THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUPERVISORY SUPPORT AND WORK PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN AN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN MPUMALANGA

by

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DECLARATION OF CANDIDATE

I declare that **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUPERVISORY SUPPORT AND WORK PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN AN EDUCATION DEPARTMENT IN MPUMALANGA** is my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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SIGNATURE **DATE**

(MR AK MABOTHA)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support after training and work performance of employees at the Department of Education's Nkangala District in Mpumalanga during 2008. The sample comprised a complete sampling frame of HR and finance personnel. A five-point Likert scale was used to evaluate the attitudes of respondents towards supervisory support, and their work performance scores were correlated with the ratings of the attitudes towards supervisory support after training. Pearson's product- moment correlation coefficient (PPM) was used to assess the relationship between the two variables. The results showed no significant relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance. The ANOVA test found that a significant (p= .016) difference only existed between attitudes towards supervisory support and educational level.
The hypothesis stated in this study was therefore rejected.

KEY WORDS:

Transfer of training; near transfer; far transfer; Likert scale; supervisory support; attitudes towards supervision; supervision before training; supervision after training; work performance; performance measurement; measurement criteria

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

This research investigates the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support received after training by employees and their work performance. Most of the organizational training and development interventions are wasted; most of the knowledge and skills gained in training (well over 80%, by some estimates) is not fully applied by those employees on the job (Broad & Newstrom, 1992; Patterson, 2009). It is evident that training transfer to the work environment still remains a major challenge facing many organizations.

According to Baharim (2008) despite the reported problems in training transfer in the research literature, training is still viewed as a primary strategy by organisations to gain competitive advantage. Dhamodharan, Daniel and Ambuli (2010) assert that the most important goal of the training is to inculcate the essential skills, which are required for employees to improve the productivity and thereby enhancing the awareness levels of employees. This in turn, is argued as being critical for successful job performance (Noe, 2005). To a great extent, the usefulness of organizational training programmes depend on the effective transfer of training – application of behaviors learned in training to the job itself (Cascio, 1998; Subedi, 2004). Job training is useless if learning is not transferred to the work environment.

A supportive work environment is critical for successful transfer of training. Influences in the work environment may affect the trainee's ability to apply new skills to the job (Dodson, 2004). The supervisor can be a significant figure in the training transfer process and can also create a supportive transfer climate for employees. According to Dodson (2004) little is known of the effect of supervisor participation in the training on transfer climate. However, in his attempt to

understand supervisors' role, Patterson (2009) investigated the lived experience of supervisors as they endeavour to facilitate training transfer for their subordinates. Clearly, a better understanding of supervisory support needed to enhance training transfer would be valuable for organisations.

Supervisory support refers to the extent to which supervisors support and reinforce the use of new skills to the job (Dodson, 2004). This includes supervisor involvement in clarifying performance expectations after training, identifying opportunities to apply new skills and knowledge, setting realistic goals based on training, working with individuals on problems encountered while applying new skills, and providing feedback when successfully applying new abilities (Dodson, 2004).

Supervisory support is one of the most important work environment variables in the pre-training and post-training climate. It is a multidimensional construct (Saks & Belcourt, 2006) which means that there a number of training activities that supervisors can perform before, during and after training to enhance the transfer process. For example, prior to attending a training programme, supervisors can provide trainees with support by meeting with them to discuss the training programme and content, setting training goals, providing trainees with time-off to prepare, and encouraging their attendance and participation (Saks & Belcourt, 2006).

Researchers contend that ensuring a supportive work environment may be the single most important requirement for successful skills transfer (Dodson, 2004). Supervisors also play a key role in the post-training environment by providing feedback, encouragement, reinforcement and goal-setting, and by ensuring that trainees have opportunities to practice and apply newly learned behaviours in their jobs (Saks & Belcourt, 2006). Supervisory support is one of the work environment factors that can help an organisation to achieve improved performance. According to Patterson (2009), the period immediately after a

training programme is probably the most crucial in terms of facilitating skill transfer.

According to Dodson (2004), influences within trainee's work environment may either promote or inhabit training transfer to the work environment. Training transfer is likely to happen in a supportive environment than non-supportive environment.

In the light of the above, expanding the understanding of the attitudes towards supervisory support through research at the Department of Education's Nkangala district in Mpumalanga was critical. Post-training strategies required to enhance skills transfer to the work environment will be highlighted by the study.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

The Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) of 2007/8 stated that the Mpumalanga Department of Education's (MDoE) Nkangala district office should implement a personnel salary (PERSAL) system training programme for human resource (HR) and finance personnel. The PERSAL system is the current electronic HR and finance system for South African government departments. It interfaces with different HR and financial systems that are used in various government departments, for example, basic accounting systems (BAS) and HR information systems, which include pension funds, leave gratuities and medical schemes.

A total of one hundred (100) HR and finance personnel participated in the PERSAL system training programme during the 2008/9 financial year. These personnel were trained to effectively use the system. According to the performance assessment reports of 2008/9, however, there was little or no evidence of improvement in work performance. Thus, the new skills acquired during the programme were not fully applied to the job. This is evident through a number of audit queries, such as inaccurate or late payment of benefits, salary

discrepancies, prolonged appointments or terminations of employees, obsolete personnel data to mention but a few.

According to Patterson (2009), supervisors can positively influence training transfer by holding discussions with employees that focus on the value and relevance of trained skills, the reasons for the employees' selection for training, and how the training fits into the employees' work performance. Inadequate transfer of training inhibits achievement of organisational objectives. With more than 80% of skills learned in training not fully applied on the job (Brinkerhof, 2006), organisations must clearly identify factors that promote or prevent the regular use of newly acquired skills (Patterson, 2009).

In view of the above, the problem Nkangala district is facing is that skills acquired in training are not fully applied on the job. No study was done to determine whether or not the attitudes of employees towards supervisory support after training affect skills transfer, which could influence work performance. If so, the researcher wants to establish whether or not employees' attitudes towards supervisory support are related to their work performance.

Therefore, the hypothesis for this research is as follows:

There will be a significant relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support conducted after training and performance amongst employees at the Department of Education in Mpumalanga during 2008.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research is to investigate the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support received after training by employees (HR and finance personnel) of Nkangala District office and their work performance.

