion of employee wellness as well as compliance to the policies and acts.

The Ministry of Works and Transport has regulations that may put pressure on the employer when managing absenteeism. The law contains the materials from International Agreements and the Labour Act of 2007, including other related legislations such as the PSA of 1995, Public Service Staff Rule of 1997, Affirmative Action of 1998, Employee Compensation Act of 1941, Social Security Act of 1994, Labour Amendment Act of 2012, and Employment Service Act of 2011 and Health and Safety of employees at work of 1999. All these regulations serve as guidelines to absence management policy in the ministry and all other ministries.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

5.1. Introduction

The focal point of this chapter is to explain the research methodology that was used in the exploration of the internal and external factors that influence employee absenteeism at the Ministry of Works and Transport in the two towns, Windhoek and Swakopmund. This chapter begins by re-outlining the research problem, objectives and questions of the present study. The next section discusses the research design, the study population, sources of information, instrumentation, purposive sampling ethical considerations, study limitation, survey method as well as sampling techniques and the statistical methods that were utilised to check the research question for the present study. The last section of the chapter, presents the results of the study.

5.1.1. Research problem

The ever-growing absenteeism remains a serious concern especially in the public sector on which the citizens' wellbeing depends through the provision of public goods and services. The Ministry of Works and Transport was established with the aim to ensure modern and reliable infrastructure development that meets the needs and demands of citizens. However, for the MWT to have a reliable infrastructure, it requires good organisational management and workforce that is committed to produce quality goods and services.

According to the annual report of 2013/2014 of the subdivision of Horticultural Services, 21% of absenteeism was recorded and yet little research for tracking the reasons of employee absenteeism was done. Such a worrisome percentage of absence has the potential to influence productivity and costs within the MWT. It is therefore, against these reasons that the researcher has embarked upon conducting a study on the internal and external factors that influence absenteeism in an employee's view point.

5.1.2. Research objectives

The main aim of this research thesis is to explore, in detail the internal and external causes of employee absenteeism in the context of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected workplaces. The research objectives include;

- To define and understand absenteeism,
- To distinguish between planned and unplanned absence,
- To identify the internal and external causes (drivers) of absenteeism,
- To understand the policy dealing with absenteeism in the Ministry of Works and Transport,
- To profile the extent of absenteeism within the MWT in Windhoek and Swakopmund,
- To observe if there is a difference between the factors influencing absenteeism at the two selected cases, and

- To make recommendations on how to improve attendance by decreasing absenteeism in the cases discussed.

5.1.3. Research questions

The primary research question for this study was to assess the internal and external factors of high absenteeism in the MWT at the two selected stations, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund? The type of secondary questions that were asked in this study are as follows;

- What are the perceived reasons for employee absence in the Ministry of Works and Transport?
- What are the internal and external factors contributing to employee absenteeism among the employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport?
- How do the root causes of absenteeism in Windhoek differ from those in Swakopmund?

5.2. Research design

The exploratory design was applied to obtain information from the two selected places. In this study both qualitative and quantitative approaches were engaged in order to establish the perceptions and understanding of employee attendance in the Ministry of Works and Transport. The choice of using mixed research methods approach--such as "qualitative and quantitative" research methods--is because it responds well to the factors and characteristics that contribute to absenteeism. Furthermore, the knowledge of key respondents on absenteeism could be best articulated in language and figures (Babbie et al, 2001).

5.2.1. Target and study population

Singh (2012:6) defines population as a whole populace that a researcher is interested in for appropriate study. Cottrell and McKenzie (2010:1) describes population as an entire set of people with the characteristics one wishes to observe and understand. The targeted study population were those people who are permanently employed by the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected stations, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund. The total population in the study was 350 employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected stations. Out of this total population, 320 were non-managerial staff and 30 were managerial staff respectively. This means that two hundred and twenty six (226) of the population was from Windhoek and ninety four (94) was from Swakopmund which formed a total population size of three hundred and twenty (320) non-managerial staff. The managerial staff had twenty (21) population size in Windhoek and nine (9) in Swakopmund with a total population size of thirty (30).

The information from the workers was collected by means of a survey questionnaires while the data from supervisors and human resource practitioners was obtained through administered interviews. According to Fox (2009:4), an interview is a verbal discussion between the investigator and a

respondent where queries are asked and responses are provided, while a survey questionnaire is described as a method of research used for gathering facts from a sample of persons through written answers to the questions, thus to acquire information and insights on numerous topics of interest (Ponto, 2015).

5.2.2. Sampling

Sampling can be defined as a process of choosing the target participants that best represent the population to be considered (Singh, 2012). Josias and Beverly (2005:84) states that the basic ideas of the sampling is by selecting some elements in a population the researcher may draw conclusion about the entire population. Sampling is a useful way in which data are collected when the population is very large. The authors further present the main advantages of collecting data from a sample which include:

- Gathering data on a sample is less time-consuming, especially when populations may be spread over large geographical areas.
- It is cheap because fewer resources will be required.

5.2.2.1 Sampling design

Sampling design methods can be divided into two broad categories: probability and non-probability sampling. In probability sampling each participant has an equal chance of being selected. On the other hand, in non-probability sampling the selection of elements for the sample is not necessarily made with the aim of being statistically representative of the population (Josias and Beverley, 2005).

The sampling design that was considered appropriate for the present study was non-probability sampling. In this case, the total population size in the study was 350 with managerial and non-managerial staff members as 320 and 30 respectively. Among the non-managerial, a sample size of 68 which constitutes 30% of employees in Windhoek and a sample of 43 which constitutes 46% of the population in Swakopmund was chosen. The managerial staff had 16 sample in Windhoek thus constitutes 76% of the population and a sample of 8 staff members in Swakopmund which constitutes 89%.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:166) present four types of non-probability sampling. These include reliance on available subjects, purposive or judgement sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling. However, this study only used purposive sampling amongst the four types of non-probability sampling. The sampling frame was drawn from the entire population of the two Ministry of Works and Transport's selected stations. It included both the repeat offenders and none offenders of absenteeism. This eliminated targeting individuals while still allowing the researcher to obtain relevant information.

5.2.2.1.1 Judgement or purposive sampling

Judgement sampling is a type of non-probability sampling which is referred to as a purposive sample. Judgment sampling involves selecting certain elements in the sample for a specific purpose. In judgment sampling, sample elements are chosen because the researcher has the knowledge of the elements and thus believes they represent the target population (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). As such, the researcher used purposive sampling for the present study.

5.2.2.1.2 Considerations regarding sampling

The reasons for choosing non-probability sampling over probability sampling were due to cost and time. Probability sampling requires more planning and repeated call backs to ensure that each selected sample member is contacted. These activities can become expensive. It was further recognised that carefully controlled non probability sampling often seems to give acceptable results. (Josias and Beverly, 2005). As such, the investigator did not consider probability sampling.

5.2.2.1.3 Sampling size

The ideal sample size of 20% is considered as good response rate, while 30% is considered as very good for most research purposes as it provides the ability to generalise a population (Josias and Beverley, 2005). However, this study took a population size of 350, of which 320 were non-managerial staff and 30 managerial staff. From the non-managerial staff of 320, 226 staff members were from Windhoek while 94 staff members were from Swakopmund. The sample size for non-managerial staff in this study was 111 of which, 68 staff members were from Windhoek and 43 staff members were from Swakopmund and this constituted 35% of the sample. The managerial staff sample size was 24 of which, 16 staff members were from Windhoek and 8 staff members were from Swakopmund, which constituted 80% of the sample. Participants were purposefully selected as being employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport. Below is the general recommended sampling guideline.

Table 1. Sampling guideline

Population size	Percentage suggested	Number of respondents
20	100%	20
30	80%	24
50	64%	32
-100	45%	45
200	32%	64
500	20%	100
1000	14%	140
10,000,00	4.5%	450
100,000,00	2%	2000

Source: Burger and Silima (2006, p.667)

5.3. Instrumentation

The researcher experienced challenges in shaping the kind of questions that best fit the objectives of the research representing the parameter of the phenomenon under the study. The self-administered survey questionnaire and interviews were the main tools used to collect the data from non-managerial and managerial staff at the two selected stations. The researchers' sources of questions employed in the questionnaire was derived from other research work in this area. The questionnaire was designed to have a set of structured response-type of categories, such as closed and open-ended questions allowing the participant freedom in his/her response. According to Josias and Beverly (2005:89) there are specific benefits to utilising questionnaires. These include:

- The cost per questionnaire is relatively low.
- Structured information in the questionnaire makes analysing questionnaires relatively straightforward.
- Questionnaires give respondents ample time to formulate accurate responses.

However, the problem of the questionnaire is the issues that relate to non-response on certain items in the questionnaire. In addition, some participants may fail to return the questionnaires which creates challenges to generalise from a sample to a population.

On the other hand, the main benefits of interviews include firstly, the suitability of gaining full data about individual feelings, insights and views. Secondly, they permit thorough questions to be asked and finally, they accomplish a greater response rate. Since the purpose of the study was to assess the internal and external factors that influence employee absenteeism, using a self-administered questionnaire and interviews were the best methods of collecting the necessary data.

5.4. Sources of information

Source of information in this study refers to the origin where the researcher has obtained the information relevant to the present study. The sources of information include the primary and secondary data.

5.4.1. Secondary data

The researcher collected information applicable to the study from various available books, articles, journals, periodicals, government gazette, industrial reports, newspapers, magazines, press, published and unpublished sources, electronic databases and World Wide Web Facilities. Some of the sources e.g. books and journals were accessed in the libraries such as the National Library, University of Namibia Library and Namibia Institute of Public Administration and Management Library. The electronic journals and articles were also accessed in the study.

5.4.2. Primary data

The primary data were collected by using a self-administered survey questionnaire and structured interview. The qualitative data was obtained through interviews while the quantitative data was collected through self-administered questionnaire. The respondents were classified as follows for administering the questionnaire and interviews:

- Labourers, Leader labourer, Cleaners, Handyman, Workhands, Artisans, Implement Operators, Operator Drivers, Caretakers, Electricians and others were classified as non-managerial staff.
- Supervisors, managers, including Human Resource Professionals were categorized as managerial staff. An open-ended interview guide was designed for this group.

For the purpose of this study both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were chosen and applied. Various methods were accessible that can be used for searching the information, but the researcher has employed the survey questionnaire and interview methods.

5.5. Survey method

The survey method is based upon a structured questionnaire (one which presents questions in a prearranged order), given to a sample out of the population and designed to produce specific information from respondents. The questionnaires were distributed by hand and were circulated to the employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport at each selected station. The space was provided

for respondents to elicit additional information on certain areas. Along with the questionnaires was a cover letter and informed consent form, explaining the purpose of the research and the rights of the participants respectively.

5.5.1. Questionnaire design

The initial sections of the questionnaire is designed to obtain an overview of each selected case. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A, B and C. Section A dealt with the general background information while section B focused on the individual and workplace factors. Section C of the questionnaire probed the participants on how the organisation should reduce absenteeism.

The set of questions contained in the survey questionnaire was made up of two different styles namely, open-ended questions which allow the respondents to answer the questions in any way and closed-ended questions whereby the respondents choose from the list of predetermined answers provided by the researcher. The use of open and closed-ended questions in this study allowed the combining of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. According to Birmingham (2018:23), refers to this as “concurrent and transformational strategies” which involve data collection using both quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously in the form of a survey or questionnaire containing both styles of questions. The questionnaire was prepared in English as it was assumed that all employees and management members are well versed in it and no communication challenges would be experienced during the study.

The questionnaire focused mainly on a comprehensive set of workplace practices that influence employee attendance and absenteeism. Question one, two, three, four, five, six, and eight were closed ended questions, gathering biographic and demographic information such as the age, gender, marital status, level of education, nature and duration of employment, and number of dependents with the view to understand the demographics of the each and every participant in the study.

Question seven was also a closed-ended item, aimed to ascertain the number of days of absence often taken by the employees per year. Questions nine, ten, and eleven were closed-ended questions, aimed to determine the awareness and effect of the ministerial absence management policy. Question twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, and sixteen were all open and closed. These questions probed the relations between the employees and the employer at the work setting. Questions seventeen and eighteen were closed ended questions seeking to understand the number of unauthorised sick leave days taken by the participants and asked whether they viewed illegal sick leave as an additional entitlement. Question nineteen, was also closed asking if the participants consume alcohol.

Questions 20 and 21 were multiple choice and asked about the common causes and the effect that absenteeism has on employee. Question 22, 23 and 24 were closed, asked whether employees communicate and feel valued by their supervisors. Question 25, asked the relationship with workers

and immediate supervisors. Questions 26 and 27 probed on what motivates the employees come and stay at work. Question 28 was closed, asked the participants to determine the extent they believed absence rates is in the ministry. Questions 29 and 30 asked the relationship between employees and the immediate supervisor. Questions 31 and 32 were multiple choice, asked employees to choose from the given answers of what they thought could reduce absenteeism. Question 33 was an open question seeking views from the participants on reducing absenteeism.

5.5.2. Interview guide

The interview guide to the managerial staff which included supervisors, managers and human resource practitioner contained structured questions (See annexures C and D).

5.6. Ethical Procedures

First of all, the researcher obtained permission where the study was planned to take place. Informed consent forms were given and read to the respondents once the permission had been granted. Participants were asked to sign the consent form before completing the questionnaires and taking part in the interview. The researcher informed the participants through the informed consent forms about the purpose of the research followed by the procedures involved in the study, the activities, the organisers and sponsors of the study. Furthermore, participants were informed right at the beginning about the risks and benefits of their participation in the study and the level of confidentiality being practiced, as well as their rights to choose to participate.

Appointments with regard to interviews were made ahead with the supervisors and human resource practitioners before the data collection started. The administered interviews with each managerial staff took about 10 to 15 minutes while the completion and answering of the questionnaires took three to four days. All completed questionnaires were marked and filed while the interviews responses were written down in a note book.

In addition, the information containing identifiable materials such as names, job designation and addresses were not included in the questionnaire forms. All the questionnaires were anonymous and the information collected was only used for research purposes. The results of the analysis presented in this thesis did not refer to the identity of any particular respondent. The content analysis and generic findings were reported in the thesis with no reference to any particular person. The respondents were told not to write their names on the questionnaire. A special code (unknown) was used to ensure anonymity of the participants. No information collected was given to the participants about the study. Equally, the confidentiality agreement between the researcher and then the field assistant who assisted to hand out the questionnaires to participants was signed to ensure that not even a small piece of information was disclosed to any unauthorised individuals.

5.7. Strengths and limitations

Once the study is completed, the researcher will get a better understanding about the possible reasons and solutions to employee absenteeism. Furthermore, the Ministry of Works and Transport and Government at large will be able to learn from the findings of the study. The management cadre and other senior government officials may use the findings of this study and make informed decisions about employee absenteeism in the public institutions. The study served as a yardstick to prospective scholars who will be interested to carry out researches on employee absenteeism. Equally, the report will be used by other role players such as community development organisation and ordinary members of the public to understand the causes of employee absenteeism at the workplace. In addition, the policy makers, top management and human resource practitioners can make use of the report to reassess the policies and approaches to reduce employee absenteeism.

Furthermore, time management was considered to be a major constraint as the researcher had a full time job and a family to care of and then the study. To overcome this, the researcher drew up a time table that guided him in carrying out the research and adhered to it. The cost was also a constraint as the researcher used his own financial resources to travel to different areas within the constituencies and buy necessary accessories such as USB flash drive and memory sticks and hence pay the taxi fares and field assistant. The major limitation was that the questionnaires were distributed during working hours whereby some respondents were not willing to receive the document thus interrupted the respondent's work.

The next section analyses the data collected. It presents the results of responses as extracted from the research instruments used which are questionnaires as well as structured interviews.

5.8. Presentation of the results

For ease of classification of the data gathered, with the exception of the last question, all were closed ended questions where the respondents would just tick the appropriate response. Separate questionnaires for sectional heads as well as for the human resource practitioners were compiled and all were open-ended questions (see annexure). The objectives of this research study were as follows:

- To define and understand the concept of absenteeism
- To distinguish between planned and unplanned absenteeism.
- To identify the internal and external causes (drivers) of absenteeism at the two selected sites.
- To understand the policy on absenteeism in the ministry of works and transport.
- To establish the extent of absenteeism within the Ministry of Works and Transport, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund.

- To establish whether there is a difference between the factors influencing absenteeism at the two selected stations.
- To make recommendations on improving the situation and decreasing absenteeism in the selected cases.

