

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: PERFORMANCE OF  
EMPLOYEES AT A SOUTH AFRICAN PLATINUM MINE**

by

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**DECLARATION OF CANDIDATE**

I declare that **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME: PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES AT A SOUTH AFRICAN PLATINUM MINE** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE

(MISS ER TSHIKOVHI)

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DATE

## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to determine the impact of a training and development (T&D) programme on the perceived performance of human resource assistants at a platinum mine in South Africa according to the following four performance dimensions: (i) personal (ii) customer; (iii) internal business; and (iv) learning and growth. A non-experimental design was used for this study, which was predominately quantitative in nature. Data was collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire, which consisted of closed-ended questions.

Based on the results obtained in this study, it was apparent that the T&D programme contributed significantly to an increase in the performance of employees. However, there are certain areas that can be improved in order to maximise and optimise the learning of employees. Recommendations were made regarding areas for improvement and possible future research.

## **KEYWORDS:**

Evaluation; Impact; Training; Work performance; role of training; importance of training and development; Learning impact questionnaire; Balanced scorecard; Performance measurement; Kirkpatrick's model

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP-RM	:	Anglo Platinum-Rustenburg Mine
BSC	:	Balanced scorecard
ETD	:	Education, Training and Development
HR	:	Human Resource
HRAs	:	Human Resource Assistants
HRD	:	Human Resource Development
HRDP	:	Human Resource Development Programme
LIQ	:	Learning Impact Questionnaire
ROI	:	Return on Investment
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for Social Science
T&D	:	Training and Development

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

“The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa is very clear in providing a national imperative for human development through ETD” (Von Solms, 2006:1).

The South African context of reintegration into the international arena has become just as dynamic and challenging as it was at the time of the first democratic elections. The transformation process has placed new demands on business sectors, especially with regard to people management (Walters, 2006). According to Walters (2006), the changes in the political dispensation brought about a change in legislation, which has placed further demands on the people management practices of South African organisations. The Labour Relations Act no 66 (1995) and Skills Development Act no. 97 (1998) are good examples of this.

Jayawarna, Macpherson and Wilson (2007) highlight the fact that performance in any business plays a critical role in measuring turnover, employee growth and survival. It is important for T&D practitioners to conceptually understand and practically demonstrate that education, training and development (ETD), as a strategic intervention, has an impact on the business and the individual in contributing to social development and economic growth.

The new demands on business have created a need for employees to acquire a new set of skills and competencies, in order for them to assume responsibility for their own career planning. According to Swanepoel, Erasmus, Van Wyk and Schenk (2005), the first and most fundamental task in the process of planning is to ensure that there is a clear link between organisational strategic plans and workforce plans. The human resource (HR) function at the platinum mine in this study had the task of adding value to business performance through practices such as staffing, cost and remuneration, absence and retention, recruitment and T&D. The human resource

development (HRD) function at this platinum mine had to identify T&D needs and suitable candidates, and then reduce costs through effective T&D programmes.

The selected platinum mine implemented a Human Resource Assistants Development Programme (HRADP) as one of the initiatives to address performance demands. It had some human resource assistants (HRAs) with qualifications, and others who did not possess any qualifications in human resources. Due to these discrepancies, it was necessary to review the HRAs' performance.

The question here was whether or not under-performing HRAs were those who did not possess any qualifications and as a result needed to upgrade their skills, and whether or not the good performers were those who possessed qualifications. This necessitated all employees being trained in order to close the skill gaps. HRAs who did not possess any qualification were identified and enrolled in a twelve month HRADP, in order to close the gap between those who possessed a qualification and those who did not. Once they were back on the job, it was then imperative to investigate the performance of those who were exposed to the programme and those who were not, and to compare the work performance of the two groups of HRAs.

It was against this background that this study sought to determine the impact of this HRADP on the work performance of HRAs.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESIS**

### **1.2.1 Problem statement**

Substantial financial resources were invested in the HRADP during the 2007-2008 financial year. The HRADP was intended to bring out a significant change in the calibre of human resource professionals at the selected platinum mine. Evaluation studies had not been conducted to determine whether or not the HRADP was effective in changing the performance of employees. Therefore, the effectiveness of the HRADP, both in terms of tangible and intangible results, was unknown. It was therefore important that the HRADP was investigated to evaluate the success or

failure of its impact on the performance levels of HRAs at the selected platinum mine.

### **1.2.2 Research objectives**

The main objective of this study was to determine the impact of a T&D programme on the perceived performance of HRAs at a selected platinum mine in South Africa according to the following four performance dimensions: (i) personal (i.e. attitudes, behaviour, morale, esteem), (ii) customer; (iii) internal business; and (iv) learning and growth.

The sub-objectives of this study were the following:

- To determine whether or not there was an improvement in the personal dimension (i.e. attitudes, behaviour, morale, esteem) of HRAs.
- To establish customer responsiveness levels of HRAs as a result of the HRDAP.
- To determine whether or not HRAs had any knowledge and understanding of the internal business perspective.
- To determine HRAs' interest in pursuing further learning and growth opportunities in the HR field.

### **1.2.3 Research hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>**. The training and development programme will not have an impact on the perceived performance of HRAs.

**H<sub>1</sub>**. The training and development programme will have a significant impact on the perceived performance of HRAs.

### 1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons and Kavanagh (2007) are of the opinion that, as a result of the financial investments that organisations make in training, it is important to provide evidence that training efforts are being fully realised. In other words, it is important for organisations to ensure that training leads to the desired work outcomes, such as increased job performance.

Rothwell, Hohne and King (2007) suggest that in order to increase the value of the HRD department to the organisation, there is a need to offer training that is strategic i.e. that aligns itself with the organisation's key business strategies. This means that training needs related to knowledge and skills should be identified, so that employees can achieve organisational goals. Effective training programmes should be designed to close the identified gaps. Most importantly, there is a need to quantify the impact of the training programme on business results through the performance of employees who have been exposed to it.

A training programme has to be assessed in terms of the programme itself, the behaviour of trainees outside the training environment, and whether or not it has had the desired effect (Wickramasinghe, 2006). In other words, training has to be assessed in terms of training transfer, validation and evaluation. Training transfer ensures that the training has been transferred to the work environment. Wickramasinghe (2006) further indicates that effective training can be gauged by the capacity of trainees to apply knowledge, skills and abilities gained in training to their work environment and maintain them over time in their job contexts – in other words, there is a sustainable transfer. The post-training environment plays an important role in determining the degree to which the training received is transferred to the workplace.

Kleinhans (2005) is of the view that for training to be transferred to the workplace, it must be accompanied by changes in the workplace, such as job redesign, incentive systems, supervisor support and new tools. The new skills and attitudes acquired in the classroom disappear rapidly unless they are used and supported in the workplace.

Lingham et al (2006) suggest that the effectiveness of training should be based on the extent to which trainees are able to apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes they obtained during the training – this suggests the importance of the applicability of training programmes in the workplace. They further indicate that training and education are viewed as key ongoing processes in support of organisational growth and advancement, providing a forum for communication of new organisational strategies, new values, new tools, and new and improved ways of performing work. Apart from the need to provide training that is aligned with organisational goals and visions, training related to career development should also be tailored to the career needs of individuals.

Sofo (2007) adds an organisational dimension to the notion of transfer of training, by noting that it is the extent to which the learning acquired during training sessions is applied and maintained on the job, in order to increase performance and productivity. According to Sofo (2007), it is generally agreed that the transfer of training involves the application and generalisation of new knowledge and skills.

Far transfer is the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes in a situation that is dissimilar to the original training event, which means that employees can transfer off-the-job (classroom) training to situations that are on-the-job (applied). This is the area of training that organisations generally focus on in order to improve performance (Sofo, 2007), and it generally corresponds to Level 3, on-the-job application (results), evaluation of training. In other words, training transfer occurs when the results of training can move to a future time, space and context.

Desirable job performance is achieved after the organisation has spent time teaching individuals how to perform at the desired level. After this learning process, the organisation expects only the desirable performance, since it has taught everything that an individual needs to know in order to achieve this performance (Bras & Rodrigues, 2007). It is evident that such activity will be reflected in each individual's performance. Jayawarna, Macpherson and Wilson (2007) indicate that it is clearly important to understand the link between training and performance, as this may not be a simple task due to the internal and external variables that influence the training-performance relationship. A positive outcome of this relationship is that training

facilitates organisational performance, which is measured by profitability, productivity and competitive advantage.

T&D programmes bring stability in terms of labour turnover, placements and increased quality of work life. It suffices to mention the importance of evaluation, and this can be supported by researchers' suggestion that evaluation forms part of the organisation's training strategy. As indicated in the final report (HRADP, 2007), participants reported their satisfaction with the training content, organisation and delivery of these programmes and their relevance to their jobs, as well as giving an overall rating of the training. An unforeseen benefit is that employees move between sections and teams when necessary, with minimum disruption, as they have all received exactly the same training and, where appropriate, have passed tests to assess their competencies.

Velada *et al.* (2007) are in favour of examining all aspects of the training process when conducting research on the transfer of training. They further suggest that transfer of training is influenced by the training design, characteristics of the trainee, and contextual factors such as feedback regarding post-training job performance. They conclude by saying that for organisations to maximise their return on investment (ROI) with regard to the transfer of T&D, they need to focus on three determinants of transfer of training, namely training design, individual characteristics and work environment.

According to Kleinhans (2005), the ways in which to measure the effects of learning can be found in the following three stages: (1) cognitive: focus on attitudes and depth of understanding; (2) behavioural: supplemented by direct observation - surveys and questionnaires can be used to assess behavioural changes; and (3) performance improvement: measuring performance in order to provide a rationale for investment in learning.

In conclusion, it is clear that no learning has taken place unless changes in behaviour occur. Interestingly, a change in behaviour is largely dependent on attitude change, increase in knowledge and skills, and self-efficacy. When desired behaviours are practiced, this will have an impact on the quality of performance or

results. There is little point in developing skills and competencies if they cannot be transferred to the workplace.

#### **1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The value and benefits of this study are that it:

- Encourages a structured approach in order to identify weaknesses and areas requiring development to overcome performance problems.
- Assesses whether or not the HRADP accomplished what it intended to.
- Determines whether or not the acquired competencies are applied in the immediate workplace by the HRAs.
- Realises the value that the HRADP adds in terms of achieving overall HR service delivery within the organisation.
- Shares the outcomes of the research with other mining houses that have similar T&D responsibilities towards their employees.

#### **1.5 ASSUMPTIONS**

Two key assumptions are made in this study. It is assumed that the respondents will give honest answers to research-related questions and will freely share their experiences. It is also assumed that the data will be recorded accurately, and that rational conclusions will be drawn from the available information.

#### **1.6 DELIMITATIONS**

The scope of this study was limited to a specific T&D programme at a selected platinum mine in the North West Province of South Africa during the period of 2007-2008.

#### **1.7 LIMITATIONS**

The researcher identified the following as being limitations of this study:

- Some of the target respondents could not be reached, as they had already left the company, and no alternative arrangements could therefore be made.

- Some of the respondents knew the researcher personally and there was thus the possibility of bias regarding how the HRADP influenced their work performance, based on their qualifications.
- Pre-existing skill levels could not be determined, as no pre-testing assessment was conducted prior to the commencement of the HRADP.

## 1.8 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

To facilitate interpretation, a brief definition is provided for the following terms used in this study, namely impact, performance, HRDP, HRAs and education, and T&D.

### *Impact*

The *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (2005) defines impact as an effect or influence. In this study, the term 'impact' is used to refer to the strong effect (regardless of whether or not there is a significant difference) of a variable on the performance of HRAs.

### *Performance*

Work performance is described by Van der Linde (2005) as the quality and quantity of the human output that is necessary to meet the work goals and standards for doing a specific job.

### *Training and Development (T&D)*

Training is defined as learning and development undertaken for the purposes of supporting the development and maintenance of operational capability in employment: skills for work and in work, on-the-job or off-the-job, in order to enable effective performance in a job or role. Development, on the other hand, is defined as learning which changes the whole person in some substantial way and helps him or her to grow, and not just to change their vocational skill level or academic knowledge (Gibb, 2008). For the purpose of this study, the two terms will be used together to describe the HRADP, which was implemented as a training intervention.

### *HRAs*

For the purpose of this study, the term HRAs refers to the human resource assistants at the selected platinum mine who participated in the HRADP. These are

the two representative groups of employees - those who were exposed to the HRADP and those who were not exposed - and they will form part of the sample.

## **1.9 ABBREVIATIONS**

AP-RM	:	Anglo Platinum-Rustenburg Mine
BSC	:	Balanced Scorecard
ETD	:	Education, Training and Development
HR	:	Human Resources
HRAs	:	Human Resource Assistants
HRD	:	Human Resource Development
HRDP	:	Human Resource Development Programme
LIQ	:	Learning Impact Questionnaire
ROI	:	Return on Investment
SPSS	:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
T&D	:	Training and Development

## **1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

This chapter provided a general orientation to this study. Chapter two will comprise a summary of the literature review on the impact of T&D programmes, with specific reference to T&D programmes that focus on improving employees' job performance.

Chapter three will outline the research design and methodology used to test the hypotheses on the impact of HRADP, by comparing the performance of HRAs who were exposed to the HRADP to that of those who were not exposed to it.

Chapter four will contain a presentation and discussion of the research results, firstly in terms of the biographical variables, and then provide the results of the analysis of the stated hypothesis. It will then provide comments related to each of the results by drawing conclusions from the data, in order to prove or disprove the stated hypothesis.

Chapter five will interpret the results of the study in relation to the current impact of the HRADP, with special reference to the importance of a proven significant

difference in terms of performance between the two representative groups of HRAs. Gaps in the data will be highlighted, which may suggest possible areas for further research, and the general significance of the research findings, as well as the conclusions and recommendations, will then be discussed.

## **1.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter began by providing a background to the study. The literature review, problem statement, research objectives and hypothesis were all discussed, and the research design and methodology, as well as the reliability and validity of the data, were also outlined. The significance of the study, as well as its assumptions, delimitations and limitations, were discussed, and a definition of terms was then provided. The chapter concluded by presenting an outline of the remaining chapters. Chapter 2 will contain the literature review.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a detailed review of the literature and research related to T&D programmes' impact on the work performance of employees, using the balanced scorecard of the performance management model. The literature review will examine in more detail the theoretical insights briefly introduced in chapter 1, and will also discuss the importance of T&D. The role of training in the organisation will be clearly explained, after which the evaluation of the effectiveness of training will be explored, with specific reference to levels three and four of Kirkpatrick's evaluation of training model. Lastly, the aspects of the four performance dimensions linked to the balanced scorecard will be discussed.

#### **2.2 Importance of training and development in organisations**

In recent times, countries throughout the world have become aware of the fact that increasing economic growth is not only due to new technology or a combination of the factors of production, but also to the development of its manpower resources (Taiwan, 2007).

The success of any business organisation, whether in the private or public sector, depends mainly on the quality of its human resources. Literature confirms that the training of manpower is a major prerequisite for any organisation that wants to achieve maximum productivity through the effective performance of its employees. Employees can only perform better through the acquisition of new skills, knowledge and abilities by means of training programmes.

According to Sewdass (2004), T&D has the ability to contribute to the effectiveness and efficiency of an organisation, and can be regarded as essential for its long-term success. Ondari-Okemwa, as cited by Sewdass (2004), states that in whatever way the activities of management are identified, and whatever the nature of the organisation, staff training is an essential part of the function of management. He further cites Mayo (1998), who emphasises the fact that the importance of the strategic imperative in adding value to the organisation lies in its ability to grow the

intellectual capital, the people in the organisation, their capabilities and potential, and how they are led and organised.

Altarawneh (2009) states that T&D is the most important subsystem or element of human resource development, as it involves increasing, improving, enhancing and modifying employees' and managers' skills, abilities, capabilities and knowledge, in order to enable current and future jobs to be more effectively performed. These desirable outcomes are likely to enhance both an individual's and an organisation's growth and performance.

T&D is a vital activity for any organisation aiming to improve the productivity and competitiveness of its operations. The need for T&D has increased dramatically due to the rapidly expanding use of technology within industries and businesses, and the continuous threats of knowledge and technology obsolescence. The growing emphasis on quality and customer satisfaction has compelled organisations to recognise the importance of T&D in terms of job satisfaction, productivity and overall profitability (Mathefane, 2007).

Rothwell, Hohne and King (2007) are of the view that in order to increase the value of HRD departments to the organisations that they serve, there is a need to offer training that is strategic i.e. that aligns itself with the organisation's key business strategies. This means that training needs related to knowledge and skills should be identified, so that employees can achieve organisational goals. Effective training programmes should be designed to close the identified gaps. Most importantly, there is a need to quantify the impact of the training programme on business results through the performance of employees who have been exposed to the training programme.

Lingham, Richley and Rezania (2006) suggest that the effectiveness of training should be based on the extent to which trainees are able to apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes they obtained during the training – this suggests the importance of the applicability of training programmes in the workplace. They further indicate that training and education are viewed as key ongoing processes in support of organisational growth and advancement, providing a forum for communication of new organisational strategies, new values, new tools and new and improved ways of

performing work. Apart from the need to provide training aligned with organisational goals and vision, training focused on career development should also be tailored to the career needs of individuals.

T&D programmes bring stability in terms of labour turnover, placements and increased quality of work life. It suffices to mention the importance of evaluation, and this can be supported by researchers' suggestion that evaluation forms part of the organisation's training strategy. According to Swansburg and Swansburg (1999), staff development programmes are planned and organised to help staff acquire the skills and knowledge which will enhance job performance and at the same time increase their value as employees.