Given the above stated aim, the following research objectives were formulated:

1. To determine whether or not attitudes towards supervisory support is significantly related to the work performance amongst employees.
2. To evaluate the role that variables such as gender, age, race, position and educational level play in the attitudes of respondents towards supervisory support.
3. To enhance the sustainability of the positive contributions made by supervisors prior to and after training.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Saks and Belcourt (2006) discussed the need for transfer research from an organisational perspective and suggested that research is needed that explores transfer not only from individual perspective, but also from a departmental and organisational perspective. It was against the above background that this study was conducted. The study investigated transfer at organisational level, particularly, attitudes towards supervisory support after training. The study will identify the key contributing factors to training transfer, such as, to train supervisors on specific support behaviors and to include such behaviors in their performance appraisals (Saks & Belcourt, 2006). Supervisors will gain an ability to identify variables that will increase training transfer behaviors of trainees.

Employees will also benefit from a strong supervisory support network that will be created before and after training. A number of training activities aimed at enhancing training transfer before and after training will be incorporated into the training programmes to improve the training transfer process. The importance of a supportive work environment for training transfer cannot be overemphasised.

1.5 ASSUMPTIONS

Two key assumptions will be made in this research study. First, the researcher assumed that respondents will honestly respond to the research questionnaires and will freely share their experiences (Patterson, 2009). Secondly, the researcher assumes that he will be able to separate his personal experiences from the experiences of the respondents, because he is a training officer, and member of the organisation where the study will be conducted and will draw rational conclusions from the available information (Patterson, 2009).

1.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A complete sampling frame of HR and finance personnel who attended PERSAL system training programme in 2008 will be used to investigate the variables. The study will only be conducted within the HR and finance departments of the organisation. Therefore, the findings of this study should be generalized with some caution within the entire organisation. Questionnaires will be used to collect data; therefore, there is possibility not to receive all questionnaires from respondents.

The researcher is an employee (Training officer) of the organization where the study will be conducted, and some of the respondents knew him personally. There was thus a possibility of dishonesty regarding the answering of the questionnaire. According to Welman, Kruger and Mitchell (2005), participants' awareness that they are completing a test (questionnaire) may affect their responses. Participants may wittingly or unwittingly change answers that they gave on different occasions (Welman et al, 2005).

The research study will focus only on HR and finance personnel of the Nkangala district; therefore, it might be difficult to make universal application of its findings in other organizational contexts (Patterson, 2009). Futhermore, the study will

utilise employees' annual performance ratings and therefore, the authenticity of the allocated scores is questionable.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

In order to reduce individual interpretations of various terms used in this study, a brief definition and explanation was offered.

Training -- was defined as the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts, or attitudes that result in improved performance in another environment" (Patterson, 2009).

Transfer of training – has been defined as the application and maintenance of knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned from training to the job (Dodson, 2004; Subedi, 2004).

Positive transfer of training -- was defined as the degree to which learners apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in a training context to the job, maintained over a period of time" (Patterson, 2009).

The transfer system – referred to "all factors in the person, training, and organisation that influence transfer of training to job performance" (Patterson, 2009).

Supervisory support – was defined as the extent to which supervisors support and reinforce use of training on the job (Dodson, 2004). Accoding to Dodson (2004) this includes supervisor involvement in clarifying performance expectations after training, identifying opportunities to apply new skills and knowledge, setting realist goals based on training, working with individuals on problems encountered while applying new skills, and providing feedback when successfully applying new abilities.

Work environment factor -- referred to factors in the workplace that may affect individual application and maintenance of new skills learned in training (Dodson, 2004).

Work performance -- work performance was described as the quality and quantity of human output that is necessary to meet work goals and the standards that are required to do a specific job (Van der Linde, 2005).

Work performance measurement -- involves the method or procedures that provide quantitative indexes of the extent of which employees demonstrate certain behaviours and of the results of those behaviours (Landy & Farr, 1983).

PERSAL system -- is the existing computarised HR system for government. The PERSAL system interfaces with different financial systems that are used in South African government, for example, Basic Accounting Systems (BAS), the pension funds and medical schemes (Free State Provincial Treasury, 2008). The system is standard for all government Departments and ensures control and the facility to provide responses to high level enquiries (Free State Provincial Treasury, 2008).

1.8 OUTLINE OF THE DISSERTATION

This dissertation is arranged into five chapters, a list of references, appendix, list of tables and list of figures. This chapter will outline the general orientation to the dissertation. Chapter two will outline the literature review with discussions of concepts of transfer of training, supervisory support and work performance.

Chapter three contains methods and procedures used in the study, research design, population and sample, data collection and data analysis. The findings of the study will be presented in chapter four. The final chapter of the study will offer conclusion and recommendations.

1.9 SUMMARY

This chapter began by describing the background for this study. The problem statement was discussed; research aim, objectives and hypothesis were specified. Definitions of key terms were provided. Significance of the study, limitations of the study and assumptions were then explained. The chapter concluded by providing an outline of this dissertation. Chapter two will present the literature review.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one provided a background to this study, indicating the importance of a supportive environment in organisations to enhance transfer of training. This chapter explores literature relevant to transfer of training, especially regarding the role that attitudes towards supervisory support (after training) plays in the transfer of trained skills to actual work performance.

2.2 TRANSFER OF TRAINING

Transfer of training is defined as the application and maintenance of knowledge, skills and attitudes learned from training in the workplace (Dodson, 2004; Foxon, 1993; Ismail & Bongogoh, 2007; Subedi, 2004). Saks and Belcourt (2006) postulate that transfer of training involves the generalisation of learning, trained skills and behaviours from the training environment to the work environment, and the maintenance of trained skills and behaviours or the length of time that trained material is used after a training programme. Board and Newstrom, in Subedi (2004), agree with the above statement, namely that transfer may encompass both maintenance of behaviour and its generalisation to new applications. According to Nikandrou, Brinia and Bereri (2009), the term “generalisation” refers to whether or not employees apply the new knowledge, skills and behaviour to a range of different situations occurring outside the training programme.