5.9. Response rate

Table 2. Population response rate

	Non-managerial staff			Managerial staff		
	Total	Windhoek	Swakopmund	Total	Windhoek	Swakopmund
Population size	320	226	94	30	21	9
Sample size	111	68	43	24	16	8
Sample %	35	30	46	80	76,2	89
Population: sample ratio	2,9:1	3,3:1	2,2:1	1,3:1	1,3:1	1,1:1
Response	96	56	40	24	16	8
Response rate %	86,5	82,0	93,0	100	100	100
Sample: response ratio	1,2:1	1,2:1	1,2:1	1:1	1:1	1:1

According to Nyanga (2015:28), a response rate of 30% to 50% or above of the total sample, offers enough information that can be used to generalise the characteristics of a study problem. As indicated in table 2 above, the population was 350 with managerial and non-managerial staff as 320 and 30 respectively. Among the non-managerial, a sample of 68 which constitutes 30% of the population in Windhoek was collected and a sample of 43 which constitutes 46% of the population in Swakopmund was chosen respectively. The managerial staff had 16 sample of the population in Windhoek, thus constituting 76, 2% of the population and a sample of 8 in Swakopmund which constituted 89%. This means in every three members of the non-managerial staff, one staff member was picked for the study.

With regards to the managerial staff, one staff member in every three employees was selected for this study. The response rate of 86.5% for non-managerial and 100% for managerial staff at both Swakopmund and Windhoek were considered suitable for generalising the results of the study. Although the overall population was 350, the study found it suitable to separate the participants into managerial and non-managerial staff at the two selected stations. Even the data collection was different for each group. While the questionnaire was used on the non-managerial staff, on the managerial staff, the administered interview method was used. Therefore, the response rates on both employees and the managerial staff have been considered as being appropriate samples for scrutinising the internal and external factors which influence employee absenteeism.

5.10. Presentation of non-managerial staff

This section present the responses of the non-managerial staff in both quantitative and qualitative methods.

5.10.1. Demographic information

Table 3: Distribution of participants by ages

Age in years	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
20 – 29	10	9	9
30 – 39	35	31	41
40 – 49	31	27	68
50 – 59	35	32	100
Total	111	100	

It was imperative for this study to see if there is a casual link between the phenomenon of absenteeism and the demographic attributes of respondents. The table above groups employees into their respective age categories.

5.10.2. Distribution of participants by Gender

Table 4. Participants by gender

Participants by gender	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Males	49	44	44
Females	62	56	100
Total	111		

Among the participants, there were fifty-six percent (56%) females and forty four percent (44%) were males. This means that more of the respondents surveyed were women as compared to men. The table above groups the participants according to their gender.

5.10.3. Distribution of participants by number of dependants.

Table 5 Number of dependants

No. of dependants	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0 - 1 persons	22	20	20
2 – 3 person	37	33	53
3 – 4 persons	19	17	70
5 or more people	33	30	100
Total	111		

The individual's number of dependants is likely to exert a certain level of influence on an individual's work habits including absenteeism. For example, the higher the number of dependants an individual has, the more likely that the individual will need to devote more time to family issues. As the table above shows the dependency loads as per family was of varying proportions.

5.10.4. Distribution of participants by marital status

Table 6: Distribution of participants by marital status.

Marital status	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Never married	54	48	48
Married	51	47	95
Divorced	5	4	99
Widower	1	1	100
Total	111	100	

The table above presents information on marital status of the participants. By far the highest proportion is the never married employees. All indicated attributes may exert various degrees of influence on the individual's work behaviour.

5.10.5. Distribution of participants by educational qualification

Table 7: Level of education

Highest level of education	Freq.	Percentage	Cum.
Primary school	14	13	13
High school	40	36	49
Degree	6	5	54
Post Graduate	4	4	58
Certificate/Diploma	47	42	100
Total	111	100	

As the table above shows, the participants used in the study were of varying levels of educational qualifications which ranged from the primary school level up to the tertiary one. It was thought that an individual's educational level has a bearing on whether he/she gets a satisfying job. The study had to establish a possible indirect link between one's educational level and absenteeism.

5.10.6. Nature of employment

Table 8: Nature of employment

Nature of employment	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Permanent employment	111	100	100
Part-time employment	0	0.0	100
Total	111	100	-

It was felt by the researcher that one's nature of employment as to whether it was permanent or temporary has an influence on the employee overall perceptions of the job as well as on absenteeism. However, this study accessed only those workers in permanent capacities. See the table above.

5.10.7. Duration of employment

Table 9: Duration of employment

Duration of employment	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0 – 3 years	21	20	20
4 -7 years	18	16	36
8 - 15 years	36	32	68
16 + years	36	32	100
Total	111	100	-

Another issue which the research factored in as a possible determinant on an individual's stance on absenteeism is the duration of employment the individual has had at the institution. The information on an employee's duration is tabulated above.

5.10.8. Absence from work by an employee within a twelve months period

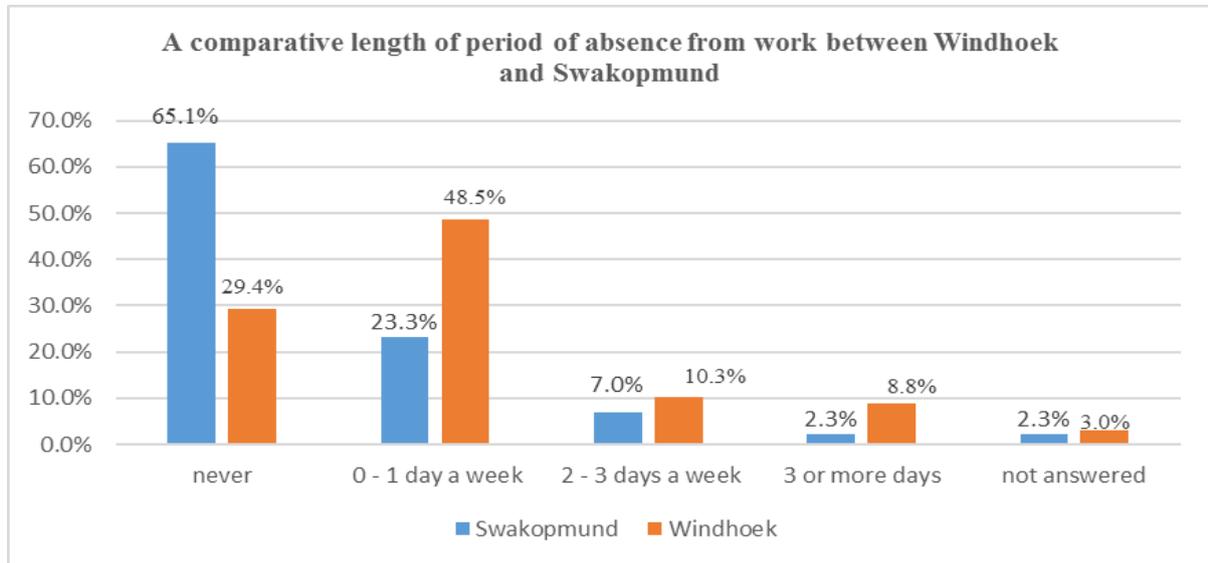


Figure 3. A comparative length of period of absence from work between Windhoek and Swakopmund

This variable sought to gauge the extent of the problem of absenteeism in terms of the length of the period in days per year and per an individual. Although some of the participants did not respond on this, the gathered data show that, on average, it was not a significant factor in order to influence the organisation's overall performance. See the figure 3 above.

5.10.9. Employee awareness about the organisational absenteeism management policy

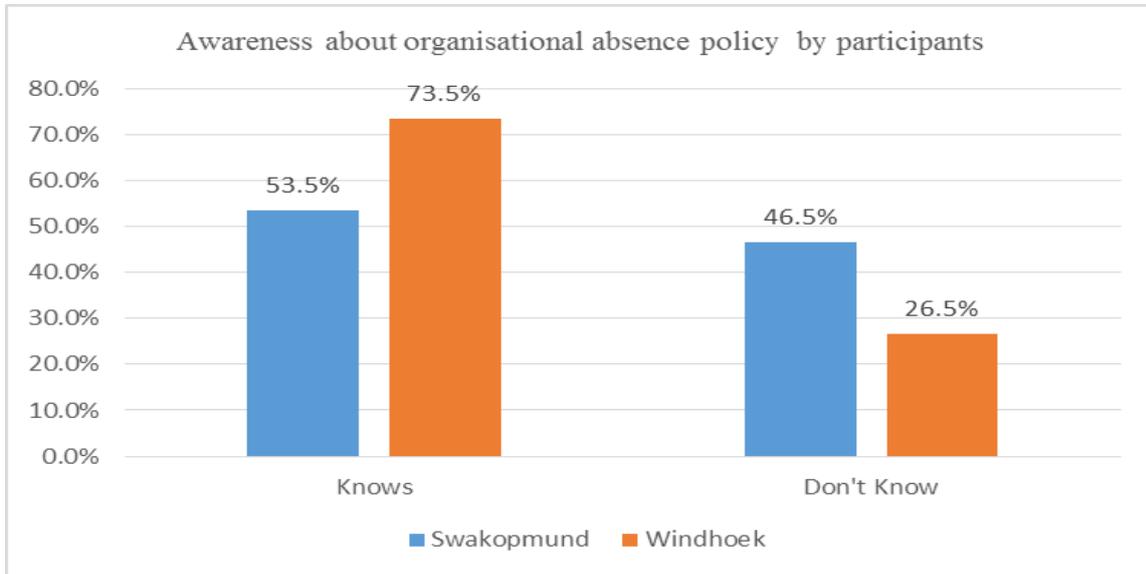


Figure 4. A comparative graph to see how the two stations, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund fare on awareness about absence policy.

5.10.10. Participant’s absence policy awareness by gender.

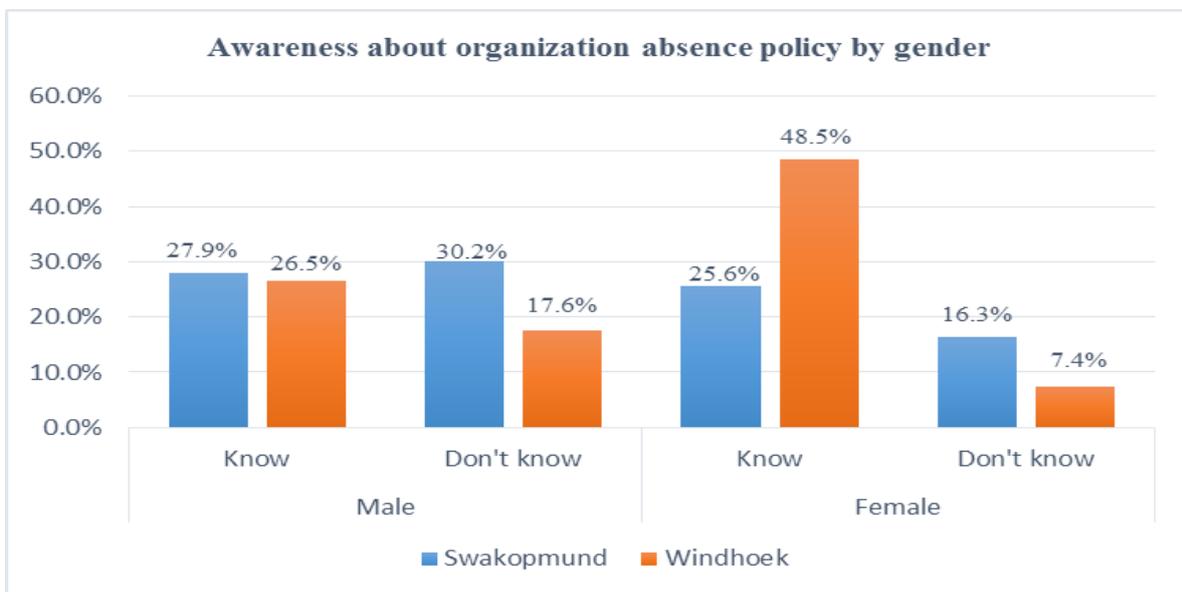


Figure 5: A comparative graph to see how the two stations fare on awareness about absence policy in terms of gender.

The assumption was that a knowledgeable employee is less likely to take actions on work activities which should prejudice either employer or oneself. The study thought to understand which of the two selected stations is well informed about the absence management policy in terms of gender. Women in this study were perceived to have little knowledge about absence policy due to the responsibility at home for caring children thus absent at work compared to their male counterpart. So, employees were

asked to indicate the extent to which they knew their department’s policy on absenteeism. Above are the results.

5.10.11. Employee means of obtaining information on management policy on absenteeism

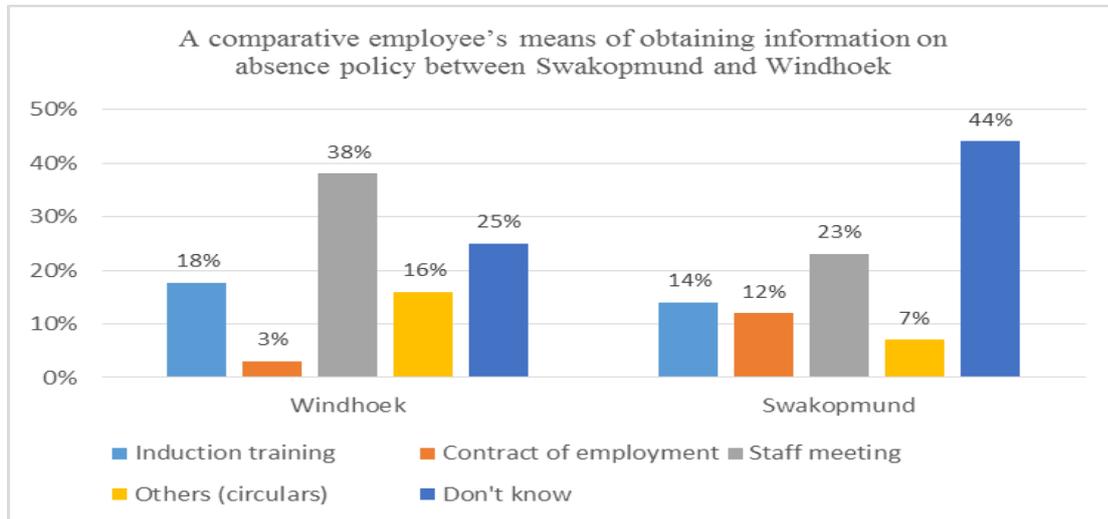


Figure 6: A comparative employee’s means of obtaining information on absence policy between Swakopmund and Windhoek.

The graph above shows that there were different modes of communication the departments used to spread employee awareness of the policy on absenteeism.

5.10.12. Dealing with absenteeism in the organisation

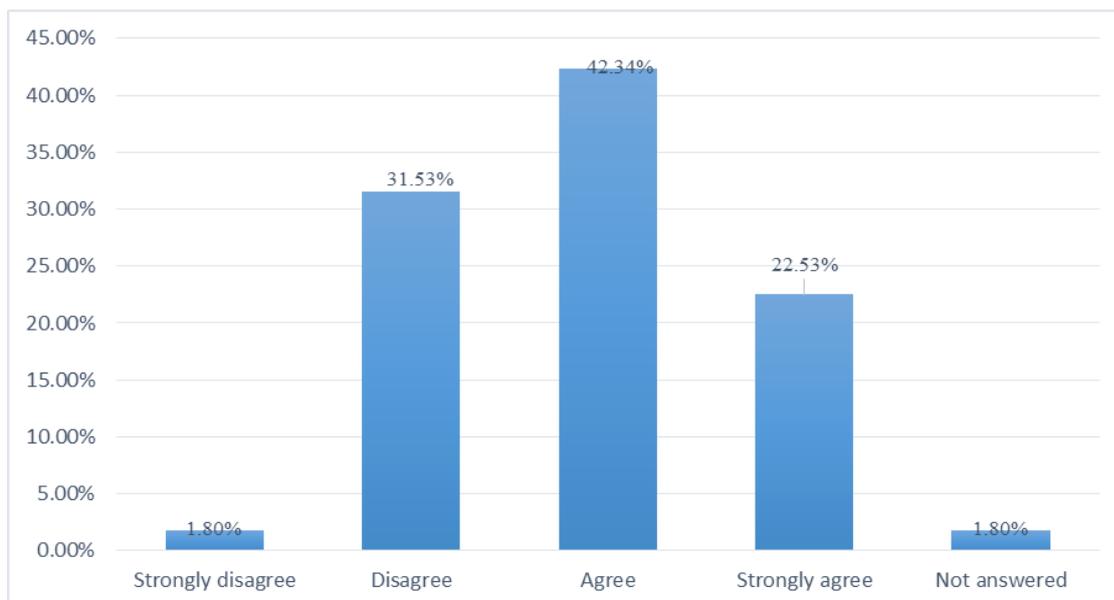


Figure 7: Absenteeism is effectively dealt with in the organisation.