Ananiadou, Jenkins and Wolf (2004) state that there is also good evidence to suggest that general training provided at the workplace has a positive impact on individuals' performance, particularly when this training is provided by the employer, rather than off the job. According to Garavan (1997), the training, development and education of employees at all levels within organisations are now considered to be vital components of maintaining competitiveness in the international arena.

Lin and Jacobs, as cited by Karthikeyan, Karthi and Graf (2010), state that since employee requirements undergo constant change, training has become part of the strategic planning of most organisations. They further emphasise that training effectiveness depends largely on the training process which, in turn, depends on establishing a relationship between the subject matter experts and human resource development professionals. Nowadays, employee training is becoming a necessity for every organization, especially since employees are often entrusted with different roles and responsibilities within organisations.

In light of the above, training enables employees to perform these roles and responsibilities efficiently and to learn new things, which will prepare them to take on greater responsibilities in future. Karthikeyan *et al.* (2010:80) indicate that human resource management is meant to "integrate all personal activities with each other and strategically with organisational objectives - it first serves the organisational interest and in that context, it is an investment rather than a cost to the organisation". The utilisation of all other resources depends directly on the effective utilisation of

human resources. Every organisation needs to have well-trained and experienced people to perform the activities that have to be done. As jobs have become more complex, the importance of employee training has also increased. In a rapidly changing society, employee training is not only an activity that is desirable, but also one to which an organisation must commit resources if it is to maintain a viable and knowledgeable workforce.

Owing to the changing environment, the HR department should respond appropriately by equipping people who have to perform in the new environment. When the effectiveness of training increases, this has a direct positive influence on the growth and output of an organisation. Employee behaviour also plays a vital role in improving the productivity of an organisation. By incorporating personality development programmes such as role play, group discussion and business games, the superior- subordinate relationship can be strengthened. Organisations should take the necessary steps to make employees aware of the essential role of training in improving productivity and customer satisfaction, in order to cope with current business challenges.

It is obvious that T&D can no longer rely on the good will of the organisation to train its employees, but needs to be linked to organisational goals and strategy in order for the investment to pay off. Daniels (2003) found that many organisations have already changed their view regarding the training function. They have seen for themselves that training is where skills are developed, attitudes are changed, ideas evolve and the organisation is reinvented. In the course of learning, the skills that will increase sales, build effective teams, improve the quality of employee performance and meet a wide range of other objectives are acquired, and employees can ultimately establish a new organisational culture.

### **2.3. The role of training**

Training embodies different levels of human activities. On one level, training focuses on how people guide and teach one another, while on another level, training seems to include how people interact and the impact of such interactions. On an even higher level, training seems to depict how a person generates from his/her experiences a set of concepts, rules and principles in order to improve his/her own

performance (Swerpersed, 2003). Training is also seen as a means to change people's behaviour, while the evaluation of training effectiveness focuses on measuring this change. The behaviour level addresses the issue of "whether people use what they know at work?" and the changes in the trainee's behaviours, skills, patterns of work, relationships and abilities that are necessary to perform the task at hand.

According to Mathefane (2007), in a successful training programme, the intervention acts not as a treatment for organisational ills, but rather as an instrument of change. The training function holds valuable intelligence regarding employees' core skills, and an effective training intervention can move people in the right direction. In addition, Fernald, Solomon and Bradley (1999:312) suggest that the role of training is as follows:

- To orientate new employees to the organisation and teach them how to perform in their initial assignment.
- To improve the current performance of employees who may not be working as effectively as desired, or to prepare employees for future promotional prospects or upcoming changes in culture, effective leadership practices or their present jobs.
- Traditionally, training facilitates the implementation of strategy by providing employees with the skills and knowledge needed to perform their jobs.
- Training also assists in solving immediate business problems, such as when the team leader of an action learning programme studies a real problem and recommends an appropriate solution.
- To keep ahead in a highly competitive and turbulent environment, it has been suggested that the training function must foster a continuous learning culture and encourage managers to reinvent their organisation.

Judging from the above, the recent changes in the macro business environment have made the HRD function even more important in helping the organisation maintain its competitiveness and prepare for the future. The pressure of global competitiveness is also changing the way in which organisations operate and the skills that their employees need. T&D is considered to be very important as a means to help businesses overcome capability gaps and ensure that employees are up-to-date and adaptable. Clearly, the beneficial effects of training are the skills,

knowledge, cultural and role changes, as well as attitudes and work behaviours in the workplace. Other such benefits are increased employee motivation and commitment (Mathefane, 2007).

In the same vein, Joeng, as cited by Mathefane (2007), refers to training as an act of increasing the knowledge and skills of an employee so that he or she can do a job. Therefore, training is an essential component of high performance in work systems, because these systems rely on frontline employees' skills, knowledge and initiative to identify and resolve problems. All these require a skilled and motivated workforce that has the knowledge and capacity to perform the requisite tasks. In other words, training is an investment in the organisation's employees. An organisation that invests a lot in training, but considers its employees to be an expendable cost to be quickly shed in times of economic difficulty, will probably see little return on its training investment. Training must be a continuous activity in every organisation and needs to be given priority when the going gets tough, because it is the human resources of an organisation that will take the necessary actions to turn the enterprise around.

Training provides employees with the knowledge, abilities and skills required for the job. According to Valle, Castillo and Rodriguez-Duarte (2009), training investment first generates a negative effect on results, which later becomes positive as far as the transfer of knowledge to the employee is concerned. Furthermore, they emphasise that of the 16 best practices, training is one of the few in which a consistent and positive impact on performance can be found.

Training plays a major role in equipping staff with the required abilities. According to Kenny and Read, as cited by Sewdass (2004), the following contributions can be identified:

- Training helps employees to learn their jobs quickly and effectively, thereby minimising or limiting the costs involved in learning.
- Training can assist existing staff to improve their work performance and keep up-to-date in their field of specialisation. Furthermore, present and future work standards required by the organisation are more likely to be achieved and maintained if staff members are well trained.

- A greater volume of work can then be expected from staff, as they will work more quickly and be less likely to make mistakes.
- The reduction in work errors can benefit the organisation, as management will have more time to spend on planning and development activities, instead of correcting mistakes, and the cost incurred by errors will therefore be eliminated.
- Labour turnover among new staff due to ineffective learning and inadequate training can be reduced. Staff who are helped by induction and training learn to do their jobs more rapidly and are more likely to achieve a high level of job satisfaction.
- Retention of staff can be an advantage to the operations of an organisation. If staffs are retrained, then new abilities can replace obsolete ones.
- Training in safe working practices reduces accidents, resulting in social and financial benefits to employers, employees and society.
- For an organisation with a reputation for providing good education, T&D tends to attract better applicants for its vacancies.
- Employees are less likely to become frustrated if T&D opportunities are available for furthering their careers with their present employer.

Lingham *et al.* (2006) state that in order to cope with the rapid rate of change, organisations are increasingly being challenged to develop meaningful training programmes for their employees as a way to compete and succeed in today's volatile environment. Pfeffer, as cited by Lingham *et al.* (2006), argues that training can be a source of competitive advantage in numerous industries for organisations with the wisdom to use it. However, Katz, as cited by Lingham *et al.* (2006), highlights the fact that although large corporations spend billions on training, effective employee learning is minimal. Prahalad, as cited by Lingham *et al.* (2006), also supports employee learning by stating that training should be considered to be a part of career development for managers, which includes both the analytic and experiential sides of management. Defined as the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes that result in improved performance, training has become part of organisational learning and change, employee evaluation, and career development.

In viewing training as adult education and part of an ongoing process of organisational change, such programmes need to be framed as a process of learning and development, by creating a design that meets the needs of the organisation and targeted employees, and providing a feedback system to redesign and adjust further versions of the programme based on organisational and employee perspectives and needs. Furthermore, it is suggested that the effectiveness of training should be based on the extent to which trainees are able to apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes they obtained during the training, thereby emphasising the importance of the applicability of training programmes (Prahalad, 2000).

## **2.4 Evaluation of the effectiveness of training and development programmes**

The evaluation of training has become one of the most important practices in the field of HRD, as there is more pressure today than ever before to prove the results and effectiveness of training investment. Although this evaluation of training programmes is both necessary and critical for organisations (in order to leverage the learning experience and ensure the efficient use of resources), and numerous studies have highlighted the importance of evaluation, few studies have focused on whether or not such evaluations yield useful information for the organisation and its employees (Mathefane, 2007).

Training is a key human resource practice and, as such, clearly deserves and necessitates systematic monitoring and evaluation. According to Kirkpatrick's hierarchical model of training evaluation, learning refers to the extent to which new learning is transferred back to the job and results in new forms of behaviour at work, while changes in behaviour refers to the extent to which the new job behaviour results in improved individual and organisational performance. Furthermore, research shows that each level has a knock-on effect on the next, so that the satisfaction of the trainees influences their propensity to study, which, if it becomes real learning, can modify behaviour to the point of improving individual and organisational results in terms of both quality and quantity (Bee & Bee, 1997).

According to Mathefane (2007), it is clear that no learning has taken place unless changes in behaviour occur. Interestingly, a change in behaviour is largely

dependent on attitude change, increase in knowledge and skills, and self-efficacy. When desired behaviours are practiced, this will have an impact on the quality of performance or results. There is little point in developing skills and competencies if they cannot be transferred to the workplace.

Desirable job performance is achieved after the organisation has spent time teaching individuals how to perform at the desirable level. After this learning process, the organisation expects only the desirable performance, since it has taught everything that an individual needs to know in order to achieve this performance (Bras & Rodrigues, 2007). It is evident that such activity will be reflected in each individual's performance. Jayawarna, Macpherson and Wilson (2007) indicate that it is clearly important to understand the link between training and performance, as this may not be a simple task, due to internal and external variables that influence the training-performance relationship. A positive outcome of this relationship is that training facilitates organisational performance, which is measured by profitability, productivity and competitive advantage.

According to Yadapaditha (2001), the evaluation of training is normally used in a broad sense to refer to any attempt to obtain information in the form of feedback on the effects of a training programme, as well as to assess the value of training in light of the feedback reported. Some experts on evaluation of training make a distinction between validation (the assessment of whether or not training has achieved its intended objectives) and evaluation (the measurement of the total effects of the training programme). In reality, it is almost impossible to obtain information on the effects of training, and this is an extremely complex process.

Velada *et al.* (2007) are of the opinion that as a result of the financial investments which organisations make in training, it is important to provide evidence that training efforts are being fully realised. In other words, it is important for organisations to ensure that training leads to the desired work outcomes, such as increased job performance.

In this study, the Human Resource Assistant Development Programme was identified as an appropriate intervention to address the learning and development needs of the selected platinum mine's HR practitioners. A training programme has

to be assessed in terms of the programme itself, the behaviour of trainees outside the training environment, and whether or not it has had the desired effect (Wickramasinghe, 2006). In other words, training has to be assessed in terms of training transfer, validation and evaluation. Training transfer ensures that the training has been transferred to the work environment. Wickramasinghe (2006) further indicates that effective training can be measured by the capacity of trainees to apply knowledge, skills and abilities gained during training to their work environment and maintain them over time in their job contexts – in other words, a sustainable transfer. The post-training environment plays an important role in determining the degree to which the training received is transferred to the workplace.

Velada *et al.* (2007) are in favour of examining all aspects of the training process when conducting research on the transfer of training. They further suggest that transfer of training is influenced by the training design, characteristics of the trainee, and contextual factors such as feedback regarding post-training job performance. They conclude by saying that for organisations to maximise their return on investment (ROI) with regard to the transfer of T&D, they need to focus on three determinants of transfer of training, namely training design, individual characteristics and work environment.

Sofo (2007) adds an organisational dimension to the notion of transfer of training, by noting that it is the extent to which the learning acquired during training sessions is applied and maintained on the job in order to increase performance and productivity. According to Sofo (2007), it is generally agreed that the transfer of training involves the application and generalisation of new knowledge and skills.

Far transfer is the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes in a situation that is dissimilar to the original training event, which means that employees can transfer off-the-job (classroom) training to situations that are on-the-job (applied). This is the area of training that organisations generally focus on in order to improve performance (Sofo, 2007), and it generally corresponds to Level 3, on-the-job application (results), evaluation of training. In other words, training transfer occurs when the results of training can move to a future time, space and context.

According to Kleinhans (2005), the ways in which to measure the effects of learning can be found in the following three stages: (1) cognitive: focus on attitudes and depth of understanding; (2) behaviour: supplemented by direct observation - surveys and questionnaires can be used to assess behavioural changes; and (3) performance improvement: by measuring performance in order to provide a rationale for investment in learning.

A sound quality-training programme is the vehicle that ensures that all employees are adequately qualified to perform their jobs in accordance with the stated requirements. An effective quality-training programme is one that adequately addresses the various training needs of employees within the organisation. According to Nanda (2009), once required training has been developed and delivered to address the training needs identified in the training needs assessment, it is followed by a training evaluation. This is the process of evaluating the results or outcomes of training. It loops back to training needs assessment, in order to determine how much and how well the training that was delivered solved the identified performance problems linked to knowledge or skills deficiencies. The Level 3 evaluation model proposed by Kirkpatrick focuses on behaviour change and looks specifically at how much or how well the trainees applied what they learned upon returning to their jobs.

Kirkpatrick (1994) identifies four levels on which training can be evaluated:

1. Reaction: evaluation on this level measures how participants in the programme react to it. In other words, it measures customer satisfaction.
2. Learning: this is defined as the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge or increase skills as a result of attending the training programme.
3. Behaviour: this can be defined as the extent to which changes in behaviour have occurred because the participants attended the training programme. Bee and Bee (1997) identify this level as the intermediate level of evaluation, which measures the effect of training on job performance. This entails determining whether or not the learning, be it knowledge, skills or attitudes, has been successfully transferred back to the workplace. It determines whether or not job

performance has improved and, in particular, whether or not the identified performance gap has been bridged.

4. Results: this can be defined as the final results that occurred because the participants attended the programme. These results can include employee satisfaction, high performance and productivity, and overall improvements in effectiveness, all of which assist in achieving organisational objectives.

Although level 4, evaluating results and effectiveness, is the most desired outcome of training, it is usually the most difficult to accomplish. Evaluating effectiveness often involves the use of key performance measures, and this is where the sound principles of performance management are of great benefit (Bergh, 2005).

This study focuses mainly on change in behaviour, and it makes sense to say that no learning has occurred unless a change in behaviour occurs. Interestingly, change in behaviour is largely dependent on attitude change, increase in knowledge, and skills improvement. When desired behaviours are practiced, this will have an impact on the quality of performance or results. There is little point in developing skills and competencies if they cannot be transferred back to the workplace.

## **2.5 Performance Measurement**

According to Kleinhans (2005), when measuring performance, it is essential that relevant criteria and the most important aspects of an employee's job are measured. Since organisational excellence depends on an employee's performance, this has to be monitored and evaluated on a continuous basis in order to identify different levels of performance and make development decisions. An employee's performance can be measured in the following three ways:

**Trait-based:** information is about personality and creativity, and has little to do with the job.

**Behaviour-based:** information focuses on specific behaviours. For example, how does an employee behave towards his/her co-workers and customers?

**Result-based:** information is measurable and appropriate.

Another important part of performance measurement is to define the performance standards before the work is done. Performance standards are expected levels of performance or goals against which an employee's performance can be measured, in order to determine the extent to which he/she has completed his/her jobs.

This study is based on the four performance dimensions emanating from the balanced scorecard (BSC) as a measure of the T&D programme (HRADP) which was presented to the HR assistants/practitioners at a platinum mine in South Africa (see Figure 2.1 below). This figure provides an overview of all the concepts contained in the literature review, as well as the expected outcomes of the training. The figure was adapted from Kaplan and Norton (2001).

Yu, Hamid, Ijab and Soo (2009) assert that the last quarter of a century has witnessed a revolution in performance management. Consequently, we see that the "customer" and "process" perspectives are business-specific, while the "financial" and "people" perspective frameworks for organisations have been proposed by academics and consultants, but there is no consensus regarding the most appropriate approach for organisations to adopt. The adoption of Kaplan and Norton's Balanced Scorecard methodology provides a flexibility of expression that will facilitate employee cohesion. This creates alignment, rather than uniformity.

According to Yu *et al.* (2009), in every situation, whether organisational or individual, performance has to be managed and measured to ensure continuous excellence. Most, if not all, organisations have at least one performance management system that is used to manage and assess the overall organisational achievement. Apart from excellent management, the performance of employees holds the key to the success of the organisation. An organisation is doomed to fail and is unable to achieve long-term goals if the operational goals of its employees are not aligned with the corporate vision and missions. A lot of emphasis has to be placed on measuring the competencies and accomplishments of the staff who carry out short-term strategies that are in line with long-term goals, in order to ensure organisation-wide cooperation.

According to Pongatichat and Johnston, as cited by Yasin and Gomes (2010), performance measurement is considered to be an important aspect of management. This critical organisational process provides the basis for an organisation to assess how far it is progressing towards its planned and targeted objectives, helps to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and facilitates future initiatives aimed at improving organisational performance. However, less emphasis has been placed on performance measures and measurement in service operational settings. This is attributed to the difficulties associated with the intangibles aspects of different services. More recently, however, these organisations began to realise the importance of non-financial measures, such as measures focusing on service quality.

A performance management system (PMS) can be defined as the set of metrics used to quantify both the efficiency and effectiveness of actions. It can also be viewed as a balanced, dynamic system which supports the decision-making process by monitoring, gathering and analysing performance-related information (Garengo and Bititci, as cited by Yasin and Gomes (2010)). The information managed by the PMS must be accurate, relevant, timely and accessible. Performance measures must also be carefully designed in order to reflect the most important factors influencing the productivity of the different processes found in the organisation. A well-designed PMS is vital for ensuring that an organisation delivers cost-effective, high-quality services which meet and exceed the needs of customers. In this context, performance measures and measurement are viewed as important drivers of increased efficiency and improved service delivery quality.