According to Baharim (2008), the definition of training provided by Tziner, Haccoun and Kadish links the acquisition of knowledge and skills gained through training to their application in the workplace. They note that the fundamental purpose of training is to help people develop skills and abilities which, when

applied at work, will enhance their average job performance in their current job. This link represents the concept of training transfer.

Baharim (2008) cites Wexley and Latham, who suggest that transfer can be measured as a positive, negative or a zero. Positive transfer occurs when learning in the training situation results in better performance on the job (Baharim, 2008). This reflects the primary objective of most organisational training interventions. Negative transfer occurs when learning in the training situation results in poorer performance on the job (Baharim, 2008). Zero transfer, not surprisingly, occurs when learning in the training situation has no effect at all on job performance (Baharim, 2008).

Cormier and Hagman, in Baharim (2008), consider transfer of training to consist of two elements: general or specific transfer. General transfer refers to the application of learned knowledge and skills to a higher level or to a more complex work situation (Baharim, 2008). Specific transfer occurs when the trainee can apply what has been learned in the training environment to a similar work situation (for instance, learning to use a word processor in the training environment and application of this learning in the work environment) (Baharim, 2008). These two elements are also described by Subedi (2004), who refers to them as near and far transfer.

2.2.1 Near transfer

The near transfer of skills and knowledge refers to the replication of previously acquired knowledge and skills in all identical situations, based on Thorndike's theory of identical elements (Subedi, 2004). Thorndike, in Subedi (2004), maintains that training in one task is not likely to lead to improvement in the performance of another task, unless there is a clear similarity between them.

This theory of transfer is based on the belief that previous learning facilitates new learning only to the extent that the new learning task contains elements identical to those in the previous task (Subedi, 2004). According to Misko, in Subedi (2004), this type of transfer often involves tasks that are procedural in nature, and the rate of learning transfer is usually high, but the learner is unlikely to adapt such skills and knowledge when confronted with a new environment and changed conditions. Most on-the-job training programmes are likely to have a high rate of near transfer of skills and knowledge, as opposed to off-the-job training programmes.

According to Yamnill and Mclean (2001), whether one achieves near or far transfer appears to be dependent on which theory of transfer guides the development and presentation of the training programme.

According to Yamnill and Mclean (2001: 201), research reviewed by Clark and Voogel suggests that the following recommendations will increase the likelihood of near transfer:

- The more the training content and program reflect the workplace, the more successful the near transfer.
- The greater the specificity about where and how the training is to be applied to the job, the more successful the near transfer.
- The more over-learning of the task is encouraged, the more successful the near transfer.
- The more the procedural nature of the task is emphasised, the more successful the near transfer.
- The more the application of the training is restricted to only those areas for which the trainee was prepared, the more successful the near transfer.

Therefore, the identical elements theory influences the acquisition of near transfer (Yamnill & Mclean, 2001).

2.2.2 Far transfer

Far transfer refers to learning new skills or performing new tasks in situations that differ significantly from those of the original learning (Subedi, 2004). Misko, in Subedi (2004), states that training conditions which focus on far transfer require learners to adapt the acquired knowledge and skills as guidelines in order to perform or learn in a changed situation or new environment. Transfer of learning from this type of training is difficult but more important than instances of near transfer, from the perspective of higher order learning and retention (Subedi, 2004). In most service-oriented organisations (such as government), training situations differ from the actual work environment because they are often off-the-job. In this case, the far transfer of skills and knowledge will be dominant.

According to Yamnill and Mclean (2001:202), the following factors may hypothetically influence the acquisition of far transfer:

- The better trainees understand the underlying principles, concepts and assumptions of the skills and behaviours they are learning, the more successful the far transfer.
- The more trainees practice in different contexts and use novelty in their practice exercises, the more successful the far transfer.
- The more encouragement trainees receive during training to discuss and apply the training in situations of their own choosing, the more successful the far transfer.
- The more encouragement trainees receive after training to apply the training to situations other than those for which they were trained; the more successful the far transfer.

Furthermore, Nikandrou, Brinia and Bereri (2009) distinguish between two types of transfer, namely direct and indirect. According to them, direct training transfer to the workplace means that the trained employee is able to apply the knowledge and skills acquired in his job. Indirect transfer means that the trained employee may transfer skills or attitudes that were developed in training to the workplace, not as part of the training objectives, but as a result of the interactions and methods used. Thus, working in a group, promoting self-confidence and self-esteem, being responsible, reliable, punctual, etc., are all possible skills and attitudes developed indirectly through training, and these may contribute to enhanced work performance (Nikandrou et al., 2009).

The acquisition of knowledge and skills gained during training is of little value if they are not applied in the job setting or maintained over time (Bates, 2003; Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Newstrom (1992) states that roughly 20% of the critical skills needed to do a job are provided by training programmes, and 80% are learned on the job. Effective assimilation or transfer of training is therefore very important (Newstrom, 1992).

Conversely, Foxon (1993) indicates that most performance technologists and trainers believe that transfer of training is extremely low, and that much of it is extinguished over time. Research has shown that 40% of skills acquired during the training process are immediately transferred to the workplace, 25% remain for a period of six months, and only 15% for a year (Nikandrou et al., 2009; Newstrom, 1992). Based on his research, Marx concludes that transfer failure may be as high as 90% for some training programmes (Foxon, 1993).

2.3 FACTORS RELATED TO THE TRANSFER OF TRAINING

Baldwin and Ford, in their early model of the transfer process, provided HRD researchers and practitioners of organisational training with an understanding of the range of factors affecting transfer of training, which include trainee characteristics, training programme design, and the type of work environment (Baharim, 2008). According to Baharim (2008), many researchers in this area have emphasised that any effort taken to evaluate training effectiveness must look for these elements of training transfer. In this study, two elements of transfer of training, namely the work environment (supervisory support and organisational characteristics) and trainee characteristics, will be discussed.

2.3.1 Supervisory support

Two very clear instances during which supervisor support can manifest itself are immediately before and immediately after the trainee's attendance of a training programme (Kirwan, 2009). At these times, the supervisor can use pre-training strategies (having pre-programme discussions) and post-training strategies (following up afterwards having been shown in particular to improve transfer (Kirwan, 2009).