Employees were also asked to evaluate the department’s effectiveness in administering cases concerning absenteeism. There were a lot of discrepancies in their responses. See figure 7 which generalises both Windhoek and Swakopmund stations.

5.10.13. Satisfaction with earnings, work conditions and others

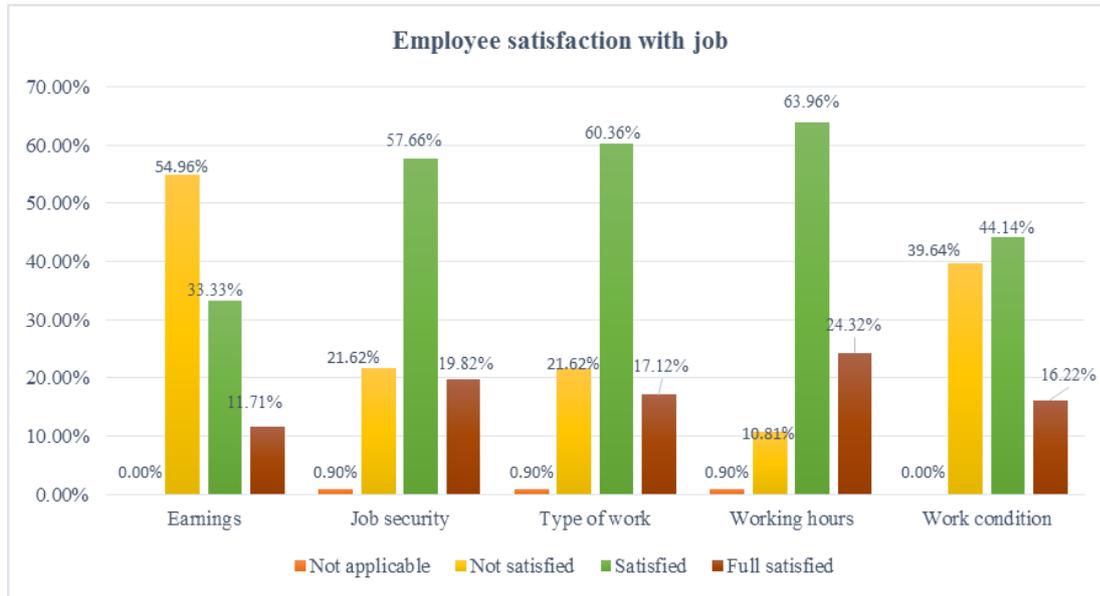


Figure 8. Satisfaction with job security, type and hours of work, earnings and work conditions between Swakopmund and Windhoek.

The above closely related variables were also considered. The employee’s satisfaction with the job has a bearing on the individual’s motivation. So, the research sought to find out if these variables could indirectly impact the worker in terms of absenteeism. The results is presented on the table above.

5.10.14. Unauthorised sick leave days taken per year

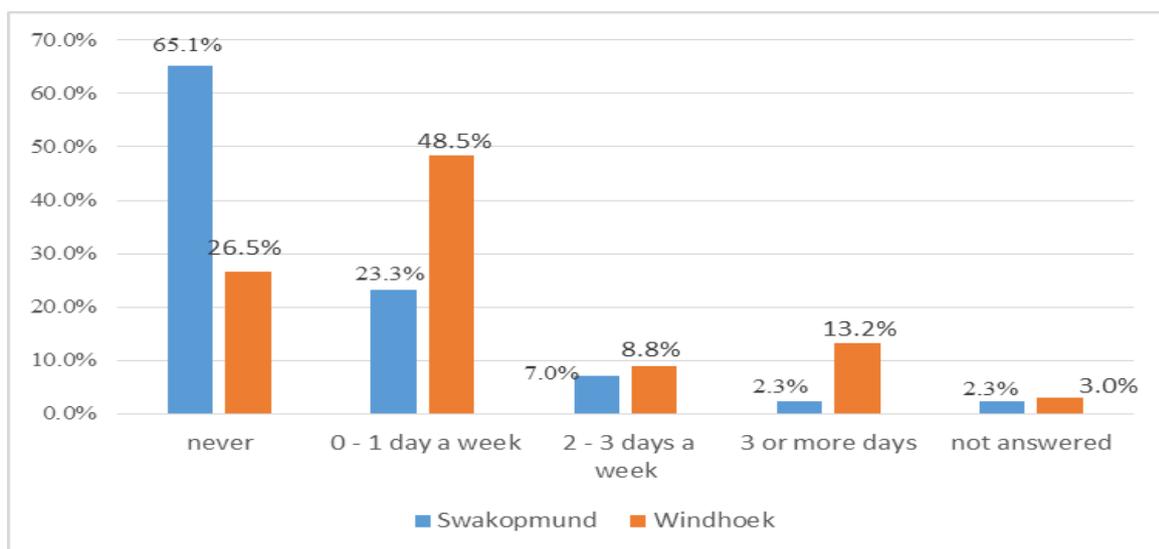


Figure 9. Comparative data on unauthorised sick leave days taken by employees between Windhoek and Swakopmund.

This variable helps the researcher to determine whether employees are abusing this loophole and therefore to what extent this abuse could be. There were varying responses from the participants. However, on average, the study did not come across any major irregularities.

5.10.15. Alcohol consumption

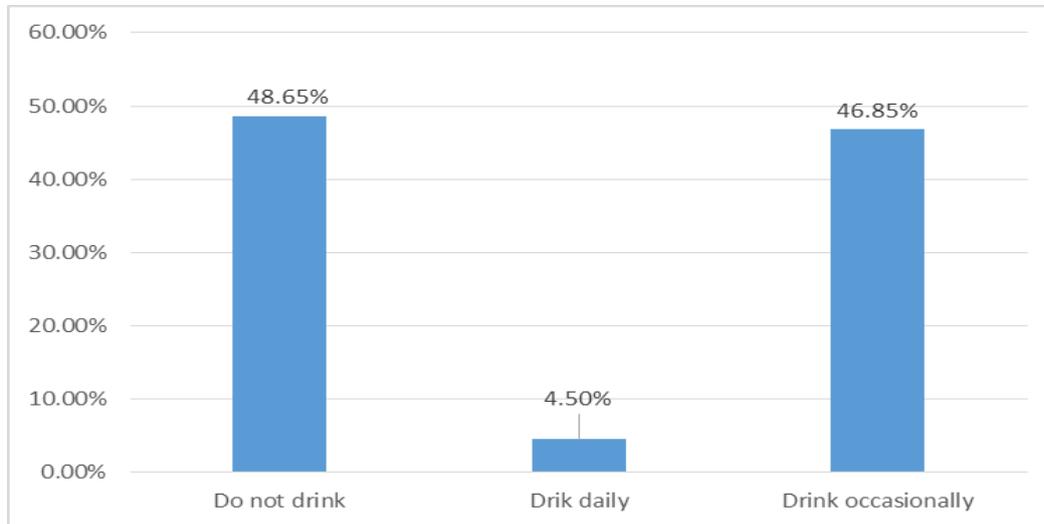


Figure 10: Alcohol consumption among the employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

This was another important area, because alcohol consumption can influence the individual in many different ways such as one's relationship with management, one's attitude towards the job, colleagues, and others. So, the study aimed to determine whether alcohol consumption can contribute to absenteeism at the workplace. Significant enough, about 49% of the respondents indicated that they do not consume alcohol. Forty seven (47%) of the respondents indicated that they consume alcohol on occasional basis. While six percent (6%) of the respondents agreed that they drink alcohol daily.

5.10.16. Employee Motivation

In this study, it was learnt that employee motivation is a significant factor in influencing the employee's overall attitude towards work. Negative tendencies by the employee such as low productivity and absenteeism can be related to employee motivation. So, the following variables were tested in order to determine whether employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport were adequately motivated. This was done through soliciting personal opinions from the employees.

- **The organisation's promotion policy**

Significantly enough, about 73% of the respondents down-graded the role of promotion as a motivating factor of work attendance. Only 27% agreed that promotion motivates the employees. However, compared to other variables, promotion prospects seem to have noticeable influence on motivation.

- **Challenging work as a factor for motivation**

In the same way as above, most respondents contradicted with the conventional view that a job which is regarded as challenging acts as an intrinsic motivating factor to the employee. Only 29% of the participants supported this view. However, compared with other variables, this factor can be regarded as important in motivating an employee.

- **Feeling valued as a motivating factor**

Again, 78% percent contradicted this view. There were only twenty-two respondents who regarded this as a possible source of motivation.

- **Recognition by the employer of job well done**

This view was supported by 55% of the respondents. In the same vain, employees did not consider praise from the management could be significant in motivating the worker. Only 18% supported it.

5.10.17. The common causes of employee absenteeism

In this study, participants were asked to select from the listed common causes of employee absenteeism. These included illness, work related injuries, family responsibilities, transport challenges, alcohol related illness, distance to work, work related stress, size of work group, supervision style, work type, age of the employee, weather condition and job satisfaction.

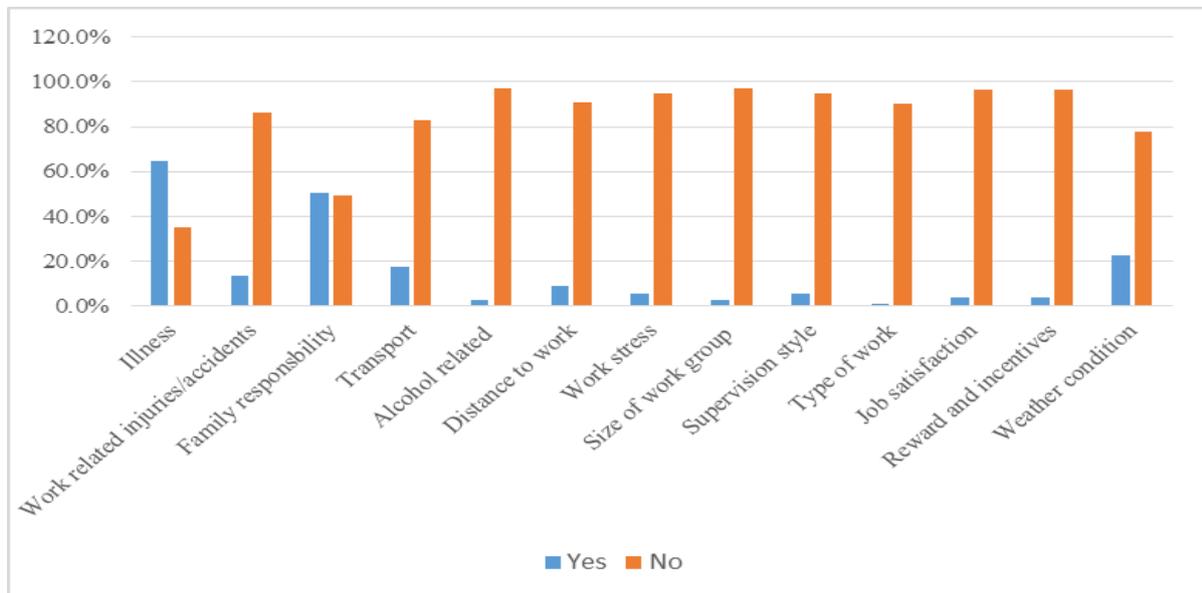


Figure 11. Perceived reasons of employee absenteeism

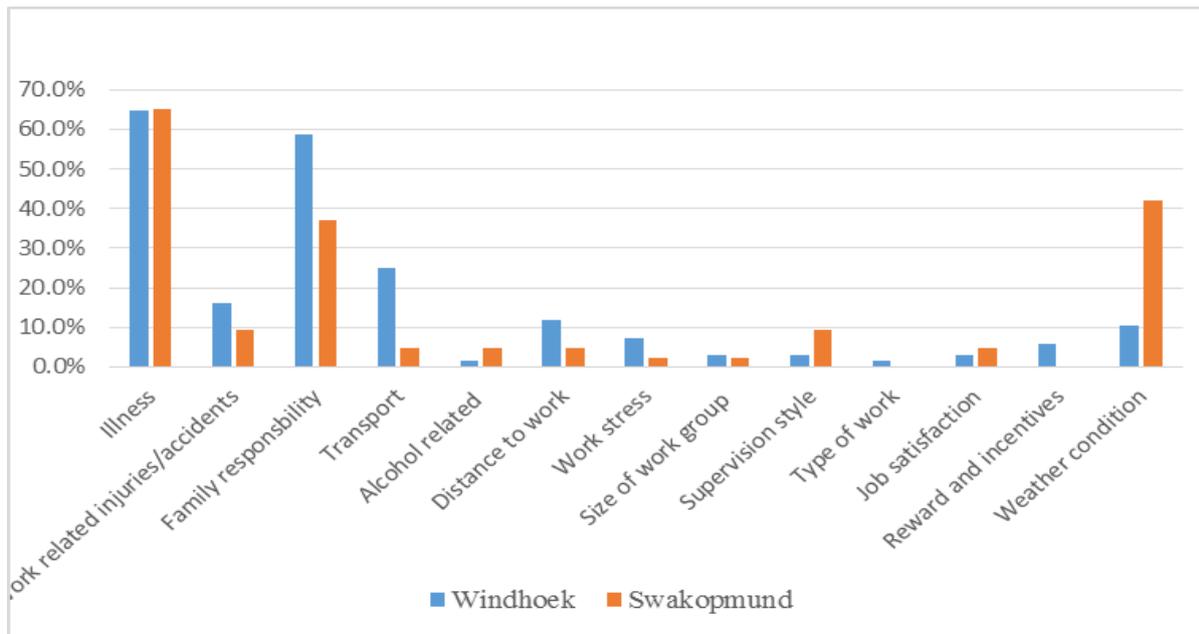


Figure 12. Comparative causes of employee absenteeism between Swakopmund and Windhoek

- **Illness of the employee**

The “yes” answers constituted 65% of the sample. This is a significant proportion and it cut across all the age groups.

- **Work - related injuries**

Only a small proportion cited this as having led to their absence. The score on this in Windhoek was fairly higher than the one in Swakopmund.

- **Family responsibilities**

On average, female employees were affected more than their counterparts. A significant proportion claimed that family responsibilities is a major factor in a person’s absence. These comprised fifty percent (50%) of the sample.

- **Transport challenges**

Eighty three percent (83%) reported that transport issues do not have much effect on their reasons for absenteeism. It was more of a problem in Windhoek than in Swakopmund.

- **Alcohol related illness**

Ninety-seven percent (97%) gave negative responses in whether this variable could have been responsible for absenteeism. Most positive responses came from male employees than their counterparts.

- **Distance to work**

Again an overwhelming number of 90% claimed that distance from work did not have any influence in instances of absenteeism both in Windhoek and Swakopmund respectively.

- **Work related stress**

This was also not a significant factor. Only six percent (6%) confirmed as being affected by this.

- **Size of work group**

It had a ninety seven percent “no” answers. So, it means it does not have any influence at all.

- **Supervision style**

Again, only five percent reported to being affected by the supervisor’s approach to subordinates.

- **Work type**

Only one percent reported as having gone absent at work due to work type. It was an employee who had been employed by the ministry for barely a year.

- **Age of the employee**

This was reported as having no influence on employee absenteeism. It was a hundred percent “no”.

- **Weather conditions**

Twenty one percent had positive answers on whether weather conditions had any bearing on their absence from work. Significantly, 41% of the “yes” answers came from Swakopmund.

- **Job satisfaction**

This also had four percent responses from the respondents who admitted that lack of job satisfaction influences them to go on absence.

5.10.18. Effective solutions in reducing employee absenteeism

Finally, the study required employees to indicate whether according to their opinion, the following suggested solutions could be effective in reducing the problem of absenteeism. These include job rotation, availability of transport, work stress, health promotion programme, reward and incentive, as well as strong supervision and management.