Adhikari (2010) states that competitiveness cannot be achieved without managing performance and at the same time developing the skills and competence of employees. Performance, as a multidimensional concept, refers to both aspects, namely executing the given tasks and achieving the planned results. According to this argument, performance is defined in terms of a behavioural process and deliberated outcome. Performance may be quantitative, qualitative or both. Quantitative performance is related to the use of resources such as budget, number of outputs produced or number of assignments undertaken at a given time. Qualitative performance is measured in terms of operational quality, and includes things such as accuracy and error. Whether it is quantitative or qualitative,

performance depends on different factors, such as personality, the leadership team, the system and the context.

According to Yasin and Gomes (2010), performance measurement is considered to be an important aspect of management. This critical organisational process provides the basis for an organisation to assess how far it is progressing towards its planned and targeted objectives, helps to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses, and facilitates future initiatives aimed at improving organisational performance. However, less emphasis has been placed on performance measures and measurement in service operational settings. This is attributed to the difficulties associated with the intangibles aspects of different services. Owing to these difficulties, service organisations, in the past, tended to resort to performance measures which emphasised the financial aspects of performance. More recently, however, organisations began to realise the importance of non-financial measures such as those focusing on service quality.

This study used Kaplan and Norton's balanced scorecard (BSC), developed in 1992, for the performance management and measurement of employees. BSC is a management model used to measure the activities of an organisation in terms of its accomplishment of the vision and mission. Instead of focusing on financial measures, these were replaced by personal measures that reflect past personal dimensions. The scorecard focuses on balancing organisational efforts with the perspectives of customers, internal processes and employees' educational context from a learning and growth dimension point of view.

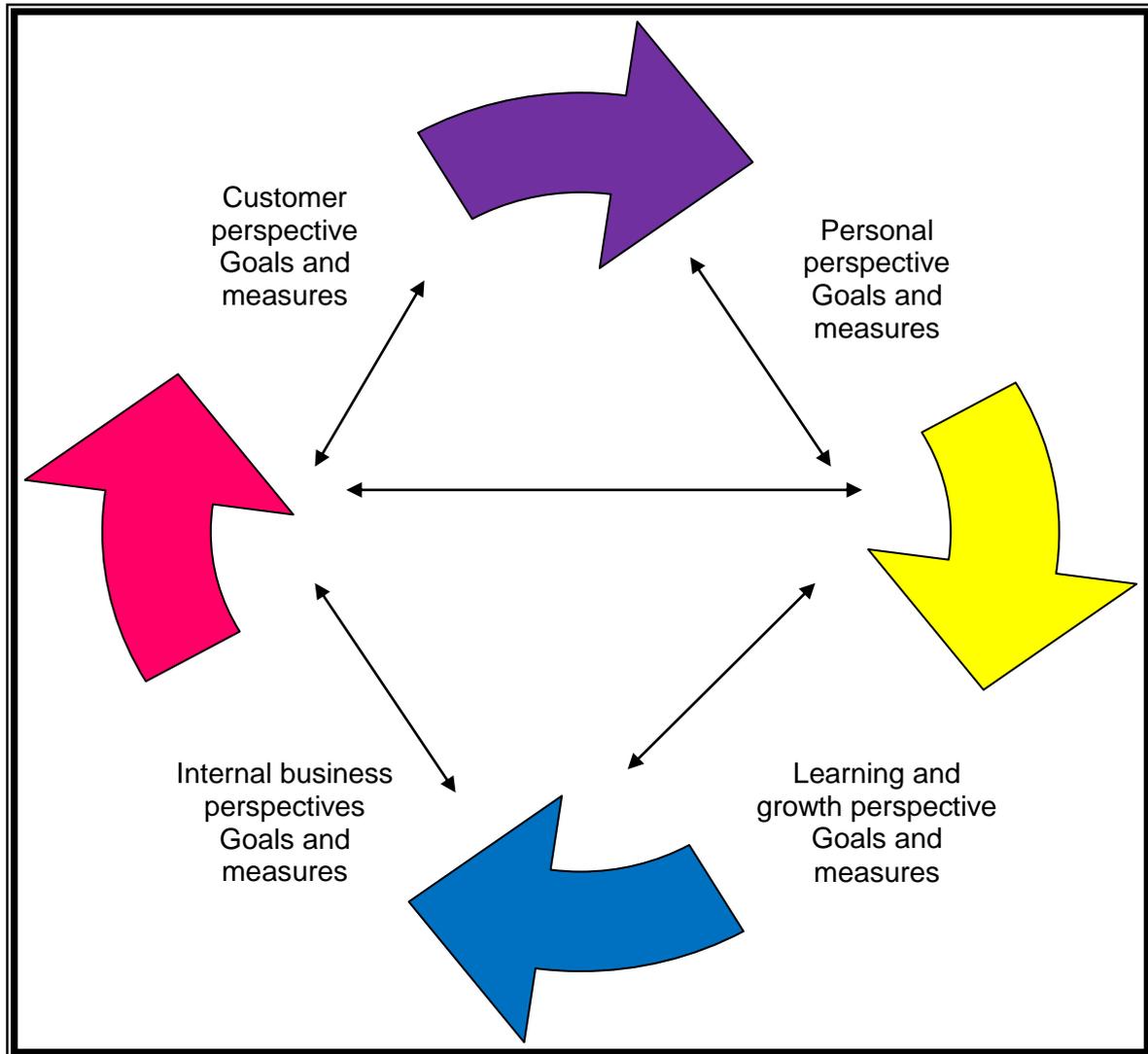
In this study, the four performance dimensions on the scorecard will be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness in measuring the impact of a T&D programme on the performance of employees. Typically, internal performance measures are identified based on the nature of the work of employees. To encourage excellence, these measures should also be connected to organisational goals, in order to ensure that the long-term objectives of the organisation are achievable (Hamid, Yu, Soo & Ijab, 2009). Well-linked performance measures will not only guarantee the desired results, but will also give a competitive edge to an organisation. It is important to realise that equal emphasis should be given to both external and internal performance measures.

According to Yu *et al.* (2009), the BSC is used by organisations to manage and measure performance based on the achievement of its set objectives, vision and long-term goals. The main characteristic that separates the model from other management concepts is that the scorecard focuses on other aspects in addition to financial outcomes, thereby representing a more comprehensive approach to performance management. Since its introduction, the scorecard has undergone various adjustments and refinements, usually made by organisations to suit their unique needs. As reported by Kaplan and Norton (2001), some organisations have customised the BSC to suit the needs of the organisation. In essence, the scorecard comprises four perspectives, namely:

1. Personal – how have the behaviours changed?
2. Customer – how do customers perceive us?
3. Internal business process- what business processes must be improved?
4. Learning and growth – how do we change and improve?

As mentioned earlier, the scorecard can be customised to suit the needs of the organisation. In a similar manner, the platinum mine in the North West province which was selected for this study used the BSC to measure the effectiveness of the T&D programme that was offered to its employees. The main significance of the system can be seen, as the four performance perspectives are clearer and expectations from employees are better understood, while providing an improved means of addressing the personal, customer, internal business processes and learning and growth perspectives of employees.

**Figure 2.1: The Balanced Scorecard**



**The Balanced Scorecard of work performance**

Source: Adapted from Van der Linde (2005:35)

The next section will explore the concepts reflected in Figure 2.1 above in more detail. The scorecard provides a framework within which the literature review can be organised.

## **2.5.1 Aspects of the four performance dimensions linked to the Balanced Scorecard**

### **2.5.1.1 Personal dimension**

Kleinhans (2005) suggests that for training to be transferred to the workplace, it must be accompanied by changes such as job redesign, incentive systems, supervisor support and new tools. The new skills and attitudes acquired in the classroom disappear rapidly unless they are used in and supported by the workplace.

Ripley (2003), states that in an increasingly competitive global economy, there has been considerable emphasis within business organisations on reinvention, re-engineering and transformation, all of which are in pursuit of higher performance. In this context, performance can be described in terms of work-related behaviours and their outcomes. Performance has been said to be a direct result of individuals, the work environment and their interaction. Ripley (2003:87) states that “performance is expressed as  $\text{performance} = f(\text{ability} \times \text{motivation})$ ”, which indicates that performance comes directly from employee behaviours, which in turn are a function of employee motivation and ability.

### **2.5.1.2 Customer perspective**

In view of the increasing similarity of product characteristics, service quality has become essential to gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage in various industries. Liebermann and Hoffmann (2008) define customer orientation as the strategy of developing a consistently profitable enterprise by putting customers' interests first. Previous research has shown that in the long-term, a corporate strategy focusing on customers' needs fosters success because of the high level of face-to-face contact with the customer, which means that customer orientation is particularly important for service companies.

Frontline employees are responsible for transforming the customer-oriented strategy into service quality that is visible to the customer. Therefore, Berry *et al*, as cited by Liebermann and Hoffmann (2008), advise companies to conduct training programmes for this target group. The issue of how to ensure that service quality training programmes actually lead to better service performance has not yet been

sufficiently analysed. The finding that, in general, trainees only apply about 30% of the training content, highlights the importance of monitoring and evaluating the transfer process. Although the number of publications which focus on training transfer has increased since Baldwin and Ford published their theoretical framework in 1988, there is still a lack of studies dealing with how training transfer can be optimised.

Berry *et al.*, as cited in Liebermann and Hoffmann (2008), also emphasise the importance of training frontline employees as a means of improving service quality. Research shows that service quality training can promote employees' customer orientation. However, organisations should not merely send their employees on training programmes, in the hopes that they will be perfectly customer-oriented on their return. Instead, training should be planned thoroughly and tailored to the specific training goals and working environment. An adequate level of perceived practical relevance is essential for guaranteeing acceptance, as well as transfer success.

The globalisation of markets, dynamic technological development, shortening of product lifecycles, and ever-changing customer needs have meant that a company's competitiveness is now more strongly related than ever before to its ability to satisfy customers' needs by creating and incorporating higher value into its products and services. This forces companies to improve their ability to create and deliver value to stakeholders, particularly customers, identify effective business models and undergo valuable innovation processes, thereby leading to innovations in new products, services and processes. Companies also need to leverage strategic resources to drive organisational competencies and superior business performance results (Schiuma & Lerro, 2008).

According to Cagnazzo, Taticchi and Brun (2010), one of the founding principles of a qualitative improvement initiative is to listen to the voices of customers and focus on meeting their expectations. The ability to know one's customers, approach them and measure their satisfaction is indispensable. Customers include all those people who receive direct benefits from the activities of the organisation.

### **2.5.1.3 Internal business perspective**

It is important for staff to clearly understand the objectives of the organisation. This is supported by Nickols (2003) and Fort and Voltero (2004), who mention that the factors which are closely related to levels of performance include clear goals and objectives, as well as intrinsic factors such as self-perception, values and benefits. These responses support the findings of Hicks and Adams (2003) regarding the link between internal rewards and work motivation. Internal rewards include aspects such as self-actualisation, recognition and a sense of achievement, and are increasingly viewed as important motivators.

According to Storey (2002), research linking HR and performance has identified “bundles” of HR policies that are positively associated with an organisation’s performance. Huselid, as cited by Storey (2002), indicates that individual elements such as training make a statistically insignificant contribution to performance. It is only when they are included as part of the bundle that they become significant.

### **2.5.1.4 Learning and growth perspective**

According to Booyesen and Swansburg, and Swansburg, as cited in Awases (2006), continuous education is usually part of the self-development responsibility of employees. However, organisations may need to accept this responsibility in order to ensure that their staffs are kept up-to-date with new developments. This may take the form of workshops, conferences, seminars, self-learning modules, individual studies or degree courses. Continuous education programmes in organisations are aimed at updating employees’ knowledge and competency, in order to increase their capacity to analyse complex problems, deliver and maintain services, and sustain professional interpersonal relationships.

Staff development is a management intervention that helps staff acquire skills and knowledge which enhances their professional goals and at the same time increases their value as employees (Swansburg and Swansburg, as cited in Awases (2006)).

The task of any worker is to bring about a desirable process or change to the organisation. This requires that the worker should possess an adequate technical

knowledge of the subject matter at hand, as well as having the ability to carry it out. In other words, employees should be trained in both the subject area and communication techniques.

The relationship of the individual to performance is very important – the view of company “performance” as an additional matter of interest to the employee is no longer relevant in a modern, knowledge-based organisation, but should instead be integral. Performance management must engage staff on a personal level to move from top-down implementation to active engagement in a virtuous cycle of performance improvement (Jain, 2004).

Schiama and Lerro (2008) emphasise the fact that through performance improvement, an organisation is able to better satisfy the wants, needs and expectations of its stakeholders. In order to improve performance, an organisation needs to continuously improve its effectiveness, as well as efficiency. This requires the ability to design, implement, manage and develop the organisational processes on which the production of an organisation’s output and outcomes is based. This is possible only through a continuous development of organisational competencies. These competencies are rooted in the organisational knowledge assets which build the intellectual capital of the organisation.

Moustaghfir, as cited in Schiama and Lerro (2008), highlights the role of dynamic capabilities in creating and sustaining a competitive advantage, furthering our understanding about the theoretical foundations of knowledge assets and how knowledge management practices improve the quality of business processes through the shaping and renewal of organisational competencies, as well as the role of dynamic capabilities in providing a sustainable competitive advantage, improving performance and increasing profitability.

According to Wilson and Western (2000), a performance appraisal is the annual interview that takes place between a manager and employee to discuss the individual’s job performance over the past 12 months and to draft action plans for improved performance. They go on to say that appraisals can be used for various purposes, including rewards, discipline, coaching, counseling, negotiating for improvements in performance, improving the work environment, increasing morale,

clarifying expectations and duties, improving upward and downward communication, reinforcing management control, helping to validate selection decisions, providing information to support HR activities, identifying development opportunities, improving perceptions of organisational goals, and selecting people for promotion and redundancy (Wilson & Western, 2000).

Personal training and development plans should be included in an appraisal, as well as job-related ones. Personal development is important in an environment and often leads to a greater willingness to undertake further development. The knowledge of every individual in the organisation has the potential power to contribute to the organisation's goals and ensure that the objectives of the organisation are successfully achieved (Shahabidin, 2003).

Nowadays, companies are required to compete in globalised and turbulent markets. In order to survive in such a dynamic environment, they need to be able to satisfy all their stakeholders and at the same time excel along all performance dimensions (Neely, Adams & Kennerley, 2002).

The literature reviewed above indicates that the effect of training on job performance and the output of employees, as well as determining whether or not there is a difference between pre- and post-training job performance of employees, need to be explored. The hypotheses of this study are that there is a significant relationship between actual performance and the set standards as a result of training, between the level of employee training and achievement of organisational goals, and between employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes and job performance. This study attempts to determine whether or not the T&D programme has a significant impact on job performance.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

Giangreco, Sabastiano and Peccei (2009) state that training, as a management practice, is often viewed in very different terms by decision-makers in organisations. On the one hand, it is often seen as a universal panacea for all problems, while on the other hand, it is viewed merely as a cost to the organisation in terms of both time and money. However, regardless of the importance attached to training, the

evaluation of training is increasingly regarded as being important, given the resources that are commonly invested in training programmes by contemporary organisations. Nearly all employees receive some form of training during their careers, and individuals rely on training to enhance their current skills and learn new ones.

This chapter provided a description of the concepts of T&D and job performance. A literature review on the importance of T&D practices was presented, and the role of training was described. This chapter also focused on performance measurement linked to the four performance dimensions of the balanced scorecard. A conclusion may be drawn from the literature that when human resource practices learned during the HRADP are transferred to and applied within the work context, this will influence employees' self-confidence and values. Furthermore, it will result in moral and ethical behaviours, facilitate employee learning and development, and encourage the team to perform optimally and behave in a supportive manner towards staff members. The next chapter will focus on the actual research process followed in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in this study. It begins with a description of the research design, research paradigm, research population and sampling method. The data collection, measuring instrument and data analysis are then outlined, followed with a discussion of the reliability and validity of the instrument, as well as the ethical considerations that apply to this study.

#### **3.2. Research design**

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) emphasise the fact that once the researcher has identified specific research questions, he/she is then in a position to select an appropriate research design. A non-experimental design was used for this study, which was conducted using a retrospective prediction design, in order to determine the impact of the HRADP on the performance of HRA's, as perceived by them. A comparison was made in this study between the perceived performance of employees who attended the HRADP and those who did not. The research instrument which was used is a structured self-administered questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions. This allows for a quantitative data analysis to test the hypothesis that there is a statistically significant difference between the two criterion groups of HRAs.

The hypothesis suggested that the two criterion groups of HRAs would differ in terms of the perception of performance (dependant variable). Therefore, the HRADP (independent variable) was regarded as a predictor variable. It was necessary to ascertain, with a reasonable degree of certainty, whether or not the HRADP caused a significant difference in the perception of performance of the two criterion groups.

#### **3.3. Research paradigm**

This study adopted a quantitative approach. According to Ramalibana (2005:19), quantitative research "is research involving the use of structured questionnaires

where response options have been predetermined and large numbers of respondents are involved". The researcher attempts to maintain objectivity by not allowing his/her personal bias to influence the analysis and interpretation of data. Secondly, the quantitative method manipulates variables and controls natural phenomena. It constructs hypotheses and tests them against the hard facts of reality (Leedy, 1996). Furthermore, quantitative research relies, for its comparative statistical evaluation, on standardisation in its data collection. This means that in a questionnaire, the order of questions and possible responses are strictly prescribed in advance, and the conditions under which the questions are answered should be held constant for all respondents in the study (Flick, 2004). It is against the above background that the quantitative research approach was used. This study sought to determine the impact of a T&D programme on the performance of HRAs, as perceived by them. The chosen research approach informed the method used in this study, namely the structured questionnaire, to collect data for the research.