Cromwell and Kolb (2004) define supervisory support as the extent to which supervisors reinforce and support the use of learning in the job environment. Supervisory support for applying new skills has consistently been found to be a key factor affecting the transfer process (Dodson, 2004). This includes supervisor involvement in clarifying performance expectations after training, identifying opportunities to apply new skills and knowledge, setting realistic goals based on training, working with individuals on problems encountered when applying new skills, and providing feedback when employees successfully apply these new abilities (Dodson, 2004)

Supervisory support has been identified as an important work environment variable that affects the transfer process (Cromwell & Kolb, 2004). Although supervisory support is considered to be most important in the training transfer process, Chiaburu (2010) argues that support originating from the supervisor may have an episodic or punctuated character, with discussions before and after training, and periodic checks on progress. This intermittence may weaken supervisors' influence over their subordinates' skill maintenance and transfer (Chiaburu, 2010).

Dodson (2004) suggests that in order to improve productivity, follow-up by the supervisor is essential. According to Patterson (2009), in their research, Lewis and Huczynski found that the supervisor plays an important role after the training. They indicated that in those situations in which the newly learned behaviour was applied, sustained and showed beneficial organisational results, the immediate supervisor demonstrated support for the innovation 70% of the time (Patterson, 2009).

The ability of supervisors to play an effective role in training programmes may increase employees' job performance (Ismail, Sieng, Abdullah & Francis, 2010). For example, the role of supervisors in administering training programmes does not only provide financial and physical facility support, but also has the ability to establish realistic and achievable learning expectations, encourage positive reinforcement, create a positive impetus for the training programme, make employees feel comfortable about attending training, and improve and develop employees' competencies (Goleman, 2000).

According to Ismail and Bongogoh (2007), support is often viewed in terms of the supervisor encouraging and providing opportunities for employees to improve their performance within the organisation. However, in organisation-sponsored training, it is often defined in terms of the supervisor encouraging trainees to attend training programmes, helping employees before, during and after training

programmes, providing budgetary support and resources, involving employees in decision making, and guiding trainees in applying competencies that they have learned in the workplace (Ismail & Bongogoh, 2007).

According to Patterson (2009), environmental elements favourable to transfer might include, amongst others, supervisory support. According to Shanock and Eisenberger (2006), research from the social and organisational support literature indicates that when supervisors are supportive of subordinates, this treatment leads to favourable outcomes such as reduced work stress and enhanced performance for the employee and the organisation.

2.3.1.1 Attitudes towards supervisory support

(a) Definition of attitudes

Attitude in this study is defined as negative or positive emotional relationship with or predisposition towards an object, an institution or person (Kalanda, 2005). According to Kalanda (2005) this definition explains the fact that attitude has to do with people's emotions and how this influences their behavior. This suggests that attitudes determine individuals' experience and reaction to circumstances.

Kalanda (2005) asserts that people's reactions and responses towards certain things largely depend on how they perceive them. For example, if an employee perceives that supervisory support is poor; his negative attitude would be reflected in his actions and limited engagements. Kathard in Mwiria (2006) discovered that grumbling of educators not only affected their attitudes towards one another and the school in it's entirely but also affected their classroom delivery (work performance).

It could be assumed that if employees act positively towards support from the supervisor, then they will have more of an interest in the support they receive.

Thus, if supervisory support after training is aimed at improved performance, then employees exhibiting positive attitude towards support from supervisor would be more likely to improve their work performance. In the next section, biographical and demographic variables such as gender, race, age, position and educational level will be discussed to establish their role in the attitudes of employees towards supervision.

(b) Role of gender in attitudes towards supervision

Brauchle and Azam (2004) suggest that a number of studies in the past 20 years reported that females are more likely to exhibit better work attitudes than their male counterparts, while others found no correlation at all between gender and work ethic. According to Christie (1996) many observers believe that men and women bring to the workplace differences in attitude, values and perceptions that influence the way they do their work. The inference would be that employee's gender may determine his or her attitude.

According to Worden (1993) studies have shown that Police officers' attitudes toward supervision do not differ between men and women. In the study of Gilinsky (1976), the relationship between gender and attitude regarding supervision was open to speculation. He hypothesized that the differences in gender, level of education and age would affect attitude toward supervision. Nevertheless, he believed that gender would have no effect upon attitude toward supervision, but that it should be measured in case there was an interaction (Gilinsky, 1976).

(c) Role of age in attitudes towards supervision

De Nobile and McCormick (2006) found using the Scheffe test that, staff members aged between 41-50 years were significantly positive towards supervision than those aged 20-30. They postulate that, the older staff members

may have received more recognition and praise from their supervisors due to greater self confidence or accumulation of successful experiences that may be expected to occur with age (De Nobile & McCormick, 2006).

According to De Nobile and McCormick (2006) longevity of career, combined with successful experience may explain why older staff members are more positive towards supervision. De Nobile and McCormick (2006) assert that, long serving employees may experience more overall positive attitude due to positive relations with colleagues established over years and the professional support that may bring or an accumulation of successful experience.

(d) Role of race in attitudes towards supervision

Socio-race is defined as categorization of individuals in terms of their physical or external qualities, such as skin colour, race or ethnicity (Brown, 2009). Africans (blacks), whites, coloureds and Indians are examples of socio-race in South African context. According to Brown (2009) investigations of socio-race in supervisory literature revealed its influence on perceptions of supervision.

Brown (2009) found in his study that trainees from racial/ ethnic minority groups in supervision with Caucasian supervisors anticipated receiving less empathy, respect, and congruence than the Caucasian trainees. In addition, the researchers have found that perceptions of being linked by supervisors were related to greater satisfaction with supervision for racial/ethnic minority trainees. However, several studies have revealed contradictory findings, yielding no main effect of race on perceptions of the supervisory relationship (Brown, 2009).