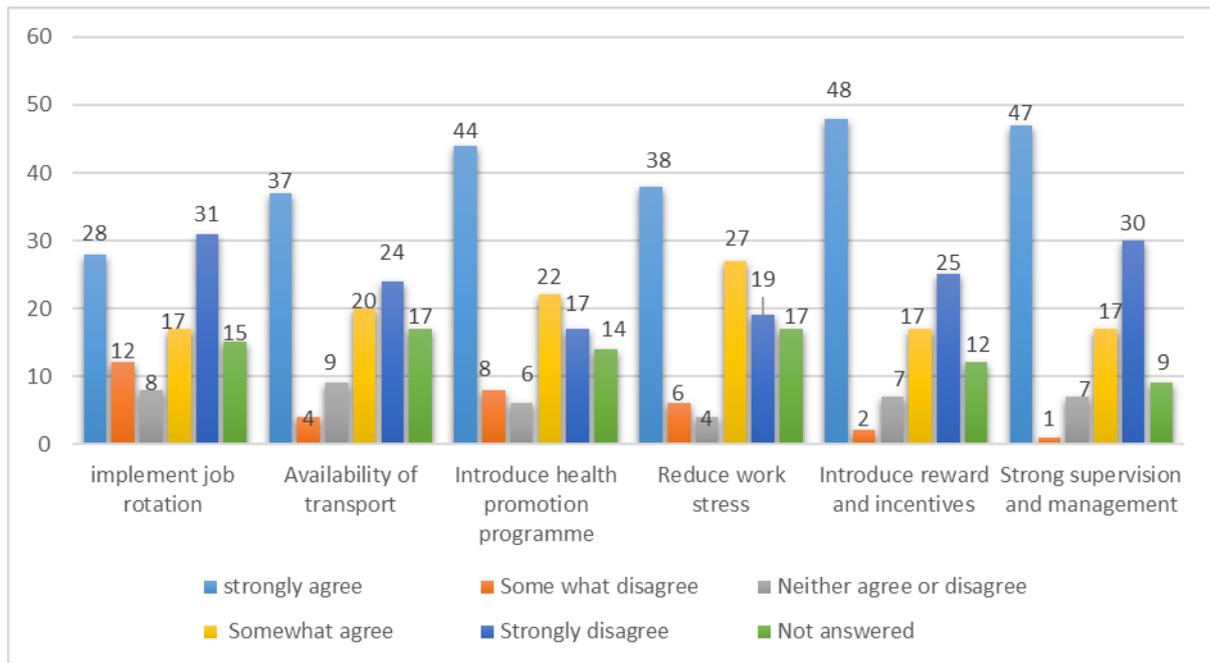


Figure 13: Designated factors to reduce employee absenteeism.

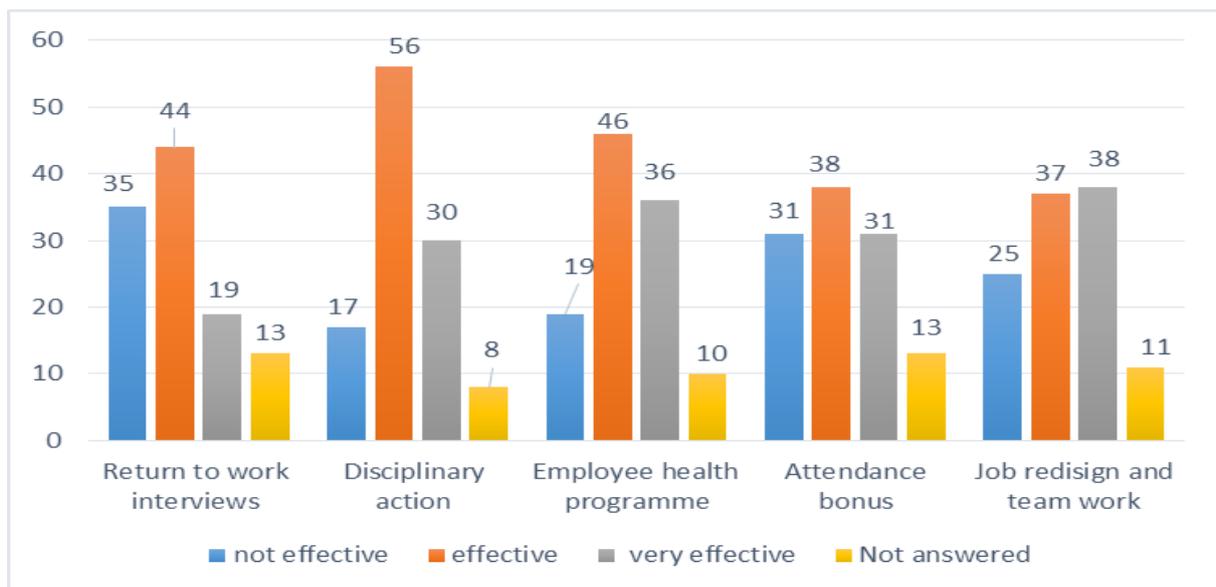


Figure 14: Effective policies in reducing employee absenteeism.

- **Implementation of a job rotation system**

A significant proportion of the respondents did not rate this positively on agree and disagree scale on the questionnaire. Only twelve respondents held a strong negative view that such a factor could not have a positive influence on absenteeism.

- **Availability of transport as a solution to reduce absenteeism.**

Seventeen of the employees did not respond to this. On the agree/disagree scale, more respondents chose the agree options, with varying degrees of emphasis.

- **Introducing health promotion schemes as a solution to absenteeism.**

One of the reasons for absenteeism which was both revealed by this research and supported by the literature review is absence on medical grounds. The study therefore sought to find out if introducing a department-specific health scheme could lessen absenteeism. Also on the agree/disagree scale, 31 of respondents indicated more support of this to be a solution.

- **Reduction of work related stress as a solution to absenteeism.**

Seventeen of the participants did not respond to this. However, on those who responded, the greater proportion did support this suggestion. Only six respondents disagreed.

- **Introduce reward and incentives for outstanding performance.**

65 of the respondents supported this view. Only two respondents would not support this view. Twelve respondents did not respond to this suggestion while seven of the respondents indicated neither agree nor disagree respectively.

- **Return to work interviews**

Again, a significant proportion of the participants responded that it would be an effective approach. Only thirty-five respondents disagreed with it as an effective policy. With the exception of the thirteen participants who did not respond, the rest indicated varying degrees of support on the effective/ineffective scale.

- **Disciplinary action**

A majority responded that this could be a deterrent approach. Only seventeen respondents thought it would not be effective.

- **Job re-designing**

On average, this approach was supported by a majority of the participants.

5.10.19. Employee's propositions to the management in order to reduce absenteeism.

This question sought to find out the solutions to the absenteeism problem. As such, the research solicited the views from the participants which could help the employer to reduce absenteeism among the employees and staff. Below are the opinions from the participants:

- i. Introduce workshops and training
- ii. Introduce reward and incentive systems.
- iii. Practice respect and equal treatment of workers.
- iv. Support employees with regard to work activities and private affairs through counselling services.
- v. Involve employees in planning and decision-making.
- vi. Enforce effective communication and supervision.
- vii. Increase access to health programmes and services at the workplace.

- viii. Keep employee records on absenteeism.
- ix. Apply unpaid leave to regular offenders of absenteeism.
- x. Provide transport to low paid staff.

5.11. Presentation of managerial data (supervisors and managers).

After the compilation and scrutiny of the findings from the employees in both locations, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund, the focus of the study then shifted to the supervisors/management level and below are the responses to the issues the research raised. In this case, symbol A refers to respondent one, B refers to respondent 2, C refers to respondent 3 and D refers to respondent 4 and so it comes up with the letter P.

- **The respondents in this category were asked of what they understand about the meaning of absenteeism? The following were the responses from the managers.**
 - a. *Voluntary non-attendance, no valid reasons and without informing supervisor.*
 - b. *Employee who stay out of work with no arrangement/permission with supervisor, no completion of a leave form.*
 - c. *A worker who did not come at work and did not apply for sick leave*
 - d. *Having often stayed away from work.*
 - e. *Absenteeism is corruption because it is a waste of tax payer's money as the workers still getting paid by doing nothing for the government.*
 - f. *Employee absenteeism is to stay away from work without approved leave or permission or making arrangement with supervisor.*
 - g. *Absenteeism is simple to dodge the work.*
 - h. *Missing the work as planned.*
 - i. *Employee absenteeism is when a worker did not report on duty as scheduled.*
 - j. *Absenteeism is when a worker did not report to work.*
 - k. *In my opinion, employee absenteeism is when a worker do not seek for permission from the supervisor for miss the working.*
 - l. *Absenteeism simply means a worker who failed to go to work due to other reasons.*
 - m. *Absenteeism is when a person who is in contract with someone in terms of employment decide to stay home and neglect his/her duty.*
 - n. *The practice of regularly staying away from work without a reason or leave.*
 - o. *Staying away from work without a leave.*
 - p. *A worker who don't come to work as expected is absenteeism*

- **Respondents' were asked whether they feel that employee absence from workplace is a serious problem in your division. Below are responses.**

- a. Yes, it gives burden to division and remaining staff thus reduce productivity.*
- b. Yes, work stand still.*
- c. Yes, employees are not motivated and loose interest*
- d. Yes, absence affects daily activities because no one will do the job.*
- e. No, not in my division, but in other divisions, because some staff members are attending to their own business, like taxi driving and also report once to their office a week. Not filling in the attendance register correctly.*
- f. Yes, because it will affect the productivity at the working place and may lead to poor performance.*
- g. Yes, it's a serious problem as the existing absence policy and laws seems to support employees than employer.*
- h. It is a serious challenge as there are no people to perform work.*
- i. Yes, especially in the category of blue collar personnel.*
- j. It is a serious issue especially at our divisions. Workers fail to report to work, some are coming late and leave early. While others are seeking for permission to attend to their family matters.*
- k. Several workers around have the tendency of skipping their work schedule which is a problem by doing so.*
- l. It is serious problem because there will be no progress in the work activities and programmes if workers are not there to execute their duties.*
- m. Yes it is a very thorny challenge which ranges from the management and workers at some workplace.*
- n. Yes, because staff members stay away regularly from the work without valid reasons while the work schedule remains behind the time.*
- o. Yes, because the more employees are absent, the less the work is being done. This affects the output or work performance of the division. It also affects the performance of those employees who are hard at work and dedicated.*
- p. Yes, many organisations are faced with this problem as it dwindles the money of the company.*

- **The respondents were also asked if they discuss the reasons with a staff member on absenteeism when he/she misses the work schedule. Below are responses.**

- a. Yes, by counselling and discipline the workers..*
- b. Yes, the staff member is asked to give reasons why she or he was absent. If the staff member does not change, then an immediate supervise is called as witnesses for a verbal warning.*
- c. N/A*

- d. *Yes.*
- e. *Yes, workers are told to inform supervisors when they plan to be absent at work and if they are booked off by the doctor, they should come with a medical certificate as a proof.*
- f. *Yes, because it is necessary to know what causes absenteeism among the staff members in order to ensure that necessary support is provided to the staff member or to make him/her aware of the government policy.*
- g. *Yes, because such a staff member has caused disturbance in the daily activities as such, the worker will be called to hear the reasons for his absence.*
- h. *Yes, but workers know the weakness of the absence policy in the government thus takes advantage of that.*
- i. *Yes, but even if you call a worker and remind him/her about the consequences of absenteeism, after few days the same thing happens. This is because a worker knows his/her rights in terms of labour relations.*
- j. *Yes, we do talk to them if he or she did not show up for work then a warning letter is issued against the offender.*
- k. *We discuss about absenteeism and its effect with the workers who failed to show up to the party (work).*
- l. *This issue has been there before and it is still ongoing probably due to the workers who are empowered about their rights in employment.*
- m. *I myself, like to observe my subordinates including the workforce. According to my experience, when a worker misses the work and you as a supervisor you don't query such a worker, then you are creating a monster that tomorrow you will not able to control the staff member.*
- n. *Yes, I do talk to my subordinates, but sometimes employees do not have valid reasons.*
- o. *Yes, I discuss with the workers who try to play truancy.*
- p. *Yes, those employees who have a problem of absenteeism, we bring them to task and if possible fill in unpaid leave.*

- **The respondents were asked whether the introduction of absence management policy had an impact on their roles as managers. The following are the responses.**

- a. *N/A*
- b. *When a staff member makes himself guilty of misconduct.*
- c. *N/A*
- d. *People continue to break the rules.*
- e. *I personally think that this policy is not effective enough, because a lot of employees are sometimes busy with their own business around town.*
- f. *It makes my role easier to deal with absenteeism.*

- g. *The policy is very complicated in terms of hiring and firing of workers who don't come to work.*
- h. *Not really, it makes my job difficult especially when applying the discipline, there are too many issues to consider.*
- i. *It is not helping us a lot since there are too many procedures to follow before punishing a worker for absenteeism.*
- j. *In fact, it impacted very little. Employees are still going absent despite the rules in places. This is not the weakness of the supervisors but rather the system in which we operate.*
- k. *It enabled me as a supervisor to deter the worker against absenteeism at the work place and possible loss of job.*
- l. *Very little, it only brought issues between the employer and the representatives of the employees (trade union).*
- m. *It gave me power to control my workers easily, but democracy is the problem because it gives to much rights in every aspect.*
- n. *It gives guidance on how to deal with employees' absenteeism in terms of decision making.*
- o. *The policy impacted very well in our management role because it keeps our work at standard and give us right and be able to solve issues at the workplace.*
- p. *The policy did not impact very well on my role as a supervisor.*

- **Respondents were asked if they feel confident in implementing the absence policy. Below are the answers.**

- a. *Never hear of it, I only know public service code of conduct staff rule.*
- b. *–I am not familiar with the policy you are talking about.*
- c. *Which policy? The Public Service Staff Rules (PSSR), this policy is very clear.*
- d. *Yes, it brings the best of service delivery.*
- e. *Yes, but what counts for one must count for all employees, including the management.*
- f. *Yes, it guides every staff member in the public service.*
- g. *No, the policy is more biased because it protects the workers too much and expose the employer.*
- h. *I don't think so, like I said, when one would like to punish the offender there are too much things to take into consideration. For example disciplinary procedures.*
- i. *No, I don't feel confident because once you stop a salary of a worker, you must expect legal challenge.*
- j. *Not really, there are too many procedures to follow when dealing or discipline a staff member at work.*
- k. *I feel confident when I reprimand the workers to seek for permission to be absent at work.*

- l. I don't feel confident because every time I am afraid to be taken to court of law by the workers once I fully implement it against the workers.*
- m. Somehow I feel confident because it helps me to achieve my intended goals.*
- n. No, the efficient and affectiveness of the policy is violated as top level management may act unfairly on some individual.*
- o. No, because it depends on your supervision style, there after implementing it effectively. Sometimes even you implement the policy it may affect you negatively.*
- p. Sometimes, I don't feel good especially when a worker did not come to work, thus put the policy into effect.*

• **The respondents were asked their relationship with employees. below are the answers**

- a. It's good.*
- b. Fair, understandable and healthy*
- c. Good. Tries to solve their problems of human beings*
- d. Good relations. We are like a family.*
- e. The relationships between me and employees is very respectful, because we are greeting each other in the morning. I ask them how they are feeling. When it comes to distributing job cards, I am also fair in that matter, treating them equal.*
- f. Yes, human resource department carry all of our personal matter with good relations.*
- g. The relationship between me and workers sometimes is good but sometimes is very poor due to work activities.*
- h. Pretty well.*
- i. Me and my subordinates we talk to each other very well. Sometimes we as supervisors we sit between the rock and a hard surface. This is because when you strictly implement the rules and regulations your subordinates tend to dislike you. So we intend to relax our powers given by the policy.*
- j. Very good.*
- k. The relationship is fair.*
- l. It is not so bad but very much accommodative.*
- m. I am ok with the people around here. We communicate to each other, which is good in terms of life.*
- n. Sometimes working with a human being is the worst environment since there is always good things and bad moments.*
- o. It varies. Sometimes when you correct them they get angry (workers) and the relationship becomes bad. Sometimes when they want favour, they bring peace and relationship becomes good.*
- p. The relations its fine, only sometimes when it becomes sour.*