### **3.4. Research population**

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) define a population as the totality of entities in which researchers are interested - that is, the collection of individuals, objects or events about which they want to draw inferences. It is the collection of elements from which the sample (n) is actually selected. The target population for this study was all eighty (80) HR assistants working at the Anglo Platinum Rustenburg Mine (AP-RM) during the period 2007-2008. A list of HRAs was obtained from the Operational Skills Development Centre's database.

### **3.5. Sampling method**

Leedy and Ormrod (2005) define a sample as a subset of the population selected to obtain information concerning the characteristics of the population. The non-probability sampling method known as convenience sampling was used in this study. The sample included 66 of the 80 HRAs, which comprised the criterion group of HRAs who attended the HRADP and those who did not. The respondents were selected based on their willingness to participate in the study. The sample was

divided into four demographic categories, namely age, gender, race, and years of employment in the organisation.

### **3.6 Data collection and measuring instrument**

#### **3.6.1 Data collection**

The collection of data is a critical phase in the implementation of a research project. According to Diamantopoulos and Schlegelmilch (2004), data is the basic material with which a researcher works. In order to draw valid conclusions from a study, it is essential that the researcher has sound data to analyse and interpret.

The actual process of data collection took place over a period of a month. Prior to commencing with the distribution of questionnaires, a written request for approval to conduct the study was submitted to the Group HRD manager, including the research proposal, proof of university registration and proposed measures for protecting participants' confidentiality.

Permission was granted by the Group HRD Manager: Operational Skills Development. Once approval was obtained, arrangements were made with the personnel at AP-RM to ask the HRAs if they would be willing to participate in the study. HR Coordinators were conveniently selected and telephoned regarding their subordinates' participation in the research project.

The questionnaire was hand-delivered via the contact official. All completed questionnaires were sent to the identified contact official for collection, and a time-frame was identified for the completion and collection of the questionnaires.

#### **3.6.2 Measuring instrument**

##### **3.6.2.1 Structured questionnaire**

The Learning Impact Questionnaire (LIQ), developed by the University of Johannesburg's Faculty of Industrial Psychology and People Management, was used in this study to collect data. Respondents had to make a choice between

alternative responses, with a focus on a) the change in their behaviour (attitude, morale etc.) ; and b) the change in their performance in terms of implementing what they had learnt and showing tangible evidence of improvements in their daily work performance.

The questionnaire was linked to the Balanced Scorecard model of performance management, which comprises four performance dimensions, as indicated below. According to Yu *et al.* (2009), the balanced scorecard is used by organisations to manage and measure performance based on the achievement of set objectives, vision and long-term goals. They also state that the main characteristic that distinguishes the model from other management concepts is that the scorecard focuses on other aspects in addition to financial outcomes, thereby representing a more comprehensive approach to performance management.

Questions contained in the self-administered questionnaires were in the form of close-ended questions and using a 5-point Likert scale. Perceived performance was measured by means of questions which were structured around four performance dimensions, namely:

- a) personal (attitudes, behaviour, morale, esteem);
- b) customer;
- c) internal business; and
- d) learning and growth.

### **3.6.2.2 Layout of the questionnaire**

The questionnaire consisted of 26 closed-ended questions, where respondents were presented with a series of statements from which they were asked to choose the ones that most closely represented their views. The five-point Likert scale was used here, as it required the respondents to rate their change in behaviour and performance according to the four performance dimensions.

The questionnaire which was distributed to the sampled respondents was structured in such a way as to elicit information that would help achieve the research objectives. The first part of the questionnaire contained questions regarding biographical information, which assisted in describing the sample. The second part

focused on the changes during the last two years in relation to the impact of HRDP on the performance of HRAs, as perceived by them.

Closed-end questions were formulated to obtain information regarding the four dimensions, the first of which was the personal dimension, which contained ten questions aimed at determining whether or not there was an improvement in terms of personal factors such as the attitudes, behaviour, morale and esteem of HRAs. The second dimension was the customer dimension, which contained five questions aimed at establishing the customer responsiveness levels of HRAs as a result of the HRDAP. The third dimension was the internal business dimension, which contained six questions aimed at determining whether or not HRAs had any knowledge and understanding of internal business issues. The fourth and last dimension was the learning and growth dimension, which contained four questions aimed at determining HRAs' interest in pursuing further learning and growth in the HR field.

The average time allowed for completion of the questionnaire was between 35 and 45 minutes, depending on the employee's level of understanding of the questions posed. The answers to these questions would enable the researcher to obtain a greater understanding of the impact of the T&D programme on the perceived performance of HRAs. Velada *et al.* (2007) are of the opinion that trainees are the most important and valid source of their own performance, as their perceptions will drive their motivation and work performance.

The researcher tested the questionnaire on a group of four HRAs who were not part of the study, in order to determine the need for changes to be made in terms of the questions, cost and length of the questionnaire. These participants were not included in the main study. The pilot study confirmed that it was feasible to conduct the study, and because the questionnaire was viewed as being understandable, no amendments were made to it. This questionnaire is included as Appendix B at the end of this study, and an example of a completed questionnaire is contained in Appendix C.

The questions were constructed as follows:

Part A: Biographical information

i. (Q) 1 to 5 under Biographical details:

Q1 provided four age groups ranging from 20-30 to 50+. The purpose of this question was to determine whether or not the level of maturity of the respondent had an influence on the nature of his or her responses.

Q2 aimed to establish the gender of each respondent, as females are known to have a different approach to some problems from that of males, which may influence their answers. Wehrwein, Lujan and DiCarlo (2006) assert that males and females have different preferences in terms of learning style, which means that they will approach work activities differently.

Q3 aimed to determine the race group of respondents by providing a selection of four race groups, namely Black, White, Coloured and Asian/Indian. It was felt that the different race groups may have different approaches to some of the problems being investigated in this study.

Q4 provided a selection of four groups of years of work experience, ranging from 0 to 16+. It was felt that a longer period of employment may give some respondents better insight into some of the problems being investigated in this study.

Q5 addressed the core of the study, namely to enable a comparison to be made between HRAs who had attended and those who had not attended the HRA Development Programme.

All the questions in this section were therefore aimed at obtaining an overview of the biographical details of participants.

Part B: Four Performance dimensions:

ii. Q1-10 under Personal dimension:

The questions in this section were aimed at identifying any positive changes within the last two years on a personal level.

Q1 dealt for the respondents' knowledge of the HRM field. The purpose of this question was to determine the level of knowledge of respondents in the HRM field in terms of the four areas of HRM responsibility, namely establishing HR policies and procedures, developing/choosing HR methods, monitoring/evaluating HRM practices and advising/assisting managers on HR matters (Kleinman, 2010). Q2 focused on the skills level in HR practices. The aim of this question was to determine the respondents' perceptions of their HR skill level. Q3 asked about the respondents' confidence in executing their tasks as an HR assistant. The aim of this question was to determine the confidence levels of respondents in executing their tasks. Q4 looked at the respondents' level of morale in their job. The aim of this question was to establish whether or not the level of morale of respondents had an influence on the nature of their responses.

Q5 dealt with changes in the workplace as a result of the respondents' contribution towards their job. The purpose of this question was to determine the respondents' perceptions of their contribution in the workplace, in view of the fact that the more competence an individual possesses, the more s/he will contribute to the completion of tasks. Q6 asked about the respondents' level of passion for their job. The aim here was to find out whether or not the level of interest of respondents had an influence on their work. It can assumed that when people are doing something they love, are good at, and are rewarded for, an environment of collaboration, trust, flexibility, accountability, creativity, experimentation, candour and fun can prevail.

Q7 focused on the respondents' level of experience in HR practices. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' perceptions regarding their experience influenced their perceptions with regard to their job performance. According to Rodrigues and Rebelo (2009), job experience impacts on task and contextual performance in distinct ways. Based on the assumption that task performance reflects proficiency in carrying out tasks that are detailed in a formal job description, this performance will increase as employees obtain job-specific knowledge that allows them to perform these tasks more effectively. Q8 asked about the respondents' level of self-esteem. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' level of self- esteem had an influence on their

perceived work performance. When an employer offers more task variety to employees, this can result in higher levels of self-esteem.

Q9 dealt with respondents' interpersonal skills. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' perceptions of their level of interpersonal skills had improved. According to Boomhower (2010), communicating with one another at all levels within an organisation is key to maintaining a competitive advantage. A client's views of and relationship with an organisation is dependent on the image of that organisation, which stems from its interactions. The client's perception of the quality provided will influence his or her decision to conduct business with the organisation. The way in which one interacts with others will create an image in their minds as to whether or not one is credible and trustworthy. Communication is important because we often attach different meanings to the same words, which results in the message being interpreted incorrectly. This is another reason why clarity and understanding are essential for business productivity and growth today. Q10 focused on respondents' certainty regarding their career direction. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents were more aware, after attending the HRADP, of the career path that they needed to follow within the HRM field.

iii. Q11-15 under Customer dimension:

The questions in this section focused on positive changes that were made by respondents at a customer level. "Customers", in this context, referred to internal functions that needed to be serviced by an HR Assistant. Q11 dealt with the respondents' ability to provide an improved HR service to the different HR functions in their organisation. The purpose of this question was to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding their service delivery towards customers. Batt (2002) argues that a direct link between HR practices and employee performance in customer service settings is based on the assumption that high involvement practices help employees to develop the kind of firm-specific, human capital knowledge of a firm's products, customers and work processes that enables them to interact effectively with customers. Q12 asked about the respondents' implementation of ways of improving the current HR processes in their specific department. The aim of this

question was to determine whether or not the respondents' perceptions had an influence on their contribution towards the implementation of current HR processes.

Q13 focused on the respondents' level of professionalism, resulting in them being given more challenging tasks to execute in their current job. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' level of professionalism had an influence on their work performance, which resulted in them being given more challenging tasks to execute in their current jobs. According to the South African Board for People Practices' (SABPP) code of conduct, HR practitioners have the obligation to uphold the profession's norms and principles, and to conduct their activities in a professional and ethical manner. This is important to ensure the trust of stakeholders, by striving to build the reputation of the profession through the values of responsibility, integrity, respect and competence (SABPP, 2006). Q14 asked about the respondents' awareness of HR planning in their current HR operations. The aim of this question was to establish the respondents' perceptions regarding their level of awareness in terms of HR planning in their current operations.

Q15 dealt with respondents' sensitivity when dealing with their fellow colleagues (cultural diversity, coaching and counselling situations). The purpose of this question was to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding their level of sensitivity towards their colleagues. Sizoo, Plank, Iskat and Serrie (2005) state that employees with a high level of intercultural sensitivity towards other employees in terms of interpersonal skills, job satisfaction and social interaction have increased job performance. The respondents' perceived positive changes in terms of how they service customers provides a good indication of how their contribution, level of awareness and perceived work performance were impacted.

iv. Q16 – 21 under Internal business dimension:

Q16 focused on the respondents' awareness of the importance of the distribution of information related to HR practices within the context of the organisation's quality assurance system. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents were aware of the importance of the distribution of information relating to HR practices. Batt (2002) argues that high involvement HR practices allow a firm to build firm-specific human capital, which in turn influences organisational

performance in two ways: directly, via its effect on employee performance, and indirectly, via employee attachment to the firm.

Q17 asked respondents about the provision of advice in response to queries on organisational procedures related to HR issues. The aim of this question was to establish whether or not the respondents had a better understanding of organisational HR procedures after attending the HRDAP. Procedures assist in eliminating common misunderstandings which can result in costly mistakes for the organisation (Ormsbee, 2010:16). Q18 dealt with respondents' awareness of people (team) dynamics in the workplace. The purpose of this question was to determine respondents' perceptions regarding their awareness level of team dynamics. Kelly (2010) suggests that understanding team dynamics in the workplace and getting to know one's colleagues and their work styles can make work interactions go more smoothly.

Q19 focused on respondents' perceived performance in terms of their current administrative duties related to HR management and practices. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' perceptions of their performance had an influence on their execution of administrative duties. Q20 asked about the respondents' understanding of the national legislation which impacts on their role as an HR Assistant. The aim here was to determine the respondents' perceived understanding of HR legislation, since HR legislation helps HR employees to understand what statutory instruments exist, how they will impact on their work, and what areas they need to focus on.

Q21 focused on respondents' understanding of the business operations within the workplace. The aim of this question was to determine the respondents' perceived understanding of the business processes and systems of the organisation, as employees need to have a good knowledge with regard to services, products and customer needs, as well as the abilities and skills to meet customer needs (Liao, Toya, Lepak & Hong, 2009). All these questions focused on the positive changes related to the internal business perspective.

v. Q22- 25 under Learning and growth dimension

The questions in this section focused on positive changes occurring from a learning and growth perspective. This refers to the respondents' attitudes towards their own continuous development. This was aimed at identifying signs of practicing a culture of lifelong learning. Q 22 asked respondents about the extent to which they wished to pursue further development opportunities within the HR field. The aim here was to determine the level of respondents' perceived improved performance within the HR field. Q23 dealt with respondents' awareness of the fact that they needed to continuously update their skills – both in terms of HR practices and in their occupational area of expertise. The purpose of this question was to establish the respondents' level of awareness regarding continuous skills improvement within their area of expertise.

Q24 asked respondents about their level of awareness regarding organisational assistance in pursuing further development opportunities. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not respondents were aware that the organisation would assist them in pursuing their studies. Q25 asked respondents to rate the performance management system used in the organisation (if one was available). The purpose of this question was to determine whether or not there had been any changes with regard to respondents' performance ratings over the past two years.

vi. Q26 under General

Q26 asked respondents about what they ascribed their development in the human resource field to. The aim here was to determine what had contributed to the respondents' development.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

Moorhouse (2004) indicates that in non-experimental research, as in the case of this study, one has to build in controls for alternative explanations by means of statistics. Controls were necessary in this study, since there were a number of factors that needed to be considered when determining the impact of the HRADP on the performance of HRAs, as perceived by them. The SPSS (Statistical Package for

Social Sciences) was used to analyse the data statistically. The advantages of using the SPSS were that the program provided many ways in which to manipulate quantitative data and contained a wide variety of statistical measures. According to Belli (2008), *t*-test inferential statistics are used to draw conclusions beyond the data collected and to test hypotheses.

A five-point Likert scale was used for the questionnaire. A Likert scale is a type of psychometric response scale often used in questionnaires, and is the most widely used scale in survey research. When responding to a Likert questionnaire item, respondents have to indicate their level of agreement with a statement (How to Design and Report Likert-Scale, 2010). In this study, respondents were asked to rate each item of the four performance dimensions in the questionnaire, in order to measure changes in behaviour and/or performance. The Likert scale can be outlined as follows:

- 1 = no positive change
- 2 = a very small positive change
- 3 = some positive change
- 4 = a fair amount of positive change
- 5 = a great deal of positive change

Once the questionnaires were collected from the respondents, the data was exported into an Excel spreadsheet, where each respondent's questionnaire was allocated an identification number for easy reference. To enable the statistical analysis of all questionnaire variables, each respondent's dataset on the excel spreadsheet was transferred to the SPSS program. The data analysis followed the sequence of hypotheses, whereby the researcher first had to establish the existence of a significant difference between the HRAs who attended the HRAD and those who were not exposed to it.

In this study, *t*-test analysis was used to investigate the differences between the mean scores obtained for the biographical variables (age, gender, race and number of years' experience in the organisation) of the HRAs in terms of their perceived performance. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was done to support the identified factors of sub-objectives, namely the personal dimension, customer responsiveness,

internal business perspective, and learning and growth. According to DeCoster (1998), EFA attempts to determine the nature of the constructs influencing a set of responses. In this study, EFA was used to determine whether or not the biographical variables had an influence on the responses to questions. The issue of interest was whether or not, in general, the HRADP impacted on the perceived work performance of HRAs.

### **3.9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY OF THE INSTRUMENT**

#### **3.8.1 Reliability**

Kleinhans (2005) refers to reliability as the extent to which a measure will produce consistent results. Research is considered to be reliable when the findings are repeatable. The LIQ was the most practical and reliable data collection method for this study. In order to ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, the researcher piloted the questionnaire with four HRAs who were not part of the study. Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Some researchers, as a rule of thumb, require a reliability of 0.70 or higher. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha value was (.863), which is well above the minimum. According to Gay and Airason (2003), Cronbach's alpha is a general form of the Kuder Richardson (K-R) 20 formula, which can be used when items are not scored dichotomously. In this study, a five-point Likert scale was used in the questionnaire to score 26 items, which were divided into four performance dimensions, as previously indicated in the layout of the questionnaire.

#### **3.8.2 Validity**

Vithal and Jansen (2003) indicate that validity is an attempt to determine whether or not the meaning and interpretation of an event is sound, or whether or not a particular measure is an accurate reflection of what one intends to measure. To ensure face validity, the questionnaire was sent to the senior HR manager for scrutiny. This did not result in any changes being made to the questionnaire. This person indicated that the questionnaire adequately measured the four performance dimensions, and she therefore believed that the description and method of measurement was suitable for the respondents in this study.

### **3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

It was important that ethical values were not compromised in this study. The researcher took full responsibility for the nature and consequences of the research project. The human rights of the participants were protected in the following manner:-

- The right to privacy and non-participation: individuals had the right to decide whether or not they wanted to participate and to choose whether or not to disclose certain information.
- The right to remain anonymous: in order to protect respondents' anonymity, the researcher focused on group data, reflected in terms of averages, so as to avoid the identification of individuals. Each questionnaire was allocated a number for identification purposes.
- The right to confidentiality: this was respected, and access to data was restricted at all times.
- Reasons for the study were provided when the questionnaire was sent to participants.