(e) Role of position in attitudes towards supervision

Sun (2002) discovered in his study, that field training officers (middle level employees) are more critical of their immediate supervisors and district

managers than non field training officers (lower level employees). An employee's designation in the organisation may also influence the attitude of employees towards support they receive from their supervisors. This may be attributed to the degree of supervisory support received at various levels of the organisation.

(f) Role of educational level in attitudes towards supervision

According to Marshall (2009) education goals and education trends of employees help to explain employees' attitudes or opinions. In this regard, some research indicates that education influences attitudes or opinions that may or may not lead to manifest behaviour by employees. The combined effects of educational aspirations and commitment to education often influence the attitudes of people.

According to Brauchle and Azam (2004) research investigations on the effects of demographic variables such as gender, age, level of education, and length of full-time employment on work attitudes have been reported in the literature with differing results. Some researchers found positive relationships, while others found no relationship or negative relationships between education and work attitudes (Brauchle & Azam, 2004). According to the article Primary school teacher..., ([n.d.]) it was established that personal attribute such as age, marital status, professional experience and educational level had significant influence on the teachers' attitudes towards supervision.

2.3.1.2 The measurement of attitudes

According to Van der Merwe (2009) numerous techniques, tool and approaches to measuring attitudes accurately do exist, which suggests there is not merely one optimal way to achieve the goal of measuring attitudes accurately, but rather, that it may be reached by means of various tools and approaches. In order to measure attitude various kinds of scales have been devised. These scales

include social distance, scale of Bogardus Thurston Scale, Likert scale and socio-metric scale by Moreno (Narli, 2010).

Van Hoek (2004) cites Kiesler, Collins and Miller who postulate that the most common measure of an attitude is a pencil and paper instrument – a measurement technique which does not make direct use of overt behaviour. Other methods that can be used, include measures in which inferences are drawn from; self- reports of beliefs and behaviours, observation of ongoing behaviour in a natural setting, the individual's reaction to or interpretation of partially structured stimuli, performance of "objective" tasks and physiological reactions to the attitudinal objects or representations of it (Van Hoek, 2004).

According to Grim (1936) in attempting to measure attitudes we are dealing with extremely personal, subjective and highly complex entities. He believes that the context must be considered whenever we speak of measuring either definite physical objects or such intangible entities as attitudes. In the present study, the measurement of attitude shall be expressed by the employees' agreement or disagreement of statements on a five-point scale.

2.3.1.3 Perceived lack of supervisory support

Negative or inadequate responses from supervisors can diminish the trainee's attempts to apply new skills in the job (Dodson, 2004). These responses may include failure to provide the trainee with opportunities to apply the new skills or knowledge, the supervisor's resistance to the use of new skills, and a lack of feedback. According to Foxon (1993), other factors repeatedly mentioned include organisational demands and pressures that inhibit application, lack of opportunity to apply learned skills, and failure to provide the resources or technology necessary for their application.

According to Gilpin-Jackson and Bushe (2006), lack of supervisory support after training has been referred to as the bane of training transfer. If trainees perceive that they are not afforded an opportunity to apply newly acquired skills to the workplace, they might be easily discouraged. In their study, Nikandrou et al. (2009) discovered that even though organisations encouraged employees to participate in training, supervisors were not actually interested in letting employees apply the skills and knowledge acquired to their work. Thus, feelings of anger and disappointment prevailed, which shaped the motivation to learn and transfer skills and knowledge to the workplace (Nikandrou et al., 2009).

Newstrom, in Kuchta (1992), highlights the fact that the most common barrier to skills transfers is the lack of positive reinforcement by a trainee's supervisor for new skills being practiced. The impact of the trainee's supervisor cannot be underestimated. According to Foxon (1993), supervisors have the most important influence on the transfer process, and when they encourage and model the desired behaviours, employees are more likely to apply the new skills - when they do not (perceived lack of supervisor support), their attitude becomes an inhibiting factor. Some researchers have suggested that it is the perception of support, rather than the reality of it, which is the critical factor (Foxon, 1993).

According to Foxon (1993), Mosel was the first to articulate the relationship between an unsupportive organisational environment and transfer failure. He concluded that skills will only transfer to the extent that supervisors support and practise the same behaviours that employees are taught in the training environment. If employees perceive that they are being supported by their supervisors, there is a stronger likelihood of the transfer of new skills to the work environment.

Williams (1998) argues that whereas factors impeding work performance influence individuals directly or indirectly, factors that enhance work performance do so indirectly. These factors influence the individual first (e.g. training and work

design enhance declarative knowledge and motivation), and then work performance (Williams, 1998).

2.3.1.4 Role of the supervisor before training

As mentioned in chapter one, supervisory support is clearly a multi-dimensional construct, and can include many actions on the part of supervisors (Saks & Belcourt, 2006). Pre-training discussions can play a pivotal role in ensuring that trainees transfer their new skills to the job. Brinkerhoff and Montesino, in their study, discovered that those managers who discussed their expectations with their subordinates prior to training increased the likelihood that learning would ultimately be reflected in improved job performance (Patterson, 2009). This study and others confirm the important role that supervisors play in training transfer.

According to Patterson (2009), supervisors who engage in supportive behaviours prior to training events contribute to a more positive transfer environment within the organisation. During the design stage of training programmes, supervisors often work together in tandem with the management team and other employees in establishing objectives, selecting suitable trainers, developing effective lesson plans, selecting programme methods and techniques, preparing course materials, scheduling the programme, as well as conducting training needs' analyses (Ismail, Sieng, Abdullah & Francis, 2010).

2.3.1.5 Role of the supervisor after training

Patterson (2009) postulates that the period immediately after the conclusion of the training event is probably the most crucial in facilitating training transfer. The supervisor can influence transfer before, during, and after the training through the use of verbal and non-verbal cues (Dodson, 2004).

Patterson (2009) reports that 71% of the beneficial results from training occurred when post-training application was supported by other organisational members. A supported innovation attempt, especially when supported by an immediate supervisor, has a much higher chance of successful implementation (Patterson, 2009). Saks & Belcourt (2006) postulate that one of the most important work environment variables is supervisor support.