- **Respondents were asked whether they feel supported by human resource department, and if so why? Below are the answers**
 - a. *No-we don't get information about human resource and absence management policy.*
 - b. *N/A.*
 - c. *Yes, HRD supports us when there is a case of misconduct*
 - d. *Not yet.*
 - e. *Yes, especially when it concerns the leave applications. But when you need their support concerning misconduct, it takes too long to respond.*
 - f. *Yes, human resource department carries our work related and personal matters.*
 - g. *I don't think so, because when you report incidences of absenteeism it takes too long to get the reply. Except in the cases of circulars.*
 - h. *They do support when you ask them to do something, but takes long time.*
 - i. *Yes, if there is a vacant post that we would like to fill, we normally request through human resource department to fill the vacant positions.*
 - j. *Yes, human resource department supports us in recruiting new staff on our establishment and address some of the issues such as the benefits in the public service.*
 - k. *Yes, they support us by giving us circulars with regard to our jobs.*
 - l. *Sometimes, but not always.*
 - m. *Sometimes yes, but the human resource department do not respond in time when offices are asking for assistance with regard to staff development, recruitment and discipline.*
 - n. *No because I have never seen the actions based on the previous absenteeism records from human resource department.*
 - o. *No, because we don't receive support from human resource department in implementing the work related policy.*
 - p. *Not really, as there are still pending cases of absenteeism at my workplace with human resource department.*

- **The participants were asked if they ever had to deal with a situation where absence was abused and how they dealt with the situation. Below are responses.**
 - a. *Yes, one-to-one counselling interview. Written warning letters after three warnings, recommended for disciplinary hearing.*
 - b. *Yes, we deal with HR office*
 - c. *Yes, employee absent for whole month*
 - d. *Not yet.*

- e. *Yes, I and my supervisor gave several staff members a verbal warning, if the staff member continue with the same behaviour, we give him or her either a verbal or written warning. If he/she still continues with the behaviour she/she will be transferred to another workshop.*
- f. *Yes, call the staff member and ask the reason of not coming to work. This ensures necessary support is provided e.g. Training and if the staff member do not change I will be left with no choice but to consult government policy.*
- g. *Yes, by calling those staff members who are involved and tell them about the rules and regulation of public service act with regard to absence and consequences thereof.*
- h. *Yes, by counselling those who are always absent.*
- i. *You see, there are times when those employees who are always present at work intent to dodge their workplaces. Once this happens, you immediately call a worker concerned and address the issue.*
- j. *Yes, I called the worker and asked him why he did not come to work the previous two to three days. A worker replied, I was sick but I don't have a medical certificate since I was treated by a traditional healer. This answer, convinced me and then I let the staff member to fill and sign for paid leave absence.*
- k. *Not yet, maybe in future.*
- l. *In my division there are several workers who have this problem. What we do is to counsel them about the importance of the work and productivity at work.*
- m. *Yes, when you come across with such a situation, it's good to start with a verbal warning, written warning and final to enforce discipline among the workers.*
- n. *Yes, I called a staff member upon return and discuss and seek for any reason or proof. If no proof a staff member is required to fill the unpaid leave application.*
- o. *Yes. I call the employee so that we can discuss the issue. Then, I explain the effect of absenteeism and advice the employee the possible solution to reduce absenteeism, then, if the employee does not understand, I take the issue to my supervisor so that we can discuss about the issue and find the amicable solution.*
- p. *Yes, a worker who miss work is punished.*

- **Respondents were asked what they believe are the main causes of absence within their division/station. Below are the responses.**

- a. *Illness, disagreement, child care and death of family member.*
- b. *Serious illness (by doctor), compassionate leave (death in the family), study leave.*
- c. *No budget due to job cut, no strict control over employees, illness and laziness.*
- d. *Disagreement between supervisor and subordinates, family stress, overload of work.*

- e. *I don't have a problem in my division concerning absence. But I believe the cause is a lack of respect, responsibility of supervisors not checking the attendance register daily and see to it that the staff members staying at their workplace.*
- f. *Poverty, competency, alcohol abuse, gender violence and carelessness or laziness.*
- g. *Lack of activities at workplace, parents attend to a child when he/she is sick thus absenteeism is committed.*
- h. *Lack of motivation due to poor salaries, promotion and morale.*
- i. *The causes of absenteeism involves issues such as caring the young ones at home. There are times when you, as a parent, you are forced to remain home with the aim to take care a sick child.*
- j. *Workers are ignorant by not figuring out what will be the work activities the next day. Furthermore, lack of internal control measures by the supervisor.*
- k. *Sickness, lack of motivation and challenging work.*
- l. *Sleeping late during the weekdays due to alcohol, disloyalty to the employer and poor monitoring of attendance by the supervisors.*
- m. *Lack of knowledge about what activities should be done in the next day and also problems like families.*
- n. *Sickness, family problems and financial problems.*
- o. *Lack of taxi fare to come to work, marital related issues, lack of interest in work and family problems.*
- p. *Family, sickness and work disengagement.*

- **Respondents were asked to mention the major cost incur by their organisation when employees are absent from work. Below are the responses.**

- a. *Overtime cost.*
- b. *-N/A*
- c. *N/A.*
- d. *Poor service delivery*
- e. *Again, it is waste of tax payer's money, it is also not a good thing because employees are giving bad name for the government. People and the media are talking.*
- f. *Low productivity.*
- g. *Money is lost in the form absenteeism as a worker is paid a salary while he/she did not attend work.*
- h. *It causes extra cost to the employer because people are paid even though they did not do any work.*
- i. *You see, when supervisors say sometimes public fund has been wasted for paying the work which was not done.*

- j. For the past decades government have been paying millions of dollars emanating from absenteeism.*
- k. Loss in income and production.*
- l. Billions of dollars are lost on absenteeism alone.*
- m. Decreased production and funds within a particular company.*
- n. Increased cost with poor production, increased workload and supervision as well as paying extra money for staff member who did not do the work.*
- o. Poor performance at work, conflict among employees and no output.*
- p. The company loses money to pay for the workers on absenteeism.*

- **The respondents were asked if the employees work extra load to cover the duties of other workers who are absent. Below are the answers.**

- a. Yes.*
- b. –*
- c. Yes, they deal with extra work.*
- d. No, unless it is emergency.*
- e. No, due to a lack of materials in most of the divisions. Therefore, they are not staying in their workshop or offices. Rather attending to their private activities, like driving their own taxi.*
- f. Yes, because two hands is better than one. That is why team work is encouraged at the working place.*
- g. Those workers who are present at work will do extra work to cover for the absentee.*
- h. They work extra work load in order to cover the work of those who are absent and this causes stress to the workers.*
- i. Yes, workers do talk about those workers who just receiving salaries without doing anything. This frustrates them and end up stressed.*
- j. Yes, which is why some of the workers are complaining about the workload posed to them while they get the same salary like those at home.*
- k. Yes, they do otherwise, the work activities could be piled.*
- l. Yes, because it is the only thing any manager will do to ensure there is progress in the production.*
- m. When other workers did not come to work, it is obvious that those workers who are present have to cover all the activities planned on that day.*
- n. Yes, workers who are present do a lot of work to cover the daily activities or programme.*
- o. Yes.*
- p. They do extra work.*

5.11.1. Presentation of managerial data (Human Resources Practitioners).

This section present the results on the interview conducted with the Human Resources Practitioners on the absenteeism.

- **The respondents were interrogated if their ministry introduced a comprehensive absence management policy since 1995. And if so, how successful has the policy been since the implementation?**
 - a. *Policy not yet active because members are still going through Absent without Official Leave (AWOL).*
 - b. *Has not been successful. Steps to make it effective should be taken*
 - c. *No, absenteeism is still rife*
 - d. *No, the policy has not really been successful as it is not monitored occasionally or quarterly.*
 - e. *The policy has been a success, the number of absenteeism has been reduced and staff members know the consequences of absenteeism.*
 - f. *The policy has been working.*
 - g. *Yes, statistics shows that absenteeism figure has decreased significantly.*
 - h. *I don't think the policy was successful as to date, the ministry is experiencing absenteeism among the staff members mostly at every division in the ministry at large.*
 - i. *The policy is fine, but the people don't want to follow the rule and regulation of public service.*

- **The participants were asked if they understand the aims of the policy. Below are answers.**
 - a. *To provide mechanisms for absence management*
 - b. *Ensure adequate staffing: positive employee morale; meet expected standards; ensure accountability on the part of employees.*
 - c. *To manage and monitor absenteeism and to improve productivity*
 - d. *To reduce absenteeism, increase performance management and to boost performance and employee morale*
 - e. *To reduce absenteeism, educate employees about the value of their present at work.*
 - f. *The aim of the policy was to ensure that staff absence is kept to a minimum through effective management.*
 - g. *To improve employees' attendance by addressing employee health and wellbeing, it outlines the mechanisms to help employees' wellbeing in the workplace.*
 - h. *To help reduce absenteeism.*
 - i. *To ensure there is mechanism for absence management policy in the departments.*

- **Participants were asked if the policy was clear to understand. Below are the answers.**

- The policy is clear, however, staff should make effort to understand it.*
- Yes.*
- Yes, the policy is clear and simple to learn.*
- Not really, the policy was implemented but employees were not informed well about the policy. The employees in lower level positions do not know the existence of the policy.*
- Yes, it is clear.*
- Yes, it helps employees understand their sickness absence rights and responsibility.*
- The policy was explained to all the staff members within the ministry.*
- One can say perhaps the policy is not clear to understand, because there is no change since the implementation.*
- Not really.*

- **Respondents were asked if there is any need to amend the policy. Below are the answers.**

- “I don’t think so, in fact most of them have now been amended. It is also clear and easy to understand. Staff members should just be aware of the rules”*
- “Yes”*
- “Yes the policy makers should put more emphasis on the policies and management control”*
- No amendments needed as most of them have been changed.*
- No, because there is nothing to worry about the policy at the moment.*
- Yes, training should be provided to employees and a committee should be appointed to observe the progress of the policy on a quarterly basis.*
- Yes, employee absence to be dealt with in a way that no discrimination to all the employees and should be done in accordance with the public service commitment to equality.*
- No, at the moment one need ample time to think of what other amendments are needed.*
- Change the whole policy as it favours workers than employer.*

- **Respondents were asked to mention what they believe are the main reasons for absence within the Ministry of Works and Transport. Below are the answers.**

- Lack of motivation. Top management only mind about themselves, go abroad for training, employees and lower level management are left out.*
- Disengagement of employees; low motivation; low workplace morale; work environment is conflict ridden; employees not respected; no employee involvement in decision-making.*
- Not much work because of the budget cuts so employees have little work to do.*
- Alcohol abuse, boredom, some employees come to work but don’t have work to do, so they would rather stay home.*

- e. *Stress is one of the main reason for absence within the ministry, low morale and feelings of being unappreciated*
- f. *Lack of monitoring from supervisors, lack of resources to perform work duties and supervisors not setting examples*
- g. *Stress and low workplace morale, disengagement and bullying or harassment problems.*
- h. *It is because people are resistant to change. Alcohol is the main reason for absence and the government is not willing to increase salary of its employees, no taxi money for the staff member to come to work.*
- i. *Poor supervision style*

• **The respondents were further asked, if the opinion given above were based on research, records or personal opinion. Below are the answers.**

- a. *Not research. It is clear to see for oneself.*
- b. *Personal opinion.*
- c. *Personal opinion*
- d. *Personal opinion, I deal with misconduct and due to my previous misconduct cases I have dealt with, I have realised it.*
- e. *Personal observation*
- f. *It is based on personal opinion.*
- g. *Personal opinion*
- h. *Personal opinion not based on research.*
- i. *Personal opinion*

• **Participants were asked what they believe are the main factors affecting a person's motivation to attend. Below are the answers.**

- a. *Encouragement, remuneration, no racism, no favouritism.*
- b. *Promotion to employees when deserving; ensure salary increment every year.*
- c. *Management control, weather, and alcohol abuse.*
- d. *Good working relationships, increased morale, recognition of achievement, and development opportunities.*
- e. *Accountability and being part of the decision making.*
- f. *Performance appraisal.*
- g. *Monetary compensation or salaries, promotion opportunities, good managerial relations*
- h. *Supervisors sometimes although not in many cases can affect a person's motivation to attend.*
- i. *Too much work for one person is a problem because you are abusing the staff member and they feel exploited.*

- **The participants were asked whether workplace stress is a contributor to absenteeism within their organisation. Below are the responses.**
 - a. *Yes, when you are doing something and your supervisor is not happy with it, he will stress you. Most of the management in this ministry don't want to do their own work, they always ask for us to do it on their behalf and this can as well stress us.*
 - b. *Yes, when people are stressed, they cannot be happy, thus production goes low*
 - c. *Yes, there is sometimes stress and tension among management and their subordinates which might cause some staff members to loose respect on their supervisors and deny their instructions which might cause absenteeism due to disrespect.*
 - d. *Yes, lack of work causes stress that leads to absenteeism, not being applauded for good work results in absenteeism.*
 - e. *No, because there are no cases reported or employees booked off by a medical doctor due to stress.*
 - f. *It is a very big issue that needs an urgent intervention because absenteeism affect productivity negatively.*
 - g. *Yes, employees who are under extreme stress due to work or personal reasons get sick more often, may have poor morale and they are more likely to quit without notice.*
 - h. *Yes, stress is the disease, a staff member if he/she is sick cannot able to come at work, although some people try to come but no production as the staff member will be just sitting around.*
 - i. *Yes, because workers are given too much work to cover.*

5.12. Summary

Absenteeism remains a serious concern especially in the public sector on which the citizens' wellbeing depends on the provision of public goods and services. According to the annual report of 2013/2014 of the subdivision of Horticultural Services, 21% of absenteeism was recorded. Such a worrisome percentage of absence has the potential to influence productivity and costs within the MWT. It is therefore, against the reasons that the researcher has embarked upon conducting a study on the internal and external factors that influence absenteeism in an employee's view point. The main aim of this research thesis is to explore, in detail the internal and external causes of employee absenteeism in the context of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected workplaces. The following question was formulated for testing in the study: What are the internal and external factors of high absenteeism in the MWT at the two selected case study, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund?

The variables which were perceived to motivate and reduce absenteeism include organisation's promotion policy, challenging work, recognition by the employer, feeling valued at the work place, job rotation, availability of transport, introducing health promotion schemes, introduce reward and

incentives, return to work interviews, disciplinary action and job redesign respectively. The proposed solution to reduce absenteeism from the employees specific include workshop and training, reward and incentive, respect and equal treatment of workers, keep employee records, effective communication as well as provision of transport to low employees.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

The focal point of this chapter is to draw conclusions and recommendations based on the results and findings of the study. This chapter is a progression from chapter five on research methods, results and findings. It continues the discourse on employee absenteeism in the Ministry of Works and Transport. It is divided into three parts. The first part outlines the summary of chapters. Part two deals with the main findings. Part three draws the conclusion and recommendations.

6.2. Summary of chapters

This section summarises the main points from each chapter.

6.2.1. Chapter One

This chapter starts by defining the nature of the problem at hand. With the current emphasis on the necessities by the Namibian Government to convey quality goods and service to its people, greater demands are placed on the Ministry of Works and Transport to deliver quality goods and services. As such, the Ministry of Works and Transport requires efficiency and a committed workforce. The strategic objectives of the ministry is to ensure modern and reliable infrastructure development. Furthermore, it is accountable for the maintenance and construction of government buildings. However, due to the high rate of absenteeism in the Ministry of Works and Transport, these remain difficult to achieve. Employee absenteeism is one of the workplace problems acknowledged by most of the contemporary business world. If the problem of absenteeism is not understood and properly managed by the employer, it has the potential to deplete resources such as money and decrease production of the company.

The main aim of the research project was to evaluate the internal and external factors that cause absenteeism among the employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected places namely, Windhoek and Swakopmund. Its overall objectives was first to define and understand absenteeism, secondly, to distinguish between planned and unplanned absenteeism, thirdly, to identify the causes of absenteeism, fourthly, to understand the policy dealing with absenteeism, fifthly, to determine the external and internal drivers of absenteeism and finally, to make recommendations on improving the factors influencing absenteeism.

Chapter one is divided into four sections. Section one, presents chapter 2 which summarises the main literature reviewed and the main deductions from the literature. Section two, deals with chapter 3, which highlights the legislation discussed. Section three, presents chapter 4 which summarises the important points. The last section presents chapter 5 which gives a short review on the data collected and the main findings.