### **3.10 SUMMARY**

This chapter introduced the quantitative methodology used in this study to determine whether or not the T&D programme had any impact on the perceived performance of HRAs. A questionnaire was used for data collection purposes, and focused on the four performance dimensions, in order to identify behavioural and performance changes as a result of the attendance or non- exposure to the HRADP. The four dimensions were as follows: 1) personal dimension, which focused on the individual level with regard to HR skills and knowledge, morale and self-esteem; 2) customer dimension, which focused on internal and external customer satisfaction; 3) internal business dimension, which focused on the processes, systems and procedures of the organisation; and 4) learning and growth dimension, which focused on the prospective career opportunities and development of respondents. The next chapter presents the results for all four performance dimensions and concludes with an interpretation of these results.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

As mentioned in chapter 1, the main objective of this study was to determine the impact of the HRADP on the performance of HRAs according to the four identified performance dimensions required to function effectively in a HR administrative role at the selected platinum mine. In order to achieve this, a structured questionnaire was used. The construction of this questionnaire, as well as a description of the population, was outlined in chapter 3. In this chapter, the responses to the questionnaires will be statistically analysed and interpreted. The results will provide a basis for the rejection or acceptance of the research hypotheses presented in chapter 1.

The hypotheses are as follows:

**H<sub>0</sub>.** The training and development programme will not have an impact on the perceived performance of HRAs.

**H<sub>1</sub>.** The training and development programme will have a significant impact on the perceived performance of HRAs.

#### **4.2 ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES**

An analysis of the responses is presented and discussed in detail in this section.

##### **4.2.1 Procedure for data analysis**

The Learning Impact Questionnaire (LIQ), linked to the Balanced Scorecard model of performance, was used in a pre-coded form to overcome the lengthy and cumbersome procedures involved in preparing for data analysis. All the questions were quantitative in nature, and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to capture and analyse the quantitative data. This software program is most appropriate for analysing data on human behaviour, as it is capable of performing contingency tables, univariate and multivariate analyses, and other

statistical procedures/tests. A professional statistician was hired to input data into the computer for analysis. The data was analysed to determine whether or not there was a significant difference between the perceived performance of HRAs who attended the HRADP and those who did not. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire, which consisted of four performance dimensions and one additional dimension aimed at determining what had contributed to the respondents' development. These dimensions were presented as follows:

- Personal: ten questions
- Customer perspective: five questions
- Internal business : six questions
- Learning and growth: four questions
- General: one question

*Response rate*

The respondents were all HRAs working for a selected platinum mine in the North West Province. Of the 66 questionnaires distributed, 54 were returned by respondents. Only twelve respondents failed to complete the questionnaire, bringing the total sample to 54 respondents, which represented a response rate of 82 percent, as indicated in the table below.

**Table 4.1: Response rate**

Number of questionnaires distributed	66	100%
Number of questionnaires received	54	81.8%
Response rate	54	82%

Table 4.1 above indicates a general response rate of 82% percent, which is considered to be very good (Pilot & Beck, 2004).

**4.2.2 Biographical Information**

The objective of this section was to provide biographical information about the respondents and use some of the information to determine whether or not there was

a significant difference of opinion based on the respondents' age, gender, race, years of experience and T&D programmes attended over the past two years.

**Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics for the sample**

Simple size	Gender	Race	Mean Age	Years of experience	Programmes Attended
<b>N=54</b>	<b>M=16</b> (29.6%) <b>F= 38</b> (70.4%)	Black=46 (85.2%) White=3 (5.6%) Coloured=5(9.6%)	34	0-5 =26 (48.1%) 6-10=13 (24.1%) 11-15=7 (13%) 16+ =8 (14.8%)	HRADP=31(64.6%) Managing Conflict=4(8.3%) SAP HR=2(4.2%) SAP Time Management= (4.2%) Other =9 (18.8%)

Guilford, cited in Van der Linde (2005), states that research has proven that deferential predictability is often observed when the correlation between a predictor and a criterion varies as a function of the classification of some third variable, namely a biographical variable. For the purposes of this study, age, race, gender, years of experience and programmes attended during the last two years were used as predictor variables. The objective was to provide demographic information about the respondents and use it to determine if there was any significant difference based on the abovementioned variables (See Table 4.2).

For Question 1, which dealt with respondents' age, the results revealed that 40.7 % of the respondents were between the age of 19 and 30 years, and only 1.9 % were above the age of 51 years.

Question 2 asked for a differentiation between males and females, because females are known to have a different approach to some problems to that of males, and this may influence their answers. Wehrwein, Lujan and DiCarlo (2006) assert that males and females have different preferences in terms of learning style, which results in them approaching work activities differently.

Question 3 focused on the respondents' racial group, and namely Black, White, Coloured or Asian/Indian. It was felt that the different race groups may have different approaches to some of the problems being investigated in this study.

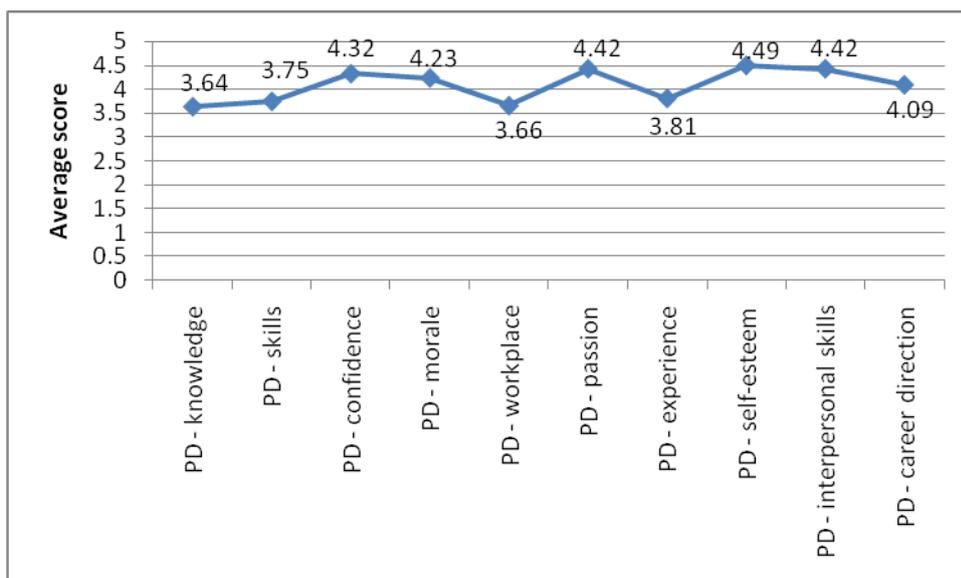
Question 4 dealt with the respondents' years of work experience, ranging from 0 to 16+ years. It was felt that a longer period of employment would give respondents a better insight into some of the problems.

Question 5 addressed the core of the research, namely enabling a comparison to be made between HRAs who had attended the HRA Development Programme and those who had not.

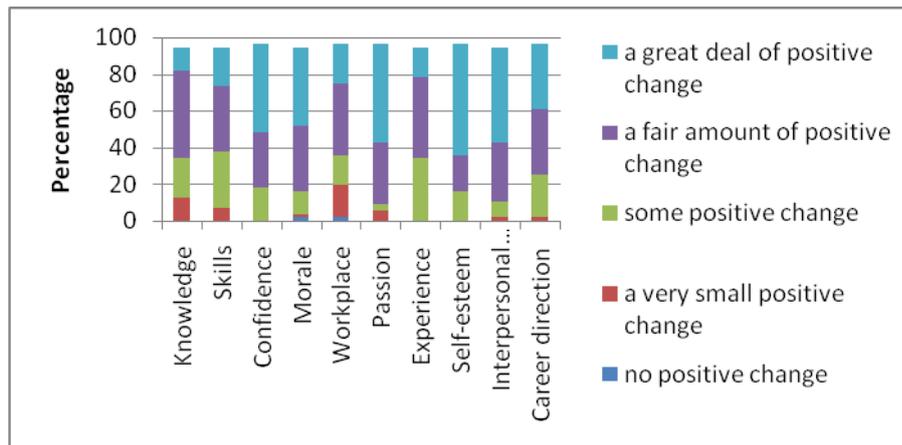
### 4.2.3 Aspects relating to the Personal dimension

This section attempts to determine the level of knowledge and skills of HRAs and how the perceived work performance of HRAs in relation to their changes in learning behaviour on a personal level have changed over the last two years. Respondents were asked to assess their knowledge and skills, as used in their current HRA roles, according to five categories. The questions were aimed at identifying any positive changes within the last two years at a personal level.

**Figure 4.1(a): Aspects relating to the Personal dimension**



**Figure 4.1(b): Aspects relating to the Personal dimension**



Question 1 focused on the respondents' knowledge of the HRM field. The purpose of this question was to determine the level of knowledge of respondents in terms of the HRM field, according to the four areas of HRM responsibility, namely establishing HR policies and procedures, developing/choosing HR methods, monitoring/evaluating HRM practices and advising/assisting line managers with regard to HR matters (Kleinman, 2010). 12.5% of the respondents indicated that their knowledge of HR had undergone a very small amount of positive change over the past two years. However, 48% of the respondents indicated that their knowledge of HR had witnessed a fair amount of positive change during the last two years. There had therefore been a significant improvement in the level of knowledge of HR in this respondent group. The knowledge of every individual in the organisation has the potential to contribute towards the organisation's goals and ensure that the objectives of the organisation are successfully achieved (Shahabidin, 2003)

Question 2 dealt with respondents' skills level in terms of HR practices. The aim of this question was to determine the respondents' perceptions of their HR skills level. The results show that 7.1% of the respondents indicated that a very small positive change took place in this regard, whereas 35% of the respondents indicated that a fair amount of positive change took place, which means that there was a significant improvement in their HR skills.

Question 3 asked about the respondents' confidence in executing their tasks as an HR assistant. The aim of this question was to determine the confidence levels of respondents in executing their tasks. 18% of the respondents indicated that there

was a positive change in this regard, whereas 48% indicated that there was a significant amount of positive change. Therefore, the confidence levels of HRAs had improved over the last two years.

Question 4 focused on respondents' level of morale in terms of their job. The purpose of this question was to determine whether or not the level of morale of respondents had an influence on the nature of their responses to the questions posed. Very few respondents (4%) indicated that there was no positive change in this regard, whereas 48% of the respondents indicated that there was a great deal of positive change. This shows that the morale of respondents had improved significantly over the past two years.

Question 5 asked respondents about the changes in the workplace as a result of their contributions towards their jobs. The aim of this question was to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding their contributions in the workplace, in view of the fact that the more competence an individual possesses, the more s/he will contribute towards the completion of tasks. Only 2% of the respondents indicated that there was no positive change in the workplace. However, 39% of the respondents indicated that there was a fair amount of positive change in the workplace. This shows that there was an improvement in the workplace as a result of their contributions.

Question 6 focused on respondents' level of passion for their job. The aim here was to determine whether or not the level of interest of respondents in their job had an influence on their work. Turoff (2004) concludes that when people are doing something that they love, are good at, and are rewarded for, an environment of collaboration, trust, flexibility, accountability, creativity, experimentation, candour and fun can prevail. Only 5.4% of the respondents indicated that a very small positive change took place in this regard, whereas 54% of the respondents indicated that a great deal of positive change took place. This suggests that HRAs' passion for their job has improved significantly over the past two years.

Question 7 dealt with respondents' level of experience in terms of HR practices. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' perceptions

regarding their experience influenced their perceived work performance. According to Rodrigues and Rebelo (2009), job experience impacts on task and contextual performance in distinct ways. Based on the assumption that task performance reflects proficiency in carrying out tasks detailed in a formal job description, it will increase as employees obtain job-specific knowledge that enables them to perform tasks more effectively. Only 16.1% of the respondents indicated that they had not experienced a great deal of positive change, whereas 44% of the respondents indicated that there had been a fair amount of positive change in this regard. This shows that the HRAs' level of experience had improved by 44% over the past two years.

Question 8 asked about respondents' self-esteem. The purpose of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' level of self-esteem had an influence on their perceived work performance. Chun, Kee and Niu (2010) argue that offering employees more task variety results in higher levels of self-esteem. The results show that 16.1% of the respondents indicated that some positive change in their perceived performance took place during the last two years. On the other hand, 61% of the respondents indicated that there was a great deal of positive change in their perceived performance over the past two years. This suggests that the HRAs' level of self-esteem has improved over the past two years, which clearly supports the hypothesis.

Question 9 focused on respondents' interpersonal skills. The aim here was to determine whether or not the respondents' perceptions of their level of interpersonal skills had improved. Boomhower (2010) asserts that communicating with one another at all levels within an organisation is key to maintaining a competitive advantage. A client's views on and relationship with an organisation is dependent on the latter's image, which stems from its interactions. Although 2% of the respondents indicated that a very small positive change had taken place over the past two years, more than 52% of the respondents indicated that a great deal of positive change had occurred. There was therefore a significant improvement in HRAs' interpersonal skills during the last two years. Interpersonal relations, including communication and teamwork, are one of the main features of an organisation (Jooste, 1993). It can be deduced that working relations and climate contribute to teamwork, which is in turn a

motivator for increased productivity and job satisfaction, and will ultimately contribute to improved performance (Adam & Bond, 2000).

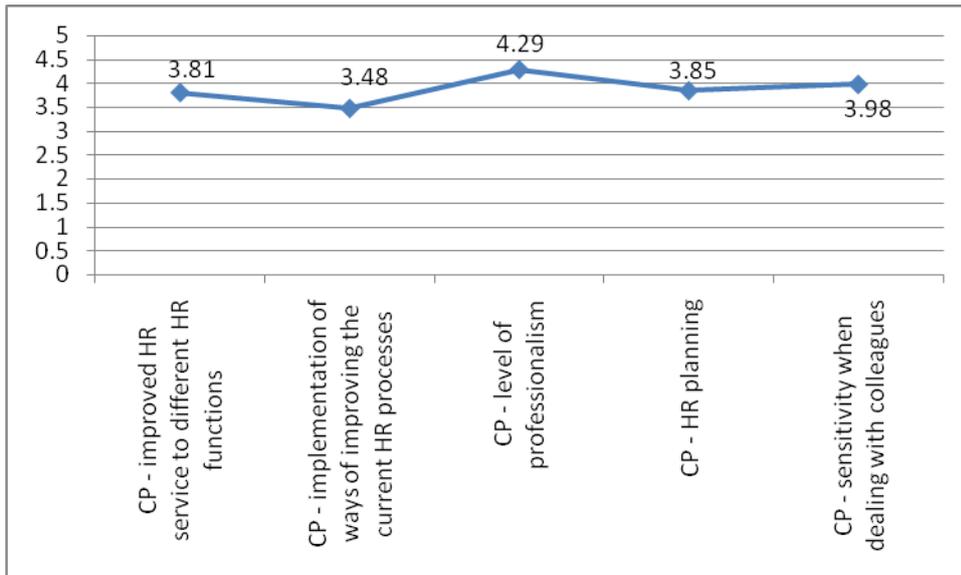
Question 10 asked respondents about their certainty regarding their career direction. The purpose of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents were more aware of the career path that they need to follow within the HRM field. Only 2% of the respondents indicated that a very small positive change took place, whereas 36% indicated that there was a fair amount of positive change over the past two years. Therefore, HRAs' sense of career direction had significantly improved over the past two years.

The overall results in relation to personal dimension aspects showed a positive change over the past two years. However, it is disconcerting to note that a significant number of respondents (39 %) rated themselves as average in terms of changes to the workplace that occurred as a result of their contributions towards their job. It can therefore be concluded that not all HRAs have the required skills to provide high-quality HR services within their work environment.

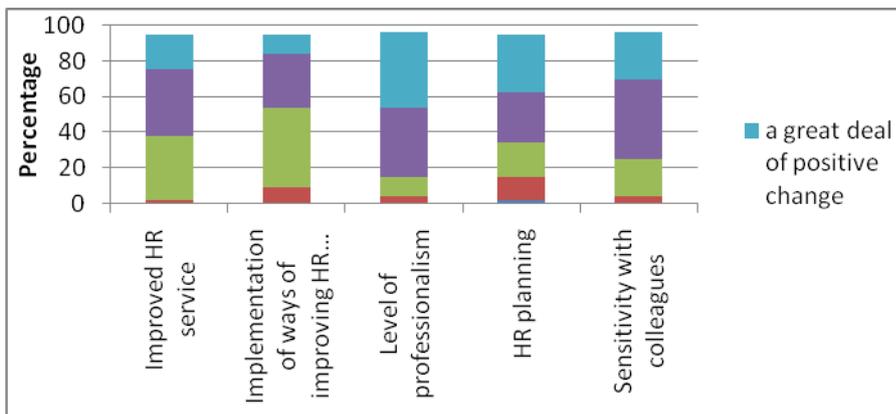
#### **4.2.4 Aspects relating to the Customer dimension**

The objective of this section was to obtain information about respondents' perception regarding their level of professionalism and sensitivity when dealing with colleagues and customers. It measured respondents' level of improvement in HR planning and service delivery to different HR functions over the past two years.