According to Kraiger (2002:72), besides offering an opportunity to perform, supervisors can create a supportive climate to encourage transfer of training. The level of support can include the following:

- Permitting employees to attend training and acknowledging the importance of it.
- Accommodating attendance of training programmes by rearranging work schedules and endorsing employees' attendance (encouragement).
- Attending training sessions themselves (participation).
- Discussing the progress that trainees are making in learning and using new skills, and finding out how their use of training content can be supported (reinforcement).
- Providing trainees with opportunities to practice new skills (practice).
- Becoming a trainer or designing instructional material for the programme (teaching).

According to Pidd (2004:275), "when factors influencing training transfer in a human service agency were examined, it was found that lack of supervisory support, in the form of little or no feedback and the refusal of supervisors to endorse work practice changes, was a major impediment to the transfer of training". Perceptions of supervisor support therefore have a strong impact on subordinates.

Cromwell and Kolb (2004) support the importance of supervisors' involvement in transfer of training. They maintain that without supervisory support, the transfer of newly acquired behaviours to the workplace would be extremely difficult at best (Cromwell & Kolb, 2004). Huczynski and Lewis, as cited by Patterson (2009), also found that the single most important factor influencing the trainee's intent to transfer was the supervisor's engagement style and attitude.

According to Dodson (2004), training is an expensive endeavour that often fails to yield the desired results. Organisations spend billions of dollars each year on formal training and development programmes, with the expectation that their training investments will lead to improvements in organisational performance or results criteria (Saks & Belcourt, 2006). Therefore, ensuring that training is transferred to the work environment should become supervisors' top priority.

According to Telles-Rogers (2003), supervision has a substantial impact on worker performance if certain supervisory functions are carried out effectively. For example, it is important for supervisors to be available to trainees as much as possible for consultation and support. The supervisor provides the main source of reinforcement of the trainee's newly learned skills (Spinale, 1980). The importance of quality supervision for supporting effective work performance is often overlooked in terms of the budget allocation and staff development planning process (Telles-Rogers, 2003).

According to May, Moore and Zammit, in Kuchta (1992), a well-known, but less practiced, maxim is that post-training support is as important as the training itself. They are of the view that employees often emerge from the training experience ready to participate in or build a work environment focused on a new strategic goal, only to have their enthusiasm dampened. The necessity of getting the employee's supervisor involved as an integral part of the human resource development process cannot be overemphasised (Kuchta, 1992).

Leifer and Newstrom, in Kuchta (1992), note that support is needed both before and after training, through stressing the expected outcome of training (improved performance) and suggesting the supervisor's active involvement in both the pre- and post-training stages. They further note that there is a two-fold effect of early reinforcement by supervisors, in that employees see evidence of support in the application of new skills, and the supervisor him/herself is also more inclined to deal with the training in a supportive way.

2.3.2 Organisational characteristics

The prevailing organisational climate with regard to new knowledge and skills greatly influences whether or not the transfer will be made (Nikandrou et al., 2009). Nikandrou et al. (2009) contend that a supportive climate increases the adoption of transfer strategies by trainees, as well as transfer in general. Trainees should be afforded an opportunity to perform new skills, provided with equipment used at work and, where possible, get someone to look after trainees' tasks during training. According to Nikandrou et al (2009), organisational culture either will or will not allow the employee to experiment with his or her new skills in the work environment.

Patterson (2009) affirms that work environment factors are unique to each organisation and play a significant role in promoting or prohibiting transfer. Tannenbann and Yukl, in Patterson (2009), report that elements of the post-training environment can encourage (rewards, job aids), discourage (ridicule from peers) or actually prohibit the application of new skills and knowledge in the job (lack of necessary equipment). Support from the organisation can be both beneficial and detrimental to the transfer process.

According to Foxon (1993), organisational characteristics account for 42% of the identified inhibitory factors, training design for 22%, individual learner characteristics for 21%, and training delivery for 13%. However, by reducing the

influence of the inhibitors and strengthening the supporting factors, the transfer opportunity is increased.

2.3.3 Trainee characteristics

According to Nikandrou et al. (2009), the characteristics of the trainee, such as his/her personality, ability to learn and transfer, personal learning goals, job and career utility, commitment to work, perception of learning, and its transfer to the job, are all factors affecting the motivation of the trainee to learn and the transfer of training. They suggest that when the employee has identified work or career goals that he/she wants to achieve through training, it is more probable that he/she will transfer the training to the work environment.

Foxon (1993) asserts that the major inhibitor is the low level of trainee motivation to apply the training (13% of inhibiting factors). Other factors identified refer to the trainee's difficulty in terms of skill or knowledge mastery, and an inability to understand the relevance of the training to the job requirements (Foxon, 1993). The motivation to transfer can be increased if trainees perceive that the new skills will solve work-related problems, enhance their overall performance, and be encouraged by others in the workplace (Patterson, 2009).

Nikandrou et al., (2009) further emphasise the impact of the trainee's personality on transfer of skills to the job. They state that the person who manages to transfer to the workplace everything he/she has learnt and has a significant impact on organisational performance, even though he/she has to face numerous organisational difficulties, is a good example of how personality can influence the transfer of skills.

According to Yamnill and Mclean (2001), if trainees can understand the principles and concepts, and if they have a chance to practice exercises and apply situations in training programmes to their workplace, they are more likely to apply

their newly acquired skills and behaviours when they are faced with new challenges and unfamiliar problems.

2.3.4 Climate for transfer

Kirwan (2009) defines the transfer climate as a set of employee perceptions concerning what (in the work environment) helps or hinders them in their application of learning. According to Yamnill and Mclean (2001), it is seen as a mediating variable in the relationship between the organisational context and an individual's job attitudes and work behaviour, and can either support or inhibit the application of newly acquired knowledge and skills in the work setting (Patterson, 2009).

The transfer climate has been studied by researchers in the field for quite some time. According to Kirwan (2009), it has also been referred to as environmental favourability (Noe, 1986), organisational climate for innovation (Huczynski and Lewis, 1980), and learning climate. Rouiller and Goldstein, in Patterson (2009), define the transfer climate as "those situations and consequences that either inhibit or help facilitate the transfer of what has been learned in training into the job situation".