6.2.2. Chapter Two

This chapter is on various issues concerning absenteeism. It includes the definition, the causes, costs and solutions of absenteeism. Absenteeism has been defined by Powel (2012) as an action of staying absent from workplace with or without the agreement with the supervisor. Farrell, (2005) categorised absenteeism into two classes, namely: planned and unplanned absenteeism. Planned absenteeism is when an employer is aware about the absence of a worker and the employer has a prior knowledge of the employee's absence while unplanned absenteeism is that one which manifests itself where the employer is not informed about the whereabouts of a worker. This type of absenteeism is disruptive as it is associated with unforeseen issues such illness and accidents and nothing can be done to avoid it.

The causes of absenteeism include among others, the attendance motivation and ability to attend variables, which are associated with factors such as workplace issues, social issues, personal characteristics, worker's attitude, values and expectations. There are costs to absenteeism and this can be enormous such as in financial terms, productivity and workers' morale. Solutions range from more severe ones such as ultimate discipline, suspensions, and demotions down to mere verbal warnings. The effectiveness and appropriateness of each and every one of this depends on a number of factors, such as the reason for absenteeism. The literature goes on mentioning that the following may be ideal to be measures taken against absenteeism. These include an absence control policy, effective supervision, job rotation, counselling of workers, record keeping, the promotion of health programmes, reward incentives and help workers return to work.

6.2.3. Chapter Three

The mechanism to deal with absenteeism is covered in the legislations pertaining to employment. The principal one is the Namibian Constitution. There is also another one of much importance which is the Labour Act of 2007, including the relevant amendments to the law. The Namibian Labour law should comply with the legislation and regulations of the International Labour Organisation, like any other law body which is a member of the International Labour Organisation. There are other instruments which are supplementing the above such as the Public Service Act of 1995, Public Service Staff Rules of 1999, Social Security Act of 1994, Employee Compensation Act of 1941, Affirmative Action Act of 1998, and regulations concerning health and safety of employees at work of 1997.

6.2.4. Chapter Four

The Ministry of Works and Transport is one of the key ministries in the Government of the Republic of Namibia. It consists of two thousand five hundred employees headed by the Permanent Secretary. The mandate of the ministry is to develop, implement and regulate sectoral policies and ensure infrastructure development and management of transport and state assets. It consist of four

departments, namely the Department of Works, the Department of Central Support Services, the Department of transport and the Department of Government Air Transport Services.

The ministry's headquarters is located in Windhoek. Windhoek is the capital city of Namibia. It was established in 1880. The city has the population size of 326, representing an ethnic cross section of Namibia. It has a total area of 5,134 square kilometres. The weather pattern ranges from 17 to 35 degree Celsius during winter and increases during summer with a humidity of about 33% while Swakopmund is located in the Namib Desert and lies about 360 kilometres in the western direction of the capital city Windhoek. The town has a total area of about 194 square kilometres. It has the total population of 45, 000. The weather pattern ranges from 16 to 30 degree Celsius with a humidity 75%

6.2.5. Chapter Five

The data which facilitated the research study included frequency and extent for absenteeism including the predictors of absenteeism. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were engaged in the study. The targeted population size was 350, if both stations are combined. The instruments used to collect the data comprise of interviews and questionnaires. The sample size of the study was one hundred and eleven non-managerial and twenty four managerial staff. This means that 68 respondents were from Windhoek and 43 were from Swakopmund station which represents 35% of the sample collected, while the sample size of the managerial staff was 24, of which 16 participants were from Windhoek and 8 were from Swakopmund which represents 80% of the sample collected.

The research study found that the research problem was slightly skewed towards the Windhoek station than Swakopmund station. It cut across the male-female divide. There was a problem in the implementation of absence management policy in both stations. Issues militating against absenteeism management include illness, family responsibility, lack of employee motivation and to a lesser extent transport challenges and weather condition.

6.3. Main findings

The main findings in this study are discussed in the following sub-headings.

6.3.1. Defining and understanding absenteeism

The concept of absenteeism and, in the case of this present study, employee absenteeism has been given various definitions. It appears as though, each source of definition is influenced by the aspect of absenteeism it intends to highlight. Earlier, in the literature review, various sources were referred to. For instance, Powel (2012:4) regarded it as the "action of staying absent from workplace without the consent of the supervisor." This can be compared with the other definition which sees employee absenteeism as "a failure of a worker to report for work as scheduled", regardless of the reasons giving rise to it (Van der Merwer & Miller, 1988:6; Jacobs & Kritsonis, 2007:4).

While the two definitions seemingly agree on the essential characteristics of employee absenteeism in that it involves the worker's failure to report for duty and also it lacks prior arrangement with the employer, other definitions emphasise only the part of the employee's not being on the job. The issue of prior arrangement between employee and employer is the only relevant issue when a distinction has to be made as to whether it is planned or unplanned absenteeism, as will be shown later in this chapter. However, this study took the latter view i.e. as long as the worker has not been at work, such an event is in the category of worker absenteeism.

6.3.1.1. Absenteeism from the perspective of the MWT employees

The research rationale of testing this variable had, at the very least, two purposes. Firstly, it is to the researcher's understanding that the contemporary organisation is very dependent on "the knowledge worker." Also, a knowledgeable worker is an empowered individual. These characteristics and the worker's performance at the workplace are positively linked. According to Van der Waldt (2016:239), "when employees are kept informed... some of their social needs are satisfied and motivation is thus increased." It is also this study's argument throughout that, the more motivated an employee is, the greater an asset he/she becomes to the organisation. Secondly, this study argues that an ignorant worker is a liability to the organisation. This worker has a higher disposition to run afoul of the employer's rules and regulations, albeit unknowingly, than a knowledgeable employee. This employee is therefore likely to get involved in actions which are prejudicial to the employer or the employee, or more still to both employer and employee concurrently.

The responses the study received from the sample managers raised some interesting questions to the research. As can be seen, there were some few discrepancies in the way absenteeism is viewed from perspectives of the different supervisors. Some place more emphasis on issues of lack of permission by the supervisor. Others have more conventional approaches to it in the sense that when an employee does not come for work, this constitutes absenteeism, no matter the circumstances. Others even went to the extreme view of limiting absenteeism as being the worker's absence caused by mischief.

The ideal situation is whereby important concepts, absenteeism being included need to have a standard approach and understanding on the part concerned. This makes dealing with it as a problem generally become easier than can be otherwise. Hence this study's emphasis throughout is that there is need for both employer and employees to get more exposure to training and development.

The researcher is of the opinion that an efficient and effective management of the organisation's absenteeism policy would entail an unquestionable understanding of the concept. Some of the definitions given by individuals who are in managerial positions do not bode well for these departments in so far as the management of employee absenteeism is concerned. The limited understanding of the concept of absenteeism would naturally cascade down to the lower ranks of

employees, it is suggested here. There is, therefore, a high probability that ignorance of critical issues with regard to absenteeism is endemic among the rank and file of the ministry's human resources.

This study also argues that there are, as such, no mitigating circumstances which should allow a poor knowledge on the part of both management and employees in having a poor knowledge on the rules and regulations on absenteeism policy. Earlier on, in the review of the Labour Law, it has been pointed out that in a contract of employment, the employer and employee have mutual obligations and responsibilities. The employee should render services in good faith and with discipline and competence. The employer should provide for its part of the contract e.g. safe working conditions. The Labour Act is also reinforced by such other legal instruments such as the Public Service Act (PSA). It has also been pointed out that there are five elements embedded in the absenteeism policy of the MWT. So, the scant knowledge by the employee can lead to misapplication in the long run.

6.4. Distinguishing unplanned from planned absenteeism

According to this study's reviewed literature, in South-Africa, about 15% of workers are absent on a daily basis and this translates into billions of rands per annum as a cost due to absenteeism, being incurred by South African companies. Heard and Walters (2007:11) report that, Erongo Region, in Namibia, incurred losses as a result of absenteeism among teachers, around \$2.7 million dollars per annum. These costs being incurred both in the private and the public sector are staggering. The apparent weaknesses of authorities in controlling these losses resulting from employee absenteeism is one distinguishing feature of unplanned absenteeism.

Unplanned absenteeism, by its nature, catches the employer unaware and unprepared. There is no prior knowledge of it on the part of the employer and the absence of precautions prior to its happening is the main reason why it results in unforeseen costs. Another characteristic feature of unplanned absenteeism is the absence of the supervisor's consent for the employee to be absent. This characteristically makes the employer a victim who should then shoulder the costs emanating from the worker's absence at the workplace. It may result in an unplanned diversion of human resources from other workstations in order to fill in the resultant gap. This diversion of resources becomes more urgent if the absent employee occupies a position which the organisation regards as a critical one. Worse still, the available workers may lack the requisite skills needed for the job, because in every division employees have different specialised skills for the roles that they play. Under such circumstances, many short-term disturbances occur. If these problems are left unchecked, they have the potential to spiral into long-term and very costly long-term results.

Responses the study received from the management of the two stations invariably refer to the various inconveniences unplanned absenteeism causes. A majority of the supervisors/managers stated that this type of absenteeism "gives burdens to the remaining workers". In some cases, the harmful effects of a single worker's absence can have ripple effects which can be felt in many sections of the organisation.

According to another supervisor at the Swakopmund office, worker morale can even be negatively affected. According to this study's reviewed literature, there is a very strong connection between an employee's morale and motivation and the employee's predisposition to be absent or even to quit the job. In Nicholas, Valock and Benavides (2012:165), "Good employee morale and motivation in the workplace is very important to the wellbeing of the organisation".

6.4.1. Unplanned employee absenteeism

Unplanned absenteeism can be due to various reasons. An employee who has vague knowledge on the seriousness and costs of absenteeism has high chances of being involved in absenteeism. The study's findings on employee's lack of awareness on absenteeism issues and the policy are astounding. Of the female respondents, only 48% in Windhoek and Swakopmund knew about the ministerial policy on absenteeism. Of equally poor score were the male respondents, with a 28% as being knowledgeable about the department's absenteeism policy. This research is of the persuasion that the lack of worker awareness in absenteeism matters is a serious matter being responsible for absenteeism in the departments and this problem is endemic in both stations.

However, unplanned employee absenteeism has also been associated with unforeseen issues such as, in the case where an employee suddenly falls ill or is involved in a vehicle accident while going to work and also death in a family. Such types of unplanned absenteeism are generally classified as unavoidable absenteeism. There is nothing which can be done to avoid an unavoidable situation and thus unplanned absenteeism except in the circumstances where precautionary measures, for instance, through running a multiskilling training and development policy. In such a case, the employer ensures a quick and timely temporary replacement of a worker who is absent.

Another way of coping when unplanned absenteeism manifests itself is where the employee takes an unauthorised sick leave. In both sections, unauthorised sick-leave by the employees seems to be a serious issue. The study's findings are that employees who have abused this in excess of five days in the last twelve months before the study, the Windhoek station accounted for nine percent (9%) of its employees while Swakopmund had a staggering two percent (20%). The abuse of this type of leave is widespread. Forty-nine percent (49%) and twenty-three percent (23%) of the employees in Windhoek and Swakopmund respectively have had, at least, a day off on unauthorised sick leave. If these figures are extrapolated to the whole ministry or public service, the loss incurred is enormous.

Other factors external to the employee such as challenges posed by the transport system or the weather conditions can also result in the employee's absence. Overall, about seventeen percent (17%) of employees reported being absent from work due to challenges imposed by the transportation system. Three percent (3%) of the participants reported absence due to alcohol related sicknesses. Finally, the employees' domestic responsibilities can be a cause of both planned and unplanned absenteeism. The study has revealed that more than fifty percent (50%) of employees at the two

selected case study had fallen victims to this type of absenteeism. Issues such as the sudden illness of a family member, caring for the young ones or even domestic violence are some of the cases employees mentioned in this regard.

6.4.2. Planned employee absenteeism

Planned absenteeism results from a mutual arrangement between the two parties: employee and employer. The employer has a prior knowledge of the employee's pending absence from the workplace. This prior knowledge gives the employer the opportunity to take appropriate steps in order to avoid possible disruptions of normal operations at work. In the event that an impending absence of the employee is not convenient to the organisation, the employee and employer can seek alternative ways such as the postponement of the said absence.

Features such as the employer's prior consent for the employee to be absent, mutual arrangement between subordinate and superior, the supervisor's prior arrangement for the employee's replacement while absent are the requirements of planned absenteeism. According to the review, this type of absenteeism provides an opportunity for management to make alternative arrangements ahead of the worker's absence. Planned absenteeism also includes the statutory leave whereby it is the employer's obligation to avail it to the employee when need be. This covers various types of leave such as compassionate leave, study leave, maternity leave, sick leave as well as vacation leave. The employee is cushioned off against any potential losses due to the fact that planned leave is an integral part of the employer's work plans.

However, although it is a type of absenteeism having been provided for by the employer, this does not mean this type of leave must always be free of cost. For instance, the contemporary organisation has to contend with the scourge of HIV/AIDS which has caused many organisations, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, sometimes heavy losses through lost productivity, the cost of caring for the sick employees etc. For instance, in Tawfik and Kinoti (2003:2), in 1990, 67% of the government expenditure on health was on HIV/AIDS treatment in some sub-Saharan African countries such as Rwanda and Zimbabwe. In Namibia expenditure on HIV/AIDS treatment also constitutes a considerable cost. A good number of the respondents in the departments supported the possible introduction of department-specific health promotion schemes for the well-being of the staff members. Respondents pointed out that such a scheme could help reduce the illness related absence of the workers in the ministry.

6.5. The causes of employee absenteeism in the Ministry of Works and Transport

The research looked at the factors acting as drivers to employee absenteeism under the following categories: internal and external causes. The internal causes have also been sub-categorised to be either internal to the organisation or internal to the employee, that is, a factor could be specific to the employee concerned. The external causes, relate to factors which are outside the influence of the

employer. External causes are essentially the organisation's external environment factors. All three sub-categories have been seen to have linkages of varying strength to employee absenteeism.

6.5.1. Internal factors: employee specific

Among these employee-specific causative factors of employee absenteeism are the employee's demographic factors such as age, sex and marital status, as well as the individual's educational or professional qualifications. Age-wise, the majority of participant employees were in their thirties, forties and fifties, but only ten of the respondents were respectively younger than thirty years old. However, the findings show that such demographic characteristics do not have a significant bearing on employee absenteeism within the ministry. By far the greatest proposition of the participants reported to having never married. Forty-seven percent (47%) were married while four percent were divorced and one percent widowed. Employees who had obtained diploma level education and below diploma constituted a ninety-one (91%) percent of respondents.

According to established literature and conventional wisdom, employees coming from larger households and thus having more dependants, have a higher likelihood of being absent at the workplace than their counterparts such as those who are still singles. Josias and Beverly (2005:23) state that married couples have more absenteeism cases when compared to singles. The literature continues claiming that married people have more responsibilities than single ones, and thus this causes them to miss work.

In another work, Hatletveit (2009:4) states that 'the higher level of education (among employees) decreases the chances of being absent....' Similarity, Karanja (2008:6) asserts that employees with longer service are usually associated with higher degrees of organisational attachment and thus, tend to have low levels of absenteeism. This study however, could not establish causal links between the factors above and the employees' predisposition to absenteeism.

The other approach the research followed on determining the possible causes of worker absenteeism in the ministry was the psycho/sociological aspects of the worker. Issues included here are such as stress-related, employee motivation, individual lifestyles and the employee's home situation, etc. On this, the employee's motivation had to be ascertained through establishing the levels of job satisfaction as a result of several variables. This aspect of the research was being heavily influenced by the Steers and Rhodes (1978) integrated attendance model as presented in the review.

For instance, 55% of the respondents reported being not satisfied with their earnings. Twenty-two percent were not satisfied with their perceived levels of job security and a majority of sixty-four percent claimed to be fully satisfied with the type of work they performed while also a significant proportion were frustrated with the total number of hours they worked as well as their working conditions. The findings, as having been outlined above, allowed the researcher to be of the

persuasion that this ministry would be predisposed to incurring substantial rates of absenteeism and probably, significant turnover rates due to psycho/sociological factors. Both, the employee's motivation to attend and the ability to attend militated against the employee's behaviour on absenteeism.

6.5.2. Internal factors: organisation specific

The researcher went on to test the other dimension of employee absenteeism which is the one internal to the organisation but not employee specific. Areas which the study covered, in this respect included the work-group size, employee relationships, supervision style and employee-employer relationships. Other areas looked at are the department's absence culture, incentives and rewards policy, the existence of advancement and promotion opportunities as well as job levels and work related stress. As to whether management acts in a manner that makes the worker feel valued by the organisation and management's recognition of a job well done by the employee were also considered under this subsection.