**Figure 4.2(a): Aspects relating to the Customer dimension**



**Figure 4.2(b): Aspects relating to the Customer dimension**



Question 11 focused on respondents’ ability to provide an improved HR service to the different HR functions in their organisation. The purpose of this question was to determine respondents’ perceptions regarding their service delivery within the organisation to their customers. Batt (2002) argues that a direct link between HR practices and employee performance in customer service settings is based on the idea that high-involvement practices help employees develop the kind of firm-specific human capital knowledge of a firm’s products, customers and work processes, which enables them to interact effectively with customers. Only 2% of the respondents indicated that they had experienced a very small amount of improved positive change in this regard, whereas 38% of them indicated that a fair amount of positive change took place over the past two years.

Question 12 asked about the respondents' implementation of ways to improve the current HR processes in their specific department. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not respondents' perceptions had an influence on their contribution towards the implementation of current HR processes. The results show that 9% of HRAs indicated that a very small amount of positive change took place. However, 45% of the respondents indicated that there had been a significant amount of positive changes in the implementation of ways to improve HR processes during the last two years. The findings show that 9% (see Table 4.4 below) of the respondents still believe that the implementation of HR processes and improvement thereof are still a challenge for them.

Question 13 dealt with respondents' level of professionalism, which resulted in them being given more challenging tasks to execute in their current job. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' level of professionalism had an influence which resulted in them being given more challenging tasks to execute in their current jobs. The South African Board for People Practices' (SABPP) code of conduct obliges HR practitioners to uphold the profession's norms and principles, and to conduct their activities in a professional and ethical manner. This is to ensure the trust of stakeholders, by striving to build the reputation of the profession through the values of responsibility, integrity, respect and competence (SABPP, 2006). Only 4% of the respondents indicated that a very small positive change in their perceived performance had occurred, whereas 43% of them indicated that there had been a great deal of positive change over the past two years. This shows that there has been a significant improvement in the level of professionalism of respondents during the last two years in terms of how they deliver services to their customers.

Question 14 asked respondents about their awareness of HR planning in their current HR operations. The aim of this question was to establish the respondents' perceptions about their level of awareness regarding HR planning in their current operations. The results show that only 2% of the respondents indicated that no positive changes were experienced in their perceived performance with regard to how they do HR planning, while 32% of them indicated that they had experienced a great deal of positive change. This suggests that there seems to be a lack of HR

planning, since only 32% of the respondents had experienced positive changes. 33% of the respondents felt that something had to be done to improve the situation in terms of how HR planning is incorporated into their roles.

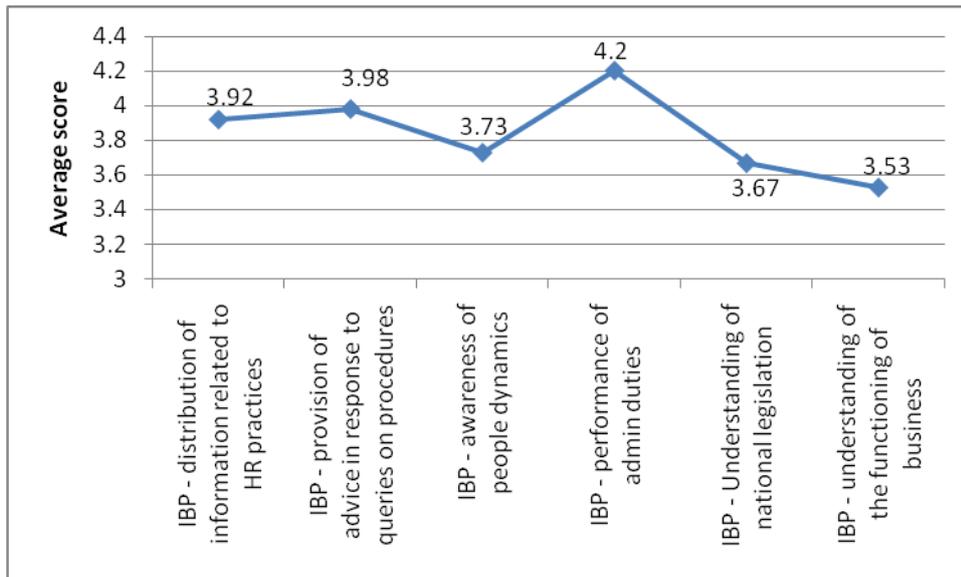
Question 15 focused on respondents' sensitivity when dealing with fellow colleagues (cultural diversity, coaching and counselling situations). The purpose of this question was to determine respondents' perceptions regarding their level of sensitivity towards their colleagues. Sizoo, Plank, Iskat and Serrie (2005) state that employees with a high level of intercultural sensitivity towards other employees in terms of interpersonal skills, job satisfaction and social interaction have increased job performance. The respondents' answers to this question would indicate how their contribution, level of awareness and, ultimately, perceived work performance were impacted. Even though 4% of the respondents indicated that a very small positive change had taken place, 45% of them indicated that a fair amount of positive change took place over the past two years. This shows that their level of sensitivity towards other colleagues has improved during the last two years.

Table 4.4 below shows that there was an improvement in HR services, level of professionalism and sensitivity towards other colleagues. However, the results also indicate that there are still challenges with regard to the implementation of ways to improve HR processes and HR planning.

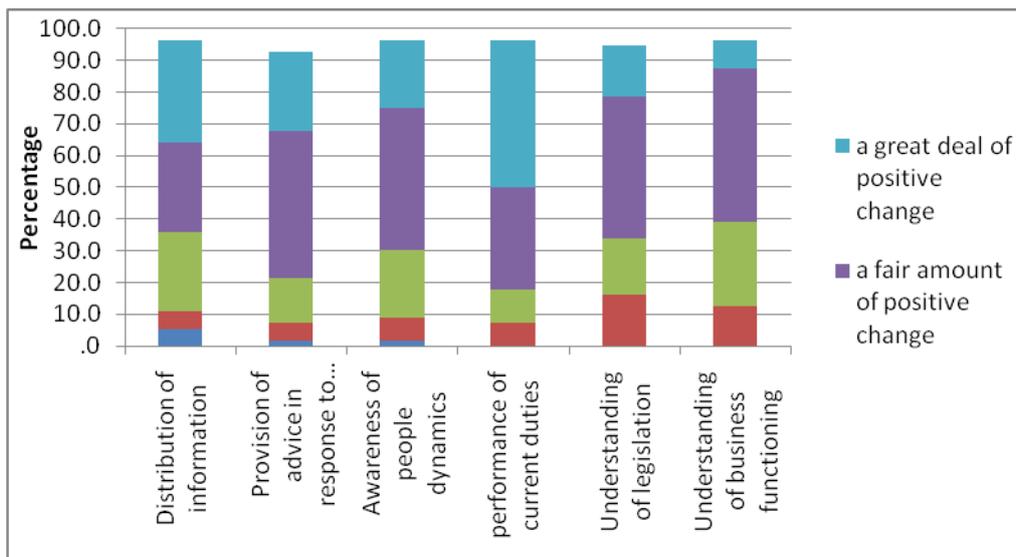
#### **4.2.5 Aspects relating to the Internal Business dimension**

The objective of this section was to elicit information from the respondents regarding their understanding of the functioning of the business, people dynamics and legislation. In addition, this section looked at the distribution of information related to HR practices and how this impacted on their performance over the past two years.

**Figure 4.3 (a): Aspects relating to the Internal Business dimension**



**Figure 4.3 (b): Aspects relating to the Internal Business dimension**



Question 16 focused on respondents' awareness of the importance of the distribution of information related to HR practices within the context of the organisation's quality assurance system. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not respondents were aware of the importance of the distribution of information relating to HR practices. Batt (2002) suggests that high involvement HR practices allow a firm to build firm-specific human capital, which in turn influences organisational performance in two ways: directly, via its effect on employee performance, and

indirectly, via employee attachment to the firm, leading to less employee turnover, less absenteeism and increasing commitment. Only 5 % of the respondents indicated that there was no positive change in their perceived performance over the past two years. However, 32% of the respondents indicated that there was a great deal of positive change in their perceived performance. The results show that there has been an improvement in perceived performance in terms of how HRAs are distributing information to their internal clients over the past two years.

Question 17 asked about the respondents' provision of advice in response to queries on organisational procedures related to HR issues. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not respondents had a better understanding of organisational HR procedures. These procedures assist in eliminating common misunderstandings, which can result in costly mistakes for the organisation (Ormsbree, 2010). Only 2 % of the respondents indicated that there was no positive change during the last two years in this regard, whereas 46% of the respondents indicated that a fair amount of positive change took place over the two-year period, which shows that there has been a significant improvement in the provision of advice in response to queries by clients.

Question 18 dealt with respondents' awareness of people (team) dynamics in the workplace. The purpose of this question was to determine the respondents' perceptions regarding their level of awareness about team dynamics. Kelly (2010) emphasises that understanding team dynamics in the workplace and getting to know one's colleagues and their work styles can make work interactions go more smoothly. The results show that only 2% of the respondents indicated that there was no positive change, whereas 45% of them indicated that there was a fair amount of positive change in the level of awareness of people dynamics. The results confirm that the respondents' level of awareness of team dynamics showed a significant improvement over the past two years.

Question 19 asked respondents about their perceived performance regarding their current administrative duties in relation to HR management and practices. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not the respondents' perceptions of their performance had an influence on the execution of their administrative duties.

Although 7% of the respondents indicated a very small positive change in this regard, 46% of them indicated that there was a great deal of positive change in their perceived performance with regard to their current duties. These results clearly indicate that there has been a significant improvement in the perceived performance of the current duties of respondents over the past two years.

Question 20 focused on respondents' understanding of the national legislation which impacts on their role as an HR assistant. The aim here was to determine respondents' perceived understanding of HR legislation, since HR legislation helps HR employees to become aware of what statutory instruments exist and how they will impact on the business, as well as what areas need to be considered. The results show that 16% of the respondents indicated that there was a very small amount of positive change in terms of their understanding of legislation, and 45% indicated that there was a fair amount of positive change in their understanding of the legislation. This shows that there has been a significant improvement in terms of the understanding of legislation by respondents over the past two years.

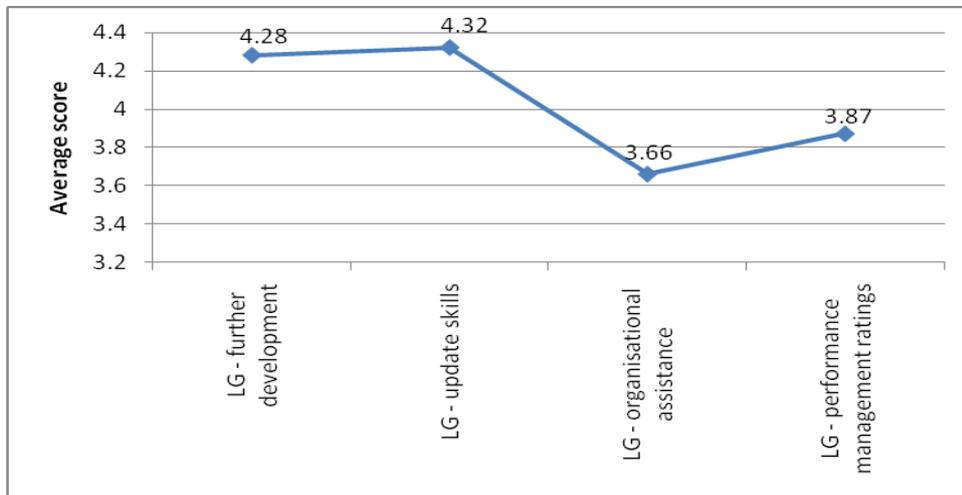
Question 21 asked about respondents' understanding of the functioning of the business within the workplace. The purpose of this question was to determine respondents' perceived understanding of the business processes and systems of the organisation, since employees need to have a good knowledge of the services, products and customer needs, as well as having the abilities and skills to meet customer needs (Liao, Toya, Lepak and Hong, 2009). Only 13% of the respondents indicated that there was a very small amount of positive change in this regard, whereas 48% of the respondents indicated that there was a fair amount of positive change in terms of the understanding of the functioning of the business. This implies that there has been a significant improvement in the understanding of the functioning of the business by respondents over the past two years.

#### **4.2.6 Aspects relating to the Learning and Growth dimension**

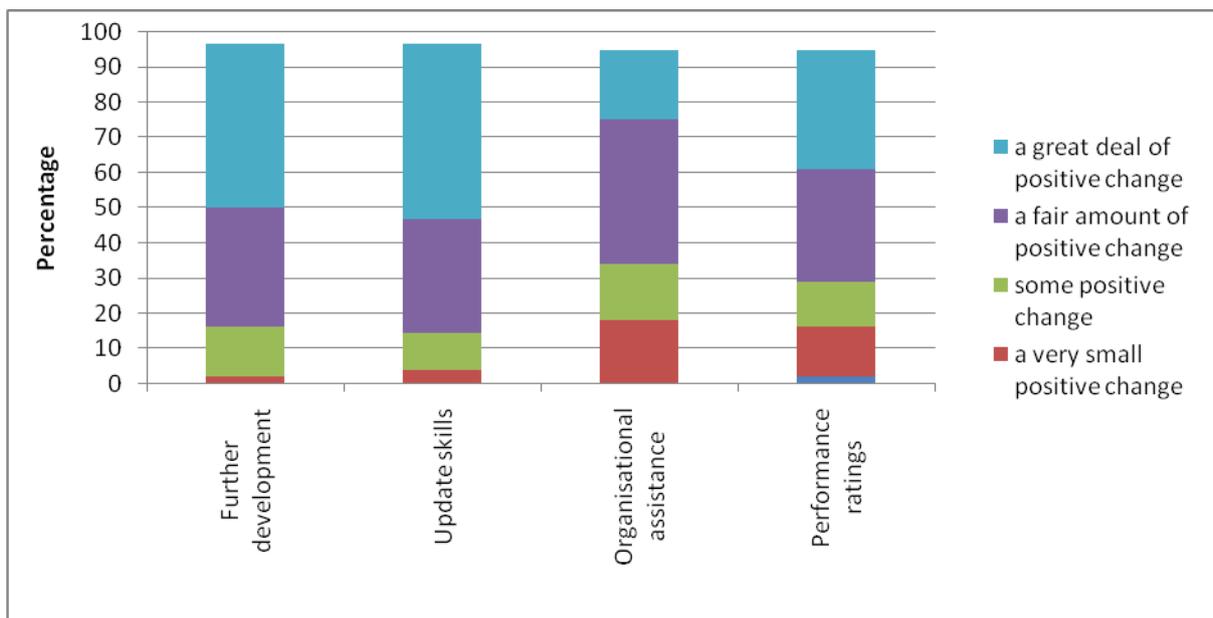
The objective of this section was to obtain information about the respondents' awareness of their development in terms of updating their skills, assistance from the

organisation, as well as any changes in the respondents' performance ratings over the past two years.

**Figure 4.4 (a): Aspects relating to the Learning and Growth dimension**



**Figure 4.4 (b): Aspects relating to the Learning and Growth dimension**



Figures 4.4 (a) and 4.4(b) above contain responses from the HRAs with regard to the learning and growth dimension. In determining staff development activities, responses were not balanced between those who felt that no positive change took place and those who indicated that a fair amount of positive change in their learning and growth had taken place over the past two years.

Question 22 focused on the degree to which respondents wished to pursue further development opportunities within the HR field. The aim here was to determine the level of respondents' perceived improved performance within the HR field. 2% of the respondents indicated that there was a very small amount of positive change in their further development over the past two years, while more than 46% of the respondents indicated that there was a great deal of positive change in their further development over the past two years.

Question 23 asked about respondents' awareness of the fact that they need to continuously update their skills – both in terms of HR practices and their occupational area of expertise. The aim of this question was to establish respondents' level of awareness regarding continuous skills improvement within their area of expertise. The results show that 4% of the respondents indicated that there was a very small amount of positive change in terms of the updating of their skills over the past two years, whereas 50% of the respondents indicated that there was a great deal of positive change in this regard over the past two years.

Question 24 dealt with respondents' level of awareness regarding organisational assistance in pursuing further development opportunities. The aim of this question was to determine whether or not respondents were aware of the fact that the organisation would assist them in pursuing their studies. The results show that 16% of the respondents indicated that there was some positive change in their perceptions regarding how they view or experience assistance from the organisation, whereas, 41% of them indicated that there was a fair amount of positive change in terms of organisational assistance over the past two years.

Question 25 asked respondents to rate the performance management system used by the organisation (if one was available). The purpose of this question was to determine whether or not there was a change with regard to respondents' performance ratings over the past two years. One of the purposes of a performance appraisal is to enhance the productivity of an employee, by detecting and eliminating problem areas in jobs or the work environment (Troskie, 1993; Prince, 2000). The results show that 2% of the respondents indicated that there was no positive change

in their performance ratings, whereas 34% indicated that there was a fair amount of positive change in their performance ratings over the past two years. This implies that the respondents' performance ratings have shown a significant improvement over the past two years. The measurement and evaluation of performance are very important tasks in any organisation. They are crucial elements of an organisation's improvement process and contribute towards identifying employees' strengths, weaknesses and development needs (Troskie, 1993; Torrington & Hall, 1998).

#### **4.2.7 Aspects relating to the General dimension**

Question 26 asked respondents about what they ascribed their development to in the HR field. The aim of this question was to determine what factors contributed to respondents' development. Respondents mentioned between one and two tasks each, which could be due to the inexperience of employees, insufficient guidance or lack of confidence (Swansburg & Swansburg, 1999).

### **4.3 Testing and interpretation of hypotheses**

This section presents the results of the study and interprets the hypotheses.

#### **4.3.1. Means, standard deviations and reliability statistics for the four performance dimensions**

The aim of this section was to indicate the mean scores and standard deviations that were obtained from the sample group. The results show that the mean score for all the dimensions was above average, which indicates that the sample group obtained higher scores on most of the performance dimensions.