Cromwell and Kolb (2004) also describe the transfer climate as work environment factors perceived by trainees to encourage or discourage their use of the knowledge, skills and abilities learned during training in their jobs. The need to create a proper organisational climate for training transfer prior to and after the training event is crucial. This is because training is the most common form of human resource development that helps organisations to enhance workforce effectiveness and productivity by means of specified learning geared towards improvement (Subedi, 2004).

According to Noe (1999), elements that comprise the transfer climate include supervisor and peer support, opportunity to use skills, and the consequences of using learned capabilities. Kirwan (2009) states that elements that make up the

transfer climate include support from peers, the organisation in general and the trainee's manager. Most researchers consider support from peers, support from supervisors, and support from the organisation to be important in the transfer climate.

2.4 EVALUATION OF THE TRANSFER OF TRAINING

The preceding section dealt with the concept of the transfer of training and factors related to it. In this section, the focus will be on whether or not the attitudes of employees towards supervisory support they received after training is related to their work performance.

2.4.1 The concept of work performance

Mguqulwa (2008) cites the definition of performance provided by Byars and Rue, who view it as the extent to which an employee accomplishes the tasks that make up his or her job. Performance is also defined by Nzama (2005) as a multidimensional construct consisting of how well one performs tasks, the initiatives one takes, and how one solves problems. Furthermore, work performance is described by Van der Linde (2005) as the quality and quantity of human output that is necessary to achieve work goals, and the standards that are required to do a specific job. In all these three definitions, the emphasis is on the measurement of the end product (output achieved by an employee).

In the Human resource development (HRD) context, improved performance is regarded as the end result of training. After training and retaining the training content, trainees should transfer the knowledge and/or skills accrued to the work context, with the intention of improving job performance over time (Velada, Caetano, Michael, Lyons & Kavanagh, 2007).

According to Yamnill and McLean (2001), training is useless if it cannot be translated into performance. Swanson, in Yamnill and McLean (2001), states that for HRD to become a core business process, performance is the key. The application of training skills to actual performance is an important issue with respect to linking individual behaviour (improved performance) to the requirements of the organisational system. According to Yamnill and McLean (2001), in order to accept as true that training truly makes a difference in organisational and individual performance, supervisors must know how to support transfer of training in organisations.

Swanson in Yamnill and McLean (2001), states that a significant purpose of training and development is to improve performance. As indicated earlier in the study, training is of little value to organisations unless it is transferred in some way to job performance. Training should be a means, not a primary organisational outcome. Therefore, training outputs should emphasise performance, not just learning. Training is an internal behaviour, whereas performance is usually a more external one (Yamnill & McLean, 2001).

According to Gilmore (2008), in order to understand work performance, one needs to observe both the actions of the employee, as well as the results or outcomes of these actions. She indicates that it is vital to understand counterproductive behaviours such as absenteeism, because these reflect employees' attitudes, which in turn influence the overall performance outcome. Supervisors must ensure that positive behaviours displayed by employees after training are supported, in order to make possible the application of acquired skills to actual performance. Employees can be held individually accountable for the behaviours which are in their control, as opposed to their limited accountability for the organisation's resources, policies and procedures (Gilmore, 2008).

Performance can also refer to the performance of an organisation (how effectively it achieves its overall goals) or a department (how effectively it

achieves its objectives). According to Nzama (2005), work performance is also viewed as multidimensional and takes place at different levels, such as business units, core processes, individual jobs and work groups. For the purposes of this study, work performance will be defined on an individual level.

2.4.1.1 Individual work performance

According to Cloete (2004), on an individual level**,** work performance refers to the degree and quality of effort, cooperation, absenteeism, lateness, compliance with standards and commitment displayed by individuals. Work performance depends on the individual's capacity, willingness, opportunity to perform and support from supervisor (Cloete, 2004). Job performance essentially refers to the application of effort to produce an outcome (e.g. number of leave forms captured on PERSAL system) (Cloete, 2004). The new skills acquired by employees during PERSAL system training should be reflected by the application of these skills to indicate work performance.

(a) Determinants of individual work performance

Individual work performance is influenced by variety of factors. These include genetics, the muscle system and job design (Cloete, 2004). Individuals' skills, knowledge, values and attitudes (SKVAs) can also influence their work performance. Therefore, according to Bergh and Theron (2002), in order to understand individuals' work performance; it is necessary to identify the determinants of their work performance.

Campbell in Cloete (2004) indicates that the following are essential determinants of work performance:

- Declarative knowledge (i.e. knowing what to do after training).
- Procedural knowledge and skill.

- Motivation (in terms of amount of effort, level of effort and duration of effort and support by supervisor).

The above determinants are influenced by individual differences in intelligence, personality, motivation, perception, demographics, attitudes and competencies (Bergh & Theron, 2002).

Cloete (2004) cites Williams, who postulates that individual work performance is enhanced or diminished by the interaction of individual and system factors. Factors that impede individual work performance include tools, equipment, work environment (supervisory support), time, policies and work processes. According to Cloete (2004), these factors could prevent the individual from delivering optimal performance.

2.4.2 The relation between work performance and supervisory support

Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, and Rhoades (2002) found, using a longitudinal panel design, that retail employees' perception that their supervisors valued their contributions and cared about their well-being (perceived supervisor support) was positively related to changes in their performance. This implies that if employees feel that they are supported by their supervisors, they are more likely to develop a positive attitude towards their supervisors and their work performance. According to Cohen (1990), if employees' perceptions of supervisory support are positive, their performance is likely to be high.

Nikandrou et al. (2009) postulate that if employees believe that their attempts to apply newly acquired skills in the workplace are not supported, this factor shapes their attitudes towards supervisory support and job performance. However, the literature suggests that when trainees perceive that their supervisors are supportive of the application of newly developed knowledge and skills, they are more likely to transfer these competencies back to the job (Velada, Caetano,

Michael, Lyons & Kavanagh, 2007). According to Kuchta (1992), within the organisational context, the obvious centre of influence in the application of trained skills is the immediate supervisor.