The participants were unanimous in indicating their belief that the sizes of work groups within the ministry had no significant effect on employee morale or motivation and hence on worker absenteeism. Related to the above were the inter-employee relationships as well as employer-employee relationships. Also closely linked to these are the ministry's supervision styles which can lead to the employee believe whether he/she is valued or not by the organisation. A recognition whether verbally or by rewarding the employee materially are also variables which the literature regarded as decisive factors of employee morale, motivation and absenteeism behaviour.

A paltry five percent of the participants viewed supervision style as a contributory factor to the above mentioned employee negative tendencies. However, there was an overwhelming support to the proposition that the employer should strive to reduce work-related employee stress. Around forty-eight percent advocated for an introduction of attractive incentives and rewards systems in the public sector at large. These views resonated very well with the reviewed literature.

Kreiner and Kinicki (2007:14) state that essentials for good performance by the employee are management recognition of the employee's work as well as crediting the work in whatever way deemed appropriate (Van Der Waldt, 2016:43) and adds that "the foremost duty of managers, as far as people issues are concerned, is to develop and maintain healthy employee relations within the organisation." Managers thus, should ensure internal harmony between staff and management. In another study, excessive workload, length of time at work are some of the reasons that cause work-related stress (Van Der Westhuizen, 2016:249). Also, Cawe (2006) as cited in DuPlessis at all (2011:187) assert that reward and recognition are some of the key drivers to the worker's engagement. This study's understanding is that such critical employment variables are not being given due attention in both selected cases which it targeted for research.

An overwhelming 80% of the employees felt that their employer does not value them that appropriately and that only 45% of the participating employees felt that they get recognition from management on work well done is ample reason to believe that the organisation has some shortcomings in their supervision style and manager-employee relationship approaches. Seventy percent of the respondents also described the poor advancement and promotion opportunities existing in the public sector as a contributing factor. On the positive side, over sixty percent felt that they were comfortable with their job types.

6.5.3. External factors of absenteeism

The last sub classification of the drivers of employee absenteeism, according to this study, involves the external dimensions. These factors can hardly be manipulated by the employer. This study focused on the following: economic and market conditions, transport challenges, as well as the occurrence of unavoidable events leading to the employee's absence. However, both economic and market conditions as well as transport challenges and unavoidable events can act as significant factors in influencing employee absenteeism.

This study revealed a significant proportion of participants who were affected by these. Sixty five percent claimed to have been absent due to medical issues such as unexpected illness, accidents on the way to work and fights in the home. While nineteen percent of the respondents have been absent at work due to transport challenges such as inadequate funds to pay the taxi fare to work and bad weather conditions. Equally, a significant proportion claimed that domestic issues which include taking a sick child and other dependents to the clinic or hospital for treatment is a major factor in a person's absence. These comprised fifty percent of the sample. On average, female employees were affected more than their counterpart. It was more of a problem in Windhoek than Swakopmund.

In addition, the issue of economic and market conditions can work both positively and negatively. For instance, the individual's worries about the possibility of not getting new employment after having left the current job and the general need to hold on to the job may act as a deterrence against potential absenteeism. However, negative economic and market conditions such as the currently perceived creeping inflation on the Namibian market may force the bread-winner to pursue supplementary sources of income and thus give less attention to one's substantive job. Due to their give-and-take tendencies among employees, the net effect of the variables would not be determined in the face to face discussions done by this research and thus their relevancy to this study is limited.

6.6. Understanding the policy dealing with employee absenteeism within the ministry

Knowledge of Namibia's legal framework on employment is key to an understanding of any public sector institution's policy on absenteeism. The sources, mechanism as well as principles underlying

labour law in Namibia have been extensively dealt with in the appendix to the literature review. Basically, all private sector institutions should abide by these laws, rules and regulations. There are basically no by-laws which maybe passed to apply to particular departments by reason of their geographical location. However, differences may occur in the manner they are implemented. To cite Van Zyl (2017:34), “the Labour Act is the prime law (in the land) that checks the relationship between employers and employees in the local field.” However, suffice to mention that rules and regulations should be subservient to the Namibian Constitution.

Another requirement for the successful management of a policy is that the implementers should have a good understanding of it. Otherwise, the dangers of applying procedures or even rules wrongly will be high. In addition to this, the employees of the public sector institutions such as these departments under review, should be considered as being on the receiving end of these rules in the sense that in as much as they are supposed to be primary beneficiaries of them alongside the employers, if they run afoul of them, they bear the consequences. Suffice to mention that the same thing applies to any other participant in the labour field including the employers.

The study’s findings on aspects considered key to an effective administration of absenteeism suggest that there are lingering problems especially at the station level in terms of various aspects. For instance, 4% of the Human Resources Management stated that, since the implementation of the comprehensive management policy in 1995, the policy has not produced good results as of the period when this research was being conducted. One reason cited was that implementers were still undergoing AWOL. Managers seemed to concur on the policy’s suspected ineffectiveness as they pointed out that absenteeism was still rife in the departments. Another member of the management team stated that many employees were still contravening the absence management rules and still go scot-free in the majority of the times.

The study also got 8% responses from the managers stating that, this 1995 policy was a very new idea to them. Although most managers confirmed receiving requisite support from the HRM, some managers would go on to express no knowledge on the department’s management policy. Some also blamed the complexity of the policy itself and thus it was difficult to understand and implement it. Although this study did not solicit specific areas of the policy, there was a substantial support for amendments to certain aspects of the policy dealing with absenteeism. However, in conclusion, the study suggest that employee absenteeism policies have not been adequately discussed by both management and employees in the ministry. The various factors influencing employee absenteeism seem to display no significant differences in terms of the two stations. These facts seems to support that the problem is more about bringing knowledge of the law and procedures to the stations than that of their existence or effectiveness.

This study also sought to establish the popularity of certain potential solutions to the problem of absenteeism in the departments. For instance, few would support the application of disciplinary methods so as to hinder absenteeism. A majority of employees favoured a re-designing of jobs, and introduction of the rewards and incentives. The respondents also urged management to show concern for workers, and employees should be involved in decision-making. However, many respondents urged that organisational communication be improved. The other variables such as job rotation, transport availability, and return to work interviews were downgraded by the respondents as not a solution to absenteeism.

6.7. Conclusions

It has been noted throughout the study, the problem of absenteeism in various departments of the Ministry of Works and Transport does exist. Due to the expensive nature of absenteeism, it is being reasoned that the departments are incurring substantial losses. From the management point of view, for absenteeism to be reduced to an acceptable level, changes of the existing laws, regulations and procedures dealing with absenteeism need to be made.

It is also noted that unplanned absenteeism poses more challenges to the two selected cases namely Windhoek and Swakopmund as compared to planned absenteeism. This is due to its nature especially that management becomes aware of it only when the employee has not reported for work. Management is caught unaware.

The most recurring causes of an employee's absence, according to the data analysed for the current study, include the one associated with sickness or injury, that by reasons of the employee's domestic commitments, and to a lesser extent, stress related cases. This is widespread and is found in both cases, namely Windhoek and Swakopmund. The employee's remuneration, the prospects as well as the occurrence of the advancement and promotion opportunities as well as challenging duties seem to dominate as possible sources of employee motivation.

Non-material factors such as the issues of being valued in the organisation, the existence of a sound relationship with supervisors as well as good and effective communication did not feature much in leading an employee to motivation. Some of the variables tested seem to have differing magnitudes in terms of the stations represented. In all but one of the factors considered, the Windhoek station registered higher scores. Only weather conditions had a greater impact on absenteeism in Swakopmund than in Windhoek.

The position taken by the management has some interesting features. Their insistence on calling for a review of the entire regime dealing with absenteeism was one of these features. Interim solutions to the problem of absenteeism in the departments of the Ministry of Works and Transport centred on

features such as applying positive reinforcement measures like the introduction of performance rewards, on outstanding achievement as well as employee counselling. Some of the measures proposed by the management seem to resonate well with the position taken by a good number of employees. In the final analysis, on the issue of the problem of absenteeism in the Ministry of Works and Transport, it is concluded that this problem does exist and there is a pressing need to address it.

6.8. Recommendations

This research has analysed and presented information on absenteeism in the departments which are under the Ministry of Works and Transport. The costly nature of absenteeism makes it such an important issue and that the problem be regarded as a serious matter. It therefore needs to be treated with a certain level of urgency. This is especially relevant given that the Government of the Republic of Namibia has chosen to scale down its budget through reducing its allocations to all ministries. Having taken all these factors into account, this study makes the following recommendations.

6.8.1.1. A review of the standing rules dealing with absenteeism.

As has been voiced by both employees and management, all instruments dealing with absenteeism have been in place for a significant period of time. However, their effect on absenteeism in the department has been marginal. It is therefore recommended that a review of the entire mechanism on absenteeism be effected. Any necessary changes, therefore should be made.

6.8.1.2. Job satisfaction and employee motivation in the departments of the MWT.

The two issues, job satisfaction and employee motivation go hand in hand. When an employee is satisfied with the job, he/she is motivated with the job. A motivated employee, when other factors are held at bay, results in more productivity and reduced absenteeism at the workplace than one who is not motivated. All measures which can lead to employee motivation need to be introduced to the extent that they are feasible. The research is thus recommending that management adopt all measures which are believed to lead to employee motivation. These include respecting employees at the workplace, introducing of health promotion scheme, management to encourage and recognise employees in their work activities etc.

6.8.1.3. Improving management awareness on the department's policy on absence.

The management team in any organisation is the one entrusted with the custodianship of the organisation concerned. It has a Judiciary role, it is expected to run the organisation in the best manner possible. If, however, management is not fully knowledgeable about any aspects of the organisation, it cannot adequately fulfil its obligations. A few individuals in the departments of the Ministry of Works and Transport proved to be unfamiliar with the organisation's policy on absenteeism. The recommendation being made in this study is that the organisation should ensure that

management is made knowledgeable of all aspects concerning the departments. This can be in the form of sending managers to refresher courses and other similar courses of action.

6.8.1.4. Employee remuneration, advancement, promotion and job-redesign.

This research has been informed about the various ways which can lead to employee motivation. The above factors: remuneration, promotion as well as job-redesigning have received support from the employees as factors which can lead to employee motivation. The recommendation is that the criteria for advancement and promotion as well as on remuneration be periodically reviewed and employee remuneration reflect the prevailing economic conditions and market trends.

6.8.1.5. Communication and employer – employee relationships.

A significant proportion of employees reported the existence of poor communication in the departments of the Ministry of Works and Transport. For some, they had learnt about the organisation's absenteeism policies through less formal means. Both management and employees reported poor employee-manager relationship. There should be formal means of communication in all pertinent issues which affect employees. Since employees are considered the most important asset in the organisation, relationship between employees and management should be improved through all conventional methods.

6.9. Summary

In summary, the problem of absenteeism exists in the departments of the Ministry of Works and Transport. It is reasoned that the departments within the MWT are incurring substantial losses. It was also noted that unplanned absenteeism poses more challenges to the two selected cases as compared to planned absenteeism. Employee motivation within the MWT is at a low ebb. Most causes of employee absenteeism were associated with illness, domestic problems and to a lesser extent, stress related cases. Illness cases were higher in Windhoek than Swakopmund. Interim solutions to employee absenteeism in the departments of the MWT centred on features such as applying positive reinforcement measures like introduction of performance rewards on outstanding achievement as well as employees counselling.

In line with the above, the study recommended that a review of the entire mechanism on absenteeism be effected. Any necessary changes, therefore should be made. The management should adopt all measures which are believed to lead to employee motivation. These include respecting employees at the workplace, introduction of health promotion scheme management to encourage and recognise employees in their work activities etc.

Furthermore, the organisation should ensure that management is made knowledgeable of all aspects concerning the departments. This can be in the form of sending managers to refresher courses and other similar courses of action. The criteria for advancement and promotion as well as on

remuneration be periodically reviewed and employee remuneration reflect the prevailing economic conditions and market trends. The relationship between employees and management should be improved through all conventional methods. The managers and supervisors should be trained on issues dealing with department's policies on absence.

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APPENDICES

Annexure A

Letter of Introduction

Richard Lutombi
University of Stellenbosch
Cape Town
South Africa

Dear Respondent

RE: FILLING IN OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a postgraduate student pursuing a Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree in Economics and Management science.

As part of the requirement for this degree, I am undertaking an academic research project entitled: "Assessing the internal and external factors influencing employee's absenteeism: a case of the Ministry of Works and Transport in Windhoek and Swakopmund, Namibia". You have been selected to participate in this study by virtue of you being an employee of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

I am therefore kindly requesting you to take few minutes and fill the questionnaire form attached. Please take note that the information that you provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and that it will be used for academic purpose only and the questionnaires is anonymous.

Thanking you for you in advance.

Yours faithfully,

DATE: -----

RICHARD. S. LUTOMBI
MPA STUDENT
UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

Annexure B

EMPLOYEE ABSENCE QUESTIONNAIRE.

I kindly request your willingness to participate voluntarily and trustfully in this research questionnaire. This questionnaire will contribute to the thesis title: “Assessing the internal and external factors influencing employee absenteeism: A case of the Ministry of Works and Transport in Windhoek and Swakopmund, Namibia”. The aim of this research is to assess the internal and external factors that causes absenteeism among the employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected cases.

I confirm that the questionnaire is anonymous and the information you provide will be used for academic purpose only.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please read each question carefully.

Date: _____

SECTION A: GENERAL BACKGROUND

1. Indicate your age group bracket in years: (tick one)

- 20 – 29:
- 30 – 39:
- 40 – 49:
- 50 – 59:
- 50 – 69:

2. Indicate your gender

- Male:
- Female:

3. Indicate your marital status: (tick one)

- Never been married:
- Married:
- Divorced:
- Widowed:

4. Indicate your highest level of education: (tick appropriately)

- Primary school:
- High school:
- Degree:
- Post graduate:
- Certificate/ Diploma:

5. Please indicate the nature of employment

- Permanent job:
- Part-time job:

Others: Explain _____

6. How long you have been employed by the Ministry of Works and Transport?

- 0 – 3 years:
- 4 -7 years:
- 8 – 15 years:
- 16 + years:

7. How often are you absent at the workplace?

0 - 1 day a week	<input type="text"/>
2 - 3 days a week	<input type="text"/>
3 - or more days	<input type="text"/>
Never	<input type="text"/>

8. How many dependents do you have?

0 - 1	<input type="text"/>
2 - 3	<input type="text"/>
3 - 4	<input type="text"/>
5 or more	<input type="text"/>

SECTION B: INDIVIDUAL AND WORK FACTORS

9. Are you aware of ministerial absence management policy?

Yes:	<input type="text"/>
No:	<input type="text"/>

10. If yes where did you hear about it?

Induction training:	<input type="text"/>
Contract of employment:	<input type="text"/>
Staff meeting:	<input type="text"/>
Others:	<input type="text"/>

11. Do you feel absence is dealt with effectively within your Department in terms of monitoring and reporting?

Strongly agree:	<input type="text"/>
Agree:	<input type="text"/>
Disagree:	<input type="text"/>
Strongly disagree:	<input type="text"/>

12. How satisfied are you with your present job in terms of earnings?

Not satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Fully satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Not applicable:	<input type="text"/>

13. How satisfied are you with your present job in terms of job security?

Not satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Fully satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Not applicable:	<input type="text"/>

14. How satisfied are you with your present job in terms of type of work?

Not satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Fully satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Not applicable:	<input type="text"/>

15. How satisfied are you with your present job in terms of number of working hours?

Not satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Fully satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Not applicable:	<input type="text"/>

16. How satisfied are you with your present work in terms of working condition?

Not satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Satisfied:	<input type="text"/>
Fully satisfied:	<input type="text"/>

Not applicable:

17. How many unauthorized sick leave days did you take within a period of one year?

- 0 - 1
- 2 - 3
- 3 - 4
- 5 or more

18. Do you view your unauthorized sick leave days as an additional entitlement to your annual leave?

Yes:
No:

19. Do you drink alcohol?

- Drink daily:
- Drink occasionally:
- Do not drink:

20. Below are some of the most common causes of absence. Please indicate which of these has caused you to be absent from work.