**Table 4.3: Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistics**

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's alpha based on standardised items	Number of items
Personal	.861	.866	10
Customer	.863	.867	5
Internal business	.840	.842	6
Learning & growth	.655	.645	4

For items to be considered reliable and for one to be able to consider a group of questions as measuring one 'theme', the Cronbach's alpha should be  $> 0.7$ . In this case, the first three dimensions are well above this minimum and the fourth one is only 0.29 less. Thus, one can consider the data to be internally consistent. Furthermore, one can consider the groups of questions to be measuring specific 'themes'.

### 4.3.2 Hypotheses

**H<sub>0</sub>.** The training and development programme will not have an impact on the perceived performance of HRAs.

**H<sub>1</sub>.** The training and development programme will have a significant impact on the perceived performance of HRAs.

#### 4.3.2.1 Chi-square goodness of fit tests

This test was applied to all questions in order to determine whether any one option was selected significantly more/less often than expected (Under the null hypothesis, it is assumed that all options are equally likely to be chosen). The *significant* results are summarised in appendix A.

The scores for the four dimensions were compared in order to calculate averages for questions, so that these values could be compared across questions and sections.

The results showed that there was a significant difference in terms of the perceived performance of HRAs, since they were all above 3, thus indicating at least a fair amount of positive change over the past two years. More respondents than expected indicated that there had been “a great deal of significant change ( $p < 0.0005$ ) in their skills, confidence, morale, self-esteem and interpersonal relations with regard to the personal dimension. Furthermore, more respondents than expected indicated that there had been a great deal of change ( $P < 0.0005$ ) in their level of professionalism and performance in carrying out their administrative duties, as well as understanding their further development and the importance of updating their skills over the past two years.

Fewer respondents than expected indicated that there was no or an insignificant change ( $P < 0.001$ ) in areas such as HR planning and distribution of information respectively. The majority of the respondents had scores ranging from average to above average, which indicates that a fair amount of change took place, and this even rose to a great deal for other respondents. The results indicated above average scores on all four performance dimensions, which suggest that the respondents perceived themselves to have experienced significant performance changes in general over the past two years, which supports the hypothesis. A possible reason for the scores for all the dimensions of performance being above average was that more respondents had attended the HRADP.

#### **4.3.2.2 Comparison of performance dimensions across demographic variables**

A non-parametric test was used to determine if there was a significant difference in average scores between categories of demographic variables.

The results, as shown in Appendix B, indicate that a significant ( $p = .037$ ) difference was found between genders for the measure of ‘level of experience’. On average, males (4.13) experienced significantly greater positive changes than females (3.68) in this area. No other area showed significant differences in this section. On the other hand, under the customer, internal business and learning and growth dimensions, the results showed that no significant differences were found between genders for any question in those sections.

Furthermore, the results show that a significant difference ( $p=.037$ ) was found in scores for different age groups with regard to the understanding of national legislation, which falls under the internal business perspective (see yellow numbers as shown in Appendix C. The results also show that there was no significant difference between the different age groups within the personal, customer and learning and growth dimensions, as compared to the internal business perspective. The results further indicate that no significant differences were found between the different races.

Lastly, the results as shown in Appendix D, show that a significant difference ( $p=.026$ ) exists between average scores for different work experience groups with regard to the distribution of information related to HR practices, which falls under the internal business dimension. However, no significant differences were found in other items for the rest of the dimensions.

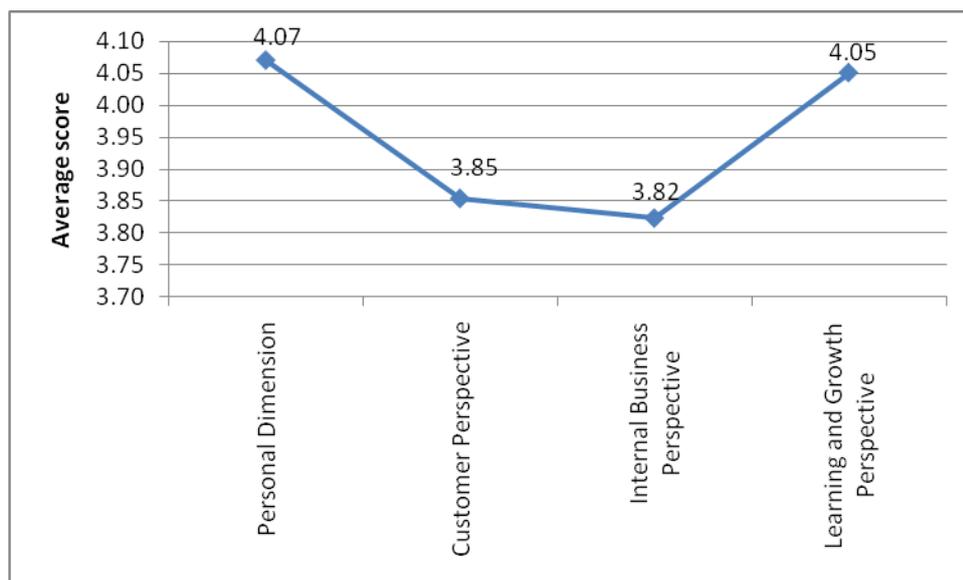
#### **4.4 One-Sample T-test**

This was applied to the average score for each section, in order to determine whether or not the average score was significantly greater than the average score of 3. Following the one sample t-test, the hypothesis was accepted, given that the significance level for each section had an average score that was significantly different to a score of 3. The p-value for all 4 cases was  $p<.0005$ . This indicates that each section had experienced more than just 'some' positive change.

**Table 4.4 Cross-tabulations between performance dimensions and biographical variables**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Personal Dimension	54	4.0704	.56523	.07692
Customer Perspective	54	3.8543	.70065	.09535
Internal Business Perspective	54	3.8235	.67708	.09214
Learning and Growth Perspective	54	4.0509	.67359	.09166

**Figure 4.5: Comparisons across four performance dimensions and biographical variables**



The average scores for each section were also analysed according to the demographics, in order to determine whether or not the average scores differed significantly across each demographic variable. In terms of the null hypothesis, the average scores would be the same for all categories. The age groups of 41 – 50 and 50+ were combined, and the results indicate that there were no significant differences in terms of the average scores/ranks for the different age groups. There

were also no significant differences with regard to the average scores/ranks for the different genders, races and levels of work experience.

However, for each development programme, the average scores for the four dimensions of study (taken separately) were analysed to determine whether or not average scores were significantly different for those who attended the course and those who did not. An independent sample t-test was conducted to measure this.

**Table 4.5: Cross-tabulation between respondents exposed and not exposed to the HRA Development Programme**

	HRA Development Programme	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Personal Dimension	No	22	3.7000	.46291
	Yes	32	4.3250	.48659
Customer Perspective	No	22	3.4152	.52005
	Yes	32	4.1563	.65201
Internal Business Perspective	No	22	3.3394	.63585
	Yes	32	4.1562	.47883
Learning and Growth Perspective	No	22	3.5682	.66896
	Yes	32	4.3828	.43987

The results indicate that for each of the four performance dimensions, the average scores for those who attended the conflict management course were not significantly different from those who did not attend it. The results further indicate that the average 'customer perspective' score for those who attended the SAP HR or management course was significantly ( $p=.018$ ) lower than the score for those who did not attend it. Furthermore, the average 'personal dimension' score for those who attended the SAP Time Management course was significantly ( $p=.001$ ) lower than the score for those who did not attend it. The results also indicate that the average scores for those who attended other courses were not significantly different from those who did not do so. However, the average score for those who attended the

HRA Development Programme indicated a significantly higher score than that for those who did not attend it. In each case, the p-value was  $< 0.0005$ . This implies that the perceived performance of the respondents who attended the HRA Development Programme has significantly changed over the past two years, since it could be concluded that this was a good course to attend, which clearly supports the hypothesis.

Lastly, the respondents were requested to indicate to what they ascribed their development in the HR field, and had to choose between training, experience and training and experience. The results show that significantly more respondents ( $p < .0005$ ) indicated that it was both training and experience.

**Table 4.6: Cross-tabulation between training, experience and training and experience**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid Training only	2	3.6	3.8	3.8
Experience only	3	5.4	5.7	9.4
Training experience	48	85.7	90.6	100.0
Total	53	94.6	100.0	
Missing System	3	5.4		
Total	56	100.0		

#### 4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, the results of the questionnaire were presented and discussed. The Learning Impact Questionnaire used in this study was completed by 54 HRAs. The four performance dimensions impacting on the perceived performance of the HRAs were also discussed. These dimensions were as follows: the personal dimension, particularly in relation to changes in learning behaviour; customer dimension; internal business perspective; and learning and growth dimension.

An analysis of data revealed the perceptions and views of HRAs with regard to the above four performance dimensions and how they impacted on their performance. The data also highlighted some suggestions for improvements, and changes that need to be made to ensure enhanced performance. Based on the findings of this study, conclusions and recommendations will be presented in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, the researcher will explain how the research objectives and hypothesis were achieved. The conclusions presented here are based on the key findings of the study, as derived from the empirical study, which was discussed in chapter three, as well as the literature review, which was presented in chapter two.

This study originated with an acknowledgement of the fact that by far the most significant component of HR is human resource personnel. Without a foundation of skilled human resources for HR, it cannot function optimally or effectively. The performance of these personnel is therefore critical to the provision of quality HR services within ARPM. This study relied on the Balanced Scorecard Performance Model, which consists of the financial (replaced by the personal dimension for the purpose of this study), customer, internal business and learning and growth dimensions.

It is against this background that this study was undertaken, within the context of a growing interest in measuring the perceived performance of HRAs in terms of how this was impacted by the T&D programme. More specifically, the objective of this study was to determine the impact of the HRADP on the performance of HRAs according to the four identified performance dimensions that are required to function effectively in a HR administrative role at the selected platinum mine.

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn, based on the results of the study, as well as recommendations which suggest how the impact of the HRADP can be determined at the selected platinum mine in the North West Province. Lastly, further recommendations regarding how to improve the performance of HRAs will be made.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

The main issues arising from this study are a summary of the findings for the purpose of testing the research hypotheses. The respondents were identified in terms of those who attended and those who did not attend the HRADP. This was done to determine whether or not respondents had experienced a perceived change in performance over the past two years. In general, the respondents were found to be very aware of the change in their perceived performance over the past two years, and all of them participated willingly in the study.

This study clearly established that the HRADP had a direct impact on the perceived performance of HRAs at the ARPM in the North West Province. For each of the 4 dimensions the average score for those who took the course HRA Development program is significantly higher than the score for those who didn't take the course. In each case the p-value is  $< 0.0005$  and this is remarkable as it clearly indicates a difference in perceived performance between the two groups of respondents. Detailed conclusions will be presented according to aspects related to the personal, customer, internal business and learning and growth dimensions.

### **5.2.1 Aspects related to the personal dimension**

The overall results in relation to personal dimension aspects showed a positive change in respondents' level of knowledge and HR skills. Their morale and confidence levels had improved significantly over the past two years. However, 39% of the respondents indicated that there was only a fair amount of positive change in the workplace. This suggests that there is room for improvement in the workplace. It was also indicated that HRAs' passion for the HR field had improved a great deal, as well as their level of self-esteem, over the past two years, which clearly supports the hypothesis. Respondents' interpersonal skills had shown significant improvement over the past two years. However, it is disconcerting to note that quite a number of respondents (39 %) rated themselves as average with regard to changes in the workplace as a result of their contributions towards their jobs. It can be concluded that not all HRAs have the required skills to enable them to provide quality HR services within their work environment.

### **5.2.2 Aspects related to the customer dimension**

The results show that there has been a significant improvement in the level of HR services, professionalism and sensitivity towards other colleagues by respondents over the past two years, in terms of how they provide services to their customers. However, the results also indicate that there is still a challenge for respondents with regard to the implementation of ways to improve HR processes and HR planning. Respondents still believe that the implementation of HR processes and improvement thereof are challenges. This implies that there seems to be a lack of effective HR planning, since 33 % of the respondents felt that something had to be done to improve the situation in terms of how HR planning is incorporated into their roles.

### **5.2.3. Aspects related to the internal business dimension**

The results show that there has been an improved perceived performance with regard to how HRAs are distributing information to their internal clients over the past two years. Respondents indicated that a fair amount of positive change took place during the two-year period, which shows that there has been significant improvement in terms of the provision of advice in response to queries by clients. The results confirm that the respondents' level of awareness of team dynamics also showed a significant improvement. In addition, the results clearly indicate that there was a significant improvement in the perceived performance of respondents' current duties, as well as the understanding of the legislation and functioning of the business by respondents over the past two years.

### **5.2.4 Aspects related to the learning and growth dimension**

With regard to staff development activities, respondents indicated that there was a great deal of positive change in their further development and the updating of their skills, as well as a fair amount of positive change in terms of organisational assistance over the past two years. In general, the respondents' performance ratings showed a significant improvement over the past two years.

Training is often a key to improved performance. The role and importance of training in enhancing performance must be emphasised. According to Manasa and Reddy

(2009), 50% of the employees in their study felt that their performance improved to a large extent due to their attendance of training programmes. They further state that 90% of the employees felt that the organisation of training programmes is one of the most important factors in improving the performance of employees. It is evident that 90% of the employees felt that their performance improved significantly due to training, which emphasises the role of training in improving performance.

It is clear that the growth and development of an organisation depends on the training that is provided for its employees, as well as the reduction of hazards related to the job. It can therefore be said that for the efficient performance of employees, the ARPM should embark on training programmes and intensify its efforts to train its workers while they are in service. An increase in job performance will bring about an increase in the level of productivity, achievement of organisational goals and a sustainable economy.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

The results of this study revealed that the HRAs' performance in relation to HR planning and the implementation of HR practices in the workplace were still a challenge for them.

In order for the HRAs to be effective in implementing the HR planning process in their business units, the following is recommended:

- Forecasting - HRAs should gather data on the organisational goals and objectives of the organisation. Therefore the HR plan should have a mechanism to express planned organisational strategies into planned results and budgets so that these can be converted in terms of numbers and skills required.
- Inventory – HRAs should take stock of the current employees in the organisation. The HR inventory should not only relate to data concerning numbers, age, and locations, but also an analysis and skills. Skill inventory will provide valid information on professional and technical skills and other qualifications provided in the organisation. It will reveal what skills are immediately available when compared to the forecasted HR requirements.
- Audit – HR inventory calls for collection of data, the HR audit requires systematic examination and analysis of this data. HRAs should conduct an

audit to look at what had occurred in the past and at present in terms of labour turn over, age and sex groupings, training costs and absence.

- HR Resource Plan- HRAs should look at career planning and HR plans. The organisation's objectives should be aligned as near as possible, or matched, in order to give optimum scope for the developing potential of its employees.
- Actioning of plan- HRAs should ensure that the three fundamentals are in place:
  - Know where the organisation is going
  - There must be acceptance and backing from top management for the planning
  - There must be knowledge of the available resources (i.e.) financial, physical and human(management and technical)
- Monitoring and control- HR department has to make a follow up to see what is happening in terms of the available resources once the programme has been accepted and implementation launched and controlled.
- HRAs will have to demonstrate their competence and expertise to line managers.
- HRAs will have to understand the relationship between HR planning and strategic organisational planning, and that this is a process that takes place over time. When and how fast this occurs depends on the organisation's competitive circumstances, the perceived potential of HR to play a significant role in the organisation, and the readiness of HRAs to respond when opportunities arise.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for further research**

The following issues should be considered for further research:

- The understanding and importance of HR planning as an effective function of HRAs, in order to deliver an effective HR service to clients at the mine.
- A study of the current scope of HR practice and its relevance to the changing environment in which HRAs operate.
- Perceptions of clients, peers, superiors, direct reports and employees regarding the quality of service rendered by HRAs.

- Pre-and post-training intervention measures may be used to accurately measure effectiveness and change in behaviour as a result of training.
- Further research needs to be conducted at other mining houses in order to validate these results. A comparative study could be conducted by agencies such as the Human Science Research Council of South Africa.

## 5.5 Limitations of the study

The researcher identified the following as being limitations of this study:

- Some of the target respondents could not be reached, as they had already left the company, and no alternative arrangements could therefore be made.
- Some of the respondents knew the researcher personally and there was therefore the possibility of bias with regard to how the HRADP influenced their work performance based on their qualifications.
- Pre-existing skill levels could not be determined, as no pre-testing assessments were conducted prior to the commencement of the HRADP.
- One of the main limitations of the literature review was that there was little information on the four performance dimensions used in the study. A limited amount of research has been conducted and reported on, especially within the context of this study.

It is possible that not all aspects related to the HRADP's impact on the perceived performance of HRAs were dealt with during this study. However, the results of this study and the instrument used may serve as a foundation for further research that may address aspects that were overlooked in this study.

Initially, a comparison of the data from HRAs who attended and those who did not attend the HRADP was considered to be necessary. However, due to the small number of respondents in the group that did not attend the HRADP, such a comparison was not viewed as being useful. Instead, the views of HRAs were considered with regard to those who attended and those who did not attend the programme.

## 5.6 Concluding remarks

The purpose of this study was to eventually either confirm or reject the hypotheses. The study followed a quantitative approach and used a non-experimental design to analyse and describe the identified variables. The results of the study confirmed the hypotheses, and the objective of determining whether or not the HRADP impacted on perceived performance was successfully achieved. In addition, it was concluded that changes in respondents' performance behaviour leads to changes in organisational results.

The findings of this study contributed to a better understanding of the factors affecting the performance of HRAs. However, further research needs to be done in this area. The study revealed that HRAs currently have deficiencies in terms of HR planning and the implementation of HR practices. Even though positive results were reported with regard to the programme's ability to change perceived performance, there are certain areas that can be improved in order to maximise the learning of these practices. Additional learning methodologies may be incorporated or used in conjunction with the current programme.

Regardless of the negative factors mentioned above, the study revealed that the T&D programme did have an impact on the perceived performance of HRAs over the past two years. Respondents also displayed a positive attitude towards this study, which addressed level 3 of Kirkpatrick's model of training evaluation, as presented by Kirkpatrick (1994), which evaluates the extent of changes in behaviour and practices as a result of a training intervention.

The findings of this study have implications for key stakeholders such as SABPP and ARPM. It is suggested that the relevant stakeholders within the organisation should discuss the issues and recommendations of this study, with a view to addressing some of the critical issues presented here. These findings will be disseminated to various institutions as a legal depository, such as Unisa Library and the Anglo RPM Development Centre Library. At the end of the study, summaries will be made available to various institutions. In addition, papers will be drawn from the study and published in various academic and professional journals.

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## APPENDIX A

### SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

Question	p-value	Interpretation		
		Significantly more respondents than expected selected...	Significantly fewer respondents than expected selected...	
<b>Personal Dimension</b>				
Knowledge	<.0005	Fair amount	No change	
Skills	<.0005	Fair amount		
Confidence	<.0005	Great deal		
Morale	<.0005	Great deal		
Workplace	<.0005	Fair amount		
Passion	<.0005	Great deal		
Experience	<.0005	Fair amount		
Self-esteem	<.0005	Great deal		
Interpersonal skills	<.0005	Great deal		
Career direction	<.0005	Fair amount/great deal		
<b>Customer Perspective</b>				
Improved HR service	<.0005	Fair amount	No change	
Implementation of improvements	<.0005	Some		
Level of professionalism	<.0005	Fair amount/great deal		
HR planning	.001			
Sensitivity towards colleagues	<.0005	Fair amount		
<b>Internal Business Perspective</b>				
Distribution of information	.001		No change/insignificant change	
Provision of advice	<.0005	Fair amount		
Awareness of people dynamics	<.0005	Fair amount		
Performance of admin duties	<.0005	Great deal		
Understanding of legislation	<.0005	Fair amount		
Understanding of business function	<.0005	Fair amount		
<b>Learning and Growth Perspective</b>				
Further development	<.0005	Great deal		
Update skills	<.0005	Great deal		
Organisational assistance	<.0005	Fair amount		
Performance ratings	<.0005	Fair amount/great deal		

## APPENDIX B

### CROSS-TABULATION BETWEEN GENDER AND PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PD – knowledge	Male	16	3.75	.931
	Female	37	3.59	.865
PD – skills	Male	16	3.94	.929
	Female	37	3.68	.884
PD – confidence	Male	16	4.50	.816
	Female	38	4.24	.751
PD – morale	Male	16	4.06	1.289
	Female	37	4.30	.661
PD – workplace	Male	16	3.56	1.153
	Female	38	3.66	1.072
PD – passion	Male	16	4.38	.806
	Female	38	4.42	.826
PD – experience	Male	16	4.13	.719
	Female	37	3.68	.669
PD - self-esteem	Male	16	4.31	.873
	Female	38	4.53	.725
PD - interpersonal skills	Male	16	4.25	.775
	Female	37	4.49	.731
PD - career direction	Male	16	4.06	.772
	Female	38	4.11	.863

**APPENDIX C**

**CROSS-TABULATION BETWEEN AGE GROUP AND PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PD – knowledge	20 – 30	22	3.45	.800
	31 – 40	20	3.75	.851
	41+	11	3.82	1.079
	Total	53	3.64	.879
PD – skills	20 – 30	22	3.68	.894
	31 – 40	20	3.80	.834
	41+	11	3.82	1.079
	Total	53	3.75	.897
PD – confidence	20 – 30	22	4.14	.834
	31 – 40	20	4.40	.754
	41+	12	4.50	.674
	Total	54	4.31	.773
PD – morale	20 – 30	22	4.23	.869
	31 – 40	20	4.25	.967
	41+	11	4.18	.874
	Total	53	4.23	.891
PD – workplace	20 – 30	22	3.95	1.046
	31 – 40	20	3.50	1.000
	41+	12	3.25	1.215
	Total	54	3.63	1.087
PD – passion	20 – 30	22	4.36	.790
	31 – 40	20	4.30	.979
	41+	12	4.67	.492
	Total	54	4.41	.813
PD – experience	20 – 30	22	3.73	.631
	31 – 40	20	3.75	.639
	41+	11	4.09	.944
	Total	53	3.81	.709
PD - self-esteem	20 – 30	22	4.41	.796
	31 – 40	20	4.55	.686
	41+	12	4.42	.900
	Total	54	4.46	.770

PD - interpersonal skills	20 – 30	22	4.45	.671
	31 – 40	20	4.55	.605
	41+	11	4.09	1.044
	Total	53	4.42	.745
PD - career direction	20 – 30	22	4.05	.899
	31 – 40	20	4.15	.745
	41+	12	4.08	.900
	Total	54	4.09	.830
CP - improved HR service to different HR functions	20 – 30	21	3.62	.740
	31 – 40	20	3.90	.852
	41+	12	3.92	.793
	Total	53	3.79	.793
CP - implementation of ways of improving the current HR processes	20 – 30	21	3.29	.561
	31 – 40	20	3.70	.865
	41+	12	3.33	1.073
	Total	53	3.45	.822
CP - level of professionalism	20 – 30	22	4.27	.827
	31 – 40	20	4.40	.598
	41+	12	4.00	1.044
	Total	54	4.26	.805
CP - HR planning	20 – 30	22	3.64	.848
	31 – 40	20	4.10	1.165
	41+	11	3.64	1.433
	Total	53	3.81	1.110
CP - sensitivity when dealing with colleagues	20 – 30	22	3.82	.795
	31 – 40	20	4.05	.826
	41+	12	4.17	.835
	Total	54	3.98	.812
IBP - distribution of information related to HR practices	20 – 30	22	3.45	1.101
	31 – 40	20	4.15	1.137
	41+	12	3.83	1.115
	Total	54	3.80	1.139
IBP - provision of advice in response to queries on procedures	20 – 30	20	3.75	.786
	31 – 40	20	4.10	.968
	41+	12	4.00	1.044
	Total	52	3.94	.916
IBP - awareness of people dynamics	20 – 30	22	3.95	.844
	31 – 40	20	3.75	1.070
	41+	12	3.58	.900
	Total	54	3.80	.939

IBP - performance of admin duties	20 – 30	22	4.41	.796
	31 – 40	20	4.10	1.071
	41+	12	4.08	.900
	Total	54	4.22	.925
IBP - understanding of national legislation	20 – 30	21	3.62	.805
	31 – 40	20	4.00	.918
	41+	12	3.08	1.084
	Total	53	3.64	.963
IBP - understanding of the functioning of the business	20 – 30	22	3.55	.858
	31 – 40	20	3.60	.754
	41+	12	3.50	1.000
	Total	54	3.56	.839
LG - further development	20 – 30	22	4.18	.853
	31 – 40	20	4.30	.801
	41+	12	4.50	.674
	Total	54	4.30	.792
LG - update skills	20 – 30	22	4.05	.999
	31 – 40	20	4.65	.587
	41+	12	4.33	.651
	Total	54	4.33	.824
LG - organisational assistance	20 – 30	21	3.62	1.024
	31 – 40	20	3.80	.894
	41+	12	3.50	1.243
	Total	53	3.66	1.018
LG - performance management ratings	20 – 30	21	4.05	.921
	31 – 40	20	4.00	1.170
	41+	12	3.33	1.303
	Total	53	3.87	1.127

## APPENDIX D

### CROSS-TABULATION BETWEEN WORK EXPERIENCE AND PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
PD – knowledge	0 - 5 years	26	3.35	.892
	6 - 10 years	13	3.85	.689
	11 - 15 years	7	3.86	1.069
	16+ years	7	4.14	.690
	Total	53	3.64	.879
PD – skills	0 - 5 years	26	3.69	.884
	6 - 10 years	13	3.92	.760
	11 - 15 years	7	3.43	1.134
	16+ years	7	4.00	1.000
	Total	53	3.75	.897
PD – confidence	0 - 5 years	26	4.15	.834
	6 - 10 years	13	4.46	.660
	11 - 15 years	7	4.29	.951
	16+ years	8	4.63	.518
	Total	54	4.31	.773
PD – morale	0 - 5 years	26	3.96	1.038
	6 - 10 years	13	4.62	.506
	11 - 15 years	7	4.43	.787
	16+ years	7	4.29	.756
	Total	53	4.23	.891
PD – workplace	0 - 5 years	26	3.85	1.190
	6 - 10 years	13	3.46	.776
	11 - 15 years	7	3.86	.900
	16+ years	8	3.00	1.195
	Total	54	3.63	1.087
PD – passion	0 - 5 years	26	4.27	1.002
	6 - 10 years	13	4.54	.519
	11 - 15 years	7	4.43	.787
	16+ years	8	4.63	.518
	Total	54	4.41	.813

PD – experience	0 - 5 years	26	3.69	.679
	6 - 10 years	13	3.77	.599
	11 - 15 years	7	3.86	.690
	16+ years	7	4.29	.951
	Total	53	3.81	.709
PD – self-esteem	0 - 5 years	26	4.46	.761
	6 - 10 years	13	4.62	.506
	11 - 15 years	7	4.14	1.069
	16+ years	8	4.50	.926
	Total	54	4.46	.770
PD - interpersonal skills	0 - 5 years	26	4.38	.804
	6 - 10 years	13	4.54	.660
	11 - 15 years	7	4.43	.787
	16+ years	7	4.29	.756
	Total	53	4.42	.745
PD - career direction	0 - 5 years	26	4.12	.909
	6 - 10 years	13	4.00	.707
	11 - 15 years	7	4.29	.756
	16+ years	8	4.00	.926
	Total	54	4.09	.830
CP - improved HR service to different HR functions	0 - 5 years	25	3.56	.712
	6 - 10 years	13	4.08	.862
	11 - 15 years	7	4.00	1.000
	16+ years	8	3.88	.641
	Total	53	3.79	.793
CP - implementation of ways of improving the current HR processes	0 - 5 years	25	3.24	.597
	6 - 10 years	13	3.62	.870
	11 - 15 years	7	4.00	.816
	16+ years	8	3.38	1.188
	Total	53	3.45	.822
CP - level of professionalism	0 - 5 years	26	4.23	.815
	6 - 10 years	13	4.46	.519
	11 - 15 years	7	4.43	.787
	16+ years	8	3.88	1.126
	Total	54	4.26	.805
CP - HR planning	0 - 5 years	25	3.56	1.044
	6 - 10 years	13	4.23	.927
	11 - 15 years	7	4.29	1.113
	16+ years	8	3.50	1.414
	Total	53	3.81	1.110

CP - sensitivity when dealing with colleagues	0 - 5 years	26	3.85	.784
	6 - 10 years	13	4.08	.954
	11 - 15 years	7	4.14	.690
	16+ years	8	4.13	.835
	Total	54	3.98	.812
IBP - distribution of information related to HR practices	0 - 5 years	26	3.38	1.169
	6 - 10 years	13	4.23	.927
	11 - 15 years	7	4.57	.787
	16+ years	8	3.75	1.165
	Total	54	3.80	1.139
IBP - provision of advice in response to queries on procedures	0 - 5 years	24	3.67	.963
	6 - 10 years	13	4.31	.630
	11 - 15 years	7	4.14	1.069
	16+ years	8	4.00	.926
	Total	52	3.94	.916
IBP - awareness of people dynamics	0 - 5 years	26	3.85	.967
	6 - 10 years	13	4.00	.913
	11 - 15 years	7	3.57	1.134
	16+ years	8	3.50	.756
	Total	54	3.80	.939
IBP - performance of admin duties	0 - 5 years	26	4.27	.919
	6 - 10 years	13	4.08	1.038
	11 - 15 years	7	4.43	.976
	16+ years	8	4.13	.835
	Total	54	4.22	.925
IBP - understanding of national legislation	0 - 5 years	25	3.60	.913
	6 - 10 years	13	4.00	.913
	11 - 15 years	7	3.86	1.069
	16+ years	8	3.00	.926
	Total	53	3.64	.963
IBP - understanding of the functioning of the business	0 - 5 years	26	3.50	.860
	6 - 10 years	13	3.62	.768
	11 - 15 years	7	3.57	1.134
	16+ years	8	3.63	.744
	Total	54	3.56	.839
LG - further development	0 - 5 years	26	4.31	.838
	6 - 10 years	13	4.15	.801
	11 - 15 years	7	4.14	.900
	16+ years	8	4.63	.518
	Total	54	4.30	.792

LG – updating of skills	0 - 5 years	26	4.08	.977
	6 - 10 years	13	4.69	.480
	11 - 15 years	7	4.71	.488
	16+ years	8	4.25	.707
	Total	54	4.33	.824
LG – organisational assistance	0 - 5 years	25	3.64	1.075
	6 - 10 years	13	3.77	.832
	11 - 15 years	7	3.86	1.069
	16+ years	8	3.38	1.188
	Total	53	3.66	1.018
LG – performance management ratings	0 - 5 years	25	3.84	1.143
	6 - 10 years	13	4.15	.987
	11 - 15 years	7	4.00	1.155
	16+ years	8	3.38	1.302
	Total	53	3.87	1.127

## APPENDIX E

### RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

A SURVEY OF THE IMPACT OF A TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME ON THE PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE OF HUMAN RESOURCE ASSISTANTS (HRAs) AT A SELECTED PLATINUM MINE IN SOUTH AFRICA

TARGET AUDIENCE:

To be completed by HR Assistants at a selected platinum mine in South Africa.

**All completed questionnaires should be submitted to Yolandi du Preez and Glenda Ntshala at OSD: HR Services before or by the end of business on 30 September 2010.**

#### PART A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. What is your age group?

20-30       31- 40       41-50       51+

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2. Gender

Male       Female

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3. Race

Black       White       Coloured       Asian/Indian

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4. Years of work experience in the organisation.

0 - 5

6 - 10

11 - 15

16+

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5. Indicate which training and development programmes you attended in the last two years: [You may select more than one option]

HRA Development Programme

Managing conflict

SAP HR Org management

SAP Time management

Other: (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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**PART B: Please read the following statements carefully, and rate your change in behaviour / performance on a scale of 1 – 5 for each of the categories.**

**Make a cross (X) in the appropriate box next to each statement to indicate your rating where:**

**1 = no positive change**

**2 = a very small positive change**

**3 = some positive change**

**4 = a fair amount of positive change**

**5 = a great deal of positive change**

**1. Personal Dimension**

**Rate your perceived change over the last 2 years in the following areas:**

1	Your <i>knowledge</i> of the HRM field	1	2	3	4	5
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2	Your <b>skills</b> level in HR practices	1	2	3	4	5
3	Your <b>confidence</b> in executing your tasks as an HR Assistant	1	2	3	4	5
4	Your level of <b>morale</b> in your job	1	2	3	4	5
5	Your <b>workplace</b> as a result of your contribution towards your job	1	2	3	4	5
6	Your level of <b>passion</b> for your job	1	2	3	4	5
7	Your level of <b>experience</b> in HR practices	1	2	3	4	5
8	Your <b>self-esteem</b>	1	2	3	4	5
9	Your <b>interpersonal skills</b>	1	2	3	4	5
10	Your certainty regarding your <b>career direction</b>	1	2	3	4	5

## 2. Customer perspective

Given that “customer”, in this sense, refers to internal functions that need to be serviced by an HR practitioner, please **rate the perceived change over the last 2 years in the following areas.**

11	Your ability to provide an <b>improved HR service to the different HR functions</b> in your organisation	1	2	3	4	5
12	Your <b>implementation of ways of improving the current HR processes</b> in your specific department	1	2	3	4	5
13	Your <b>level of professionalism</b> resulting in you being given more challenging tasks to execute in your current job	1	2	3	4	5

14	Your awareness of <b>HR planning</b> in your current HR operations	1	2	3	4	5
15	Your <b>sensitivity</b> when dealing with your fellow colleagues (e.g. cultural diversity; coaching & counselling situations)	1	2	3	4	5

### 3. Internal business perspective

Rate the perceived change over the last 2 years in the following related areas

16	Your awareness of the importance of <b>distribution of information related to HR practices</b> within the context of the organisation's QA system	1	2	3	4	5
17	Your <b>provision of advice in response to queries on organisational procedures</b> related to HR issues	1	2	3	4	5
18	Your awareness of <b>people dynamics</b> in the workplace	1	2	3	4	5
19	Your performance regarding your <b>current administrative duties</b> relating to HR management and practices	1	2	3	4	5
20	Your understanding of the <b>national legislation</b> which impacts on your role as an HR Assistant	1	2	3	4	5
21	Your understanding of <b>the functioning of business</b> within the workplace	1	2	3	4	5

### 4. Learning and growth perspective

This refers to the candidate's attitude towards their own continuous development. Are they showing signs of practicing a "culture of lifelong learning?" **Rate the perceived change over the past 2 years in the following areas.**

22	The degree to which you wish to pursue <b>further development</b> opportunities within the HR field	1	2	3	4	5
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<b>23</b>	Your awareness of the fact that you need to <b><i>continuously update</i></b> your skills – both in terms of HR practices and your occupational area of expertise	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>24</b>	Your level of awareness regarding <b><i>organisational assistance</i></b> in pursuing further development opportunities	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>25</b>	Your ratings in terms of the <b><i>Performance Management</i></b> system in the organisation (if one is available)	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

## 6. General

**26.** To what do you ***ascribe your development*** in the Human Resource field?  
(Select only ONE option)

Training courses only

Experience only

Training courses and experience

**Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire!**