Odiorne, in Kuchta (1992), observes that the behaviour of the supervisor can make a world of difference in the quality of their jobs and that employees whose supervisors use systems and exhibit behaviour which is in line with employees' needs and values will perform better than those employees who are denied such support. Kuchta (1992) cites Haire, who supports the influence of the supervisor, noting that "indeed, whether he is conscious or not, the supervisor is bound to be constantly shaping the behaviour of subordinates". According to Kuchta (1992), a supervisor can do many things to impede or improve the utilisation of new skills learned through training.

In addition, Shanock and Eisenberger (2006) suggest that trainees view the perceived support they receive from supervisors as being representative of the organisation's favourable or unfavourable orientation towards them. Because supervisors act as agents of the organisation in directing and evaluating employees, trainees tend to attribute the supportiveness of such treatment, in part, to the organisation rather than solely to the supervisor's personal inclinations (Shanock & Eisenberger, 2006). As a consequence, perceptions of supervisors' support have a strong influence on subordinates' perceived organisational support.

2.4.3 Work performance measurement

According to Landy and Farr (1983), work performance measurement involves the methods or procedures that provide quantitative indexes of the extent to which employees demonstrate certain behaviours, and of the results of these behaviours. They state that the difficulty in accurately measuring work performance, as it has been labelled, is still one of the most vexing problems

facing industrial-organisational psychologists today. According to Brudan (2010), performance measurement deals with the evaluation of results, while performance management involves taking actions based on the results of the evaluation and ensuring that the target results are achieved.

Gilmore (2008) cites Landy and Farr, who state that there are various approaches to measuring work performance. However, in essence, performance measures should be reliable, valid and accurate, as well as being practical and useful. Three dimensions of the measurement of work performance are further described by these authors, namely the time span covered by the measure, the specificity of the measure, and the closeness of the measure to organisational goals.

As mentioned above, work performance is a multidimensional construct and can be measured in different ways. According to Stiffler (2006), the measurement of performance is financial in nature - it is always linked to profit, budget, cost restriction and so on. The approach used by organisations in measuring performance is largely influenced by the way in which the organisation defines and conceptualises work performance (Nzama, 2005).

According to Adhikari (2009), work performance may be quantitative, qualitative or both. Quantitative performance is related to the use of resources such as the budget, number of outputs produced or number of assignments undertaken in a given time, while qualitative performance is measured against operational qualities such as accuracy and error (Adhikari, 2009).

Mguqulwa (2008) argues that performance is directly related to the concept of productivity because of factors such as efficiency, quality and effectiveness. It is therefore clear that performance measurement should be based on agreed performance standards between an employee and his/her supervisor.

To ensure accurate measurement, the purpose of and criteria for measurement should be clarified (Gilmore, 2008).

2.4.3.1 Work performance measurement criteria

Since performance includes other factors, such as quality, customer satisfaction, tardiness and motivation, factors that are not easily quantified, certain criteria must be identified for performance measurement (Van der Linde, 2005).

For this reason, performance measures can be divided into various types (Van der Linde, 2005) as follows:

1. Quantity – this refers to how much is produced.
2. Quality – this refers to the perfection of goods or services produced.
3. Accidents and rejects – this refers to the amount of rejected or unacceptable products, and is viewed as a more negative way of calculating productivity.

According to Cascio (1998) and Landy and Farr (1983), measurement criteria can be divided into two broad categories, namely subjective (judgemental) and objective (non-judgemental) measures of performance. According to Gilmore (2008), ratings (supervisor, peer or self) are examples of subjective criteria, and this process requires one individual to make a judgement about another's performance level. Objective criteria consist of measures that do not require a judgement, and these data consist of "anything that can be counted, seen and compared directly from one employee to another" (Gilmore, 2008). The following two measurement criteria will be discussed in the next section.

(i) Judgemental or subjective measurement criteria

Subjective measurement criteria involve ratings, rankings and the paired comparison of employees (Landy & Farr, 1983). According to Armstrong, owing to the subjective nature of these criteria, achieving consistency is a major concern (as cited in Gilmore, 2008). This is because subjective measurement criteria are based on individual perceptions. Self-appraisal and supervisory appraisal are two examples of subjective measurement criteria.

(ii) Self–appraisal

This method provides an employee with the opportunity to comment on his or her performance (Mguqulwa, 2008). An employee assesses his or her own performance against the set standards before the supervisor assesses his or her performance against the same standards. Arnold and Davey found that employees continuously rated themselves far higher than their supervisors did (cited in Gilmore, 2008). The supervisor should therefore ensure that the employee is conversant with how to rate his or her performance.

(iii) Supervisory rating

Fink and Longenecker, in Gilmore (2008), maintain that performance measurement fails in most organisations because of poor rater skills. According to Heathfield (2007), every method of assessing employee performance has its positive and negative characteristics. She suggests that they all have features in common. They are opinion-based, generally one-sided, and rarely based on metrics (Heathfield, 2007). Gilmore (2008) contends that ratings as a performance measure are subject to systematic bias and random error, which objective measures seem to be less prone to.

According to Heathfield (2007), a supervisor is uncomfortable in the judgement seat during employee performance appraisal. He knows that he may have to justify his opinions with specific examples where necessary. If he lacks skill in providing feedback and often provokes a defensive response from the employee,

who may justifiably feel that he/she is under attack (Heathfield, 2007). According to Heathfield (2007), as a result, supervisors avoid giving honest feedback, which defeats the purpose of the performance appraisal. However, supervisory ratings can be regarded as being more reliable than an employee's self-rating. The organisation in this study uses subjective measurement criteria.

(b) Non-judgemental or objective measurement criteria

Gilmore (2008) suggests that objective data are generally more accessible and readily available than subjective data. Objectivity seems to refer to the consensus of subjective opinion (Muckler & Seven, 1992). According to Muckler and Seven (1992), recent evidence suggests that when making judgements of fact (objective decisions), people prefer to compare themselves with dissimilar others, perhaps as a reality check. When making judgements about preferences (subjective choices), people prefer to compare themselves with similar others, perhaps as reinforcement for what they recognise as mere opinion (as cited in Gorenflo & Crano, 1989).

However, Gilmore (2008), argue that performance constructs that can be measured objectively