- Illness:
- Work related injuries/accidents:
- Family responsibilities:
- Transport problems:
- Alcohol related illness:
- Distance to work:
- Work stress:
- Size of work group:
- Supervision style:
- Type of work:
- Gender:
- Age:
- Job satisfaction:
- Reward and incentives:
- Weather condition:

Other: Explain _____

21. Do you believe absence has an effect on the following;

Statements	Yes	No
Low staff morale	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Low level of productivity	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reduced efficiency	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Stress among those left to cover duties	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Industrial relation conflict	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Reduced customer service	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Others: Explain _____

22. Do you feel valued by your manager?

- Strongly agree:
- Agree:

Disagree:

Strongly disagree:

Unsure:

23. Do you feel your supervisor/manager communicates effectively with you?

Yes:

No:

Sometimes:

24. If you have answered yes or sometimes to question 23, what medium of communication is used? Please tick all appropriate channels.

Informal chat:

Meeting:

One-to-one:

Memo:

Other: Explain _____

25. How would you describe your relationship with your supervisor/manager?

Excellent:

Very good:

Good:

Satisfactory:

Unsatisfactory:

Other: Explain _____

26. Would you say you are motivated by your job?

Strongly agree:

Agree:

Disagree:

Strongly disagree:

27. What motivates you?

Recognition of job well done:

Praise from manager:

Pay:

Annual leave:

Challenging work:

Feeling valued:

Promotion:

Other: Explain _____

28. Within your Department, do you believe absence is at high rate?

Yes:

No:

Unsure:

Other: Explain _____

29. How is your relationship with your immediate supervisor?

Excellent:

Good: --

Fair:

Neutral:

Poor:

30. How is your relationship with your co-workers?

Excellent:	<input type="text"/>
Good:	<input type="text"/>
Fair:	<input type="text"/>
Neutral:	<input type="text"/>
Poor:	<input type="text"/>

SECTION C: REDUCING ABSENCE.

31. To what extent do you believe worker’s absence can be reduced by the following reasons? Please tick appropriately

Perceived solutions	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Implement job rotation					
Availability of transport					
Introduce health promotion programme					
Reduce work stress					
Introduce reward and incentive system					
Strong supervision and management					

Other: Explain _____

32. From the following list indicate how effective you believe each is in reducing absence in your work place i.e. by either motivating employees to come to work or by deterring employees from being absent. For each tick the number that represent how effective you believe in each statement. 3 being very effective and 1 being not effective.

Policy	Not effective	Effective	Very effective
Return to work interviews			
Disciplinary action			
Employee health programme			
Attendance bonus			
Job redesign and team work			

33. What is your suggestions to the management in order to reduce absenteeism in your organisation?

.....

.....

.....

NB: For any enquiry regarding a helpline on substance abuse, please do not hesitate to call the Ministry of Health and Social Services: Tel: 061-2269348.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Annexure C

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SECTIONAL HEAD AND OR SUPERVISOR

I kindly request your willingness to participate voluntarily and trustfully in this research questionnaire. This questionnaire will contribute to the thesis titled: “Assessing the internal and external factors influencing employee absenteeism: A case of the Ministry of Works and Transport in Windhoek and Swakopmund, Namibia”. The aim of this research is to assess the internal and external factors that causes absenteeism among the employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected cases.

I confirm that the questionnaire is anonymous and the information you will provide will be used for academic purpose only.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please read each question carefully.

Date: _____

1. What is a meaning of employee absenteeism?

2. Do you feel that employee absence from the workplace is a serious problem in your Division? If yes, why, if no why?

3. Do you discuss the reason for absenteeism when an employee miss the work schedule?

4. The Ministry of Works and Transport introduced a comprehensive absence management policy since 1995. How has the policy impacted on your role as a manager?

5. Do you feel confident in implementing the absence policy?

6. How is your relationship with employees?

7. Do you feel supported by Human Resource Department? If yes, how? If no why?

8. Have you ever had to deal with a situation where absence was abused? How did you deal with the situation?

9. What do you believe are the main causes of absence within your Division/Section?

10. What major costs does the organisation incurred when employees are absent from work?

11. Do employees work extra workload to cover the duties of workers who are absent?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE

Annexure D

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONER

I kindly request your willingness to participate voluntarily and trustfully in this research questionnaire. This questionnaire will contribute to the thesis titled: “Assessing the internal and external factors influencing employee absenteeism: A case of the Ministry of Works and Transport in Windhoek and Swakopmund, Namibia”. The aim of this research is to assess the internal and external factors that causes employee absenteeism among the employees of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected cases.

I confirm that the questionnaire is anonymous and the information you will provide will be used for academic purpose only.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please read each question carefully.

Date: -----

-
1. The Ministry of Works and Transport introduced a comprehensive absence management policy since 1995. How successful has the policy been since the implementation? If yes, why, if no why?

2. What were the aims of the policy?

3. Is the policy clear to understand?

4. Are there any amendments to the policy you feel should be made after being in place for a while?

5. Research findings show that most organisation tend not to research the causes of absence. What do you believe are main reasons for absence within the ministry of Works and Transport?

6. Is this opinion based on research, records or personal opinion? If research, what type?

7. Absence has been linked to employee motivation and ability to attend. What do you believe are the main factors affecting a person's motivation to attend?

8. The research also show that workplace stress is a contributor to absenteeism. Do you believe this to be an issue in your organisation? If yes, why, if no why?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE

Annexure E



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

**STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH**

You are kindly invited to take part in a study conducted by Richard Lutombi Simushi, from the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences at Stellenbosch University. You are approached as a possible participant because of you being an employee of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

As part of the requirement for this degree, I am undertaking an academic research project entitled: "Assessing the internal and external factors influencing employee's absenteeism: A case of the Ministry of Works and Transport in Windhoek and Swakopmund, Namibia". The main objective of this study is to assess the internal and external factors that causes absenteeism among the workers of the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected cases namely, Windhoek and Swakopmund.

2. WHAT WILL BE ASKED OF ME?

If you agree to take part in this study, you are required to answer questions by means of a survey questionnaire. You are required to give your views from the questions asked in the questionnaire form with regard to employee absenteeism. The completion of questionnaire may take 5 to 10 minutes depending on your clear understanding. The questionnaire will be distributed at your workplace via a field assistant.

3. POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

The study involve a certain degree of risks to you as a participant which may cause distress as it included personal opinions, but the questionnaire is anonymous and all data will be protected and used for research purposes only.

4. POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO THE SOCIETY

Upon the completion there will be a better understanding about the possible reasons for and solutions to employee absenteeism. Furthermore, the Ministry of Works and Transport and Government at large will be able to learn from the study. The management cadre and other senior government officials will make use of the findings to make decisions about employee absenteeism in public service institutions. The study will serve as a yardstick to prospective scholars who will be interested to continue carry out researches on employee absenteeism. Equally, the report will be also used by other role players such as community development organisation and ordinary members of the public to understand the causes of employee absenteeism at the workplace. In addition, the policy makers, top management and human resource practitioners can make use of the report to reassess the policies and approaches to reduce employee absenteeism.

5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION

There are no incentives or monetary payment involved in this study.

6. PROTECTION OF YOUR INFORMATION, CONFIDENTIALITY AND IDENTITY

Any information the participants will share with the researcher during the study will be protected. All the questionnaires are anonymous and the information collected will only be used for research purpose. The results of analysis that will be presented in this thesis will not refer to any participant. The content analysis and the generic findings will be reported in the thesis with no reference to the participant. The researcher will use special code (e.g. unknown) during the time of study so that no name or identifying information exist even in his files. No information collected will be provided to the participants about the study. This is to ensure that participants are not embarrassed by the outcome of the study.

Furthermore, the researcher will strictly safeguard the confidential information of the participants by ensuring that no person will be allowed to see or touch the documents containing the data. The confidentiality of sensitive information will be highly maintained by keeping all the information in a safe and protected place. For example, all the storage facilities such as file cabinet and personal computer will be kept in the researcher's office which is looked all the time. Equally, the confidentiality agreement between the researcher and the field assistant who will assist to hand out the questionnaires to participants will be signed to ensure that no small piece of information is disclosed to any unauthorized individuals.

In addition, data management issues will include both electronic and non-electronic systems. The electronic systems such as personal computer and memory flash card will be used to store electronic data and a password will be created to restrict access to the personal device. The computer password will only be known to the researcher. The questionnaires and other papers will be stored in the file cabinet. Both the storage facilities will be kept in the researcher's office. Proper restrictions will be in place for individuals to access the researcher's office.

The disposal of data will be done when the information collected is no longer necessary or after a period of six months. The data that will be stored in the electronic form such as memory flash discs, personal computer and internet will be safely deleted while the questionnaires and other papers will be cut into small pieces and burned. Some other devices such as discs will be carefully incinerated.

7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

You can choose to participate or to decline. If you agree to participate, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and will not result in a penalty or loss of any benefits to which you are entitled.

8. RESEARCHERS' CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please feel free to contact Richard Lutombi Simushi at 0811405310 and or Ms Deyana Isaacs at +27219184133.

9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

As a participant you have the following rights: The right to have time to decide whether or not to be in the research study, and make decision without any pressure from the Principal Investigator. You have the right to refuse to be in the study at all, or stop participate at any time after you begin the study. If you decide to stop participating in the study, you have a right to continue. You have the right to be told what the study is trying to find out, you have the right to know what you will be asked to do if you participate in the study. You have the right to be told about reasonable foreseeable risks of being in the study. You have the right to be told about what the study is trying to find out. The right to be told about possible benefits of being in the study. As a participant you have the right to be told whether there are any costs associated with being in the study and whether will be compensated for participating in the study. You have also the right to be told who will have access to information collected about you and how confidentiality will be protected. You have the right to receive a copy of the informed consent form that you will sign as well as the right to ask any questions concerning the study. You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty.

.....
DECLARATION OF CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

As the participant I confirm that:

- I have read the above information and it is written in a language that I am comfortable with.
- I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been answered.
- All issues related to privacy, and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide, have been explained.

By signing below, I _____ (*name of participant*) agree to take part in this research study, as conducted by Richard Lutombi Simushi.

Signature of Participant **Date**

DECLARATION BY THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

As the **principal investigator**, I hereby declare that the information contained in this document has been thoroughly explained to the participant. I also declare that the participant has been encouraged (and has been given ample time) to ask any questions. In addition I would like to select the following option:

	The conversation with the participant was conducted in a language in which the participant is fluent.
	The conversation with the participant was conducted with the assistance of a translator (who has signed a non-disclosure agreement), and this "Consent Form" is available to the participant in a language in which the participant is fluent.

--	--

Richard Lutombi Simushi

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

Annexure: F.

**NOTICE OF APPROVAL****REC Humanities New Application Form**

13 September 2018

Project number: 1874

Project Title: ASSESSING THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM: A CASE OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT IN WINDHOEK AND SWAKOPMUND, NAMIBIA.

Dear Mr Richard Simushi Lutombi

Your REC Humanities New Application Form submitted on 11 July 2018 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
13 September 2018	12 September 2019

GENERAL COMMENTS:

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (1874) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Proof of permission	approval of permissionfinal - Copy	22/06/2018	
Informed Consent Form	SU HUMANITIES Consent form template_ Written for managers (G1)	05/07/2018	
Informed Consent Form	SU HUMANITIES Consent form template_ Written for employees (G1)	05/07/2018	
Data collection tool	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND SECTIONAL HEADS (G1)	05/07/2018	
Data collection tool	QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HUMAN RESOURCE PRACTITIONER (G1)	05/07/2018	
Data collection tool	employee absenteeism questionnaire (G1)	05/07/2018	
Default	letter to REC committee final	05/07/2018	
Non-disclosure agreement	Confidentiality Agreement edit	05/07/2018	

Annexure G



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA
MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT

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Windhoek, Namibia

Our Ref: Lutombi

You're Ref:

Enquiries: Mr. R. Lutombi
Tel: 061-275625
Fax: 061-275623

Mr Richard. S. Lutombi
Via the Acting Director:
Maintenance Services

Date: 15 June 2018

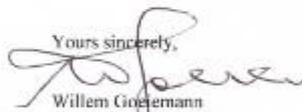
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT.

Kindly be advised that approval was granted for you to conduct research within the Ministry of Works and Transport in respect of your research topic, namely "assessing the internal and external factors influencing employee absenteeism: A case of the Ministry of Works and Transport in Windhoek and Swakopmund, Namibia".

Furthermore, you are advised that the information obtained from the research study should be treated with utmost confidentiality and such information should not be used for any purpose other than the study.

In addition, you are requested to ensure that you share with the Ministry of Works and Transport the research findings by submitting the document containing the result of your research.

Please also ensure that the operations of the respondents are not disturbed by your research activities.

Yours sincerely,

Willem Goetemann
PERMANENT SECRETARY



Effective and Efficient Delivery of Services

All official correspondence must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary

Annexure H**Field notes****1. Introduction**

On the 20th of September 2018, after the approval of ethical clearance, the researcher and Field Assistant organised meetings with different offices within the Ministry of Works and Transport at the two selected case study. First the Principal Researcher and Field Assistant Researcher started with the management and workers in Windhoek at the place of work, followed by other departments and offices. The Investigators visited the sites at around 8:00 where they introduced themselves to the heads of the sub-divisions and explained the purpose of visiting their offices. In this way, the purpose of having a meeting with the heads of offices was to inform them about the project and investigations on absenteeism among their workers. As such, they were requested to organise their worker and staff to support the study project. The meeting was also to discuss the informed consent form concerning the project study. The head of office especially at the government stores, treated the request as very important.

After a period of two days, the investigators went back to the offices and purposely handed out the questionnaires and informed consent forms to employees known to be regular absentee and present at work at the four different offices, namely, Government Stores, Head Office, Horticultural Services and Government Garage. This was done in the morning before the workers were deployed in the fields and sites. The questionnaires of those employees who were known to be truant were secretly marked with A at the far right corner of the questionnaires. This was to make our job easier upon the collection of questionnaires from the respondents. Investigators could not need an interpreter as all of the participant were literate. Workers were informed to hand back the filled questionnaires at least three days from the date of receiving. After a period of three days, the researcher collected the questionnaires from the focal person and checked them for completeness. Some of the questionnaires were returned unfilled.

2. Field observation in both Windhoek and Swakopmund

The field observation was done with the assistant of the field worker. This was done the same day when the questionnaires were handed out to the employees. Some of the observations done include the office terrain which include buildings structures, plants and people around the place.

a. Windhoek observation and activities

In Windhoek, the Researcher and Field Assistance experienced challenges when arranging meeting with the head of offices who did not want to support the request of having a meetings with them and their supervisor. They feared that the workers would disclose some of the issues concerning their work. Some worker did not want to participate due to the fear that government wanted to discharge them from their duties. Other employees refused even to pick up a questionnaire due to fear of their managers and supervisors. The building structures are still in good condition, whereas the people around were gossiping that we came to take information for them to be fired from their respective places and some could not even greet us. However, the atmosphere of the office terrain was pleasing with beautiful trees and colourful flowers.

b. Swakopmund observation and activities

After waking up, the researcher and the Assistant took a hot shower at around 6:30 and getting ready to the targeted population where the sample was to be drawn. Before going to the office, the researcher went to the coffee shop to buy some breakfast. After breakfast, we proceeded to the regional office of the Ministry of Works and Transport in Swakopmund. At

the regional office, the researcher met first, one of the staff member under his supervision who then introduced the Researcher and the Field Assistant to the head of the regional office. The researcher quickly added that the purpose of the visit was to collect information with regard to employee absenteeism and that the researcher wanted to talk to the employees as well. The head of the office gave the go ahead and the researcher explained, the purpose. At this station, employees showed interest to participating in the study. The Field Assistant to the Researcher distributed the self-administered questionnaires and asked them to return them after a period of three days. While, the managerial staff appointment were made with them regarding the interviews

When the Field Assistant and the Researcher followed the questionnaires after three days, only few of them managed to complete in time. However, the researcher extended time and asked a focal person there to assist in collecting the questionnaire and send them via courier to the researcher as the researcher had only three days visit and went back to Windhoek. After one week, the research received more questionnaires from the site and filled them accordingly.

3. Supervisor/manager and Human Resource Practitioner

More challenges were experienced with the supervisor and human resource practitioner as most of them did not turn up for interviews accept few. The reasons given were that they were very much busy with their work and that could not help me. The interview guide for this category was structured interview. It seemed as though some of the supervisors were attending a workshop and doing training because when the researcher visited the head of the office he was told that they were having training workshop. However, the researcher administered the interviews with those who were available for the appointment.

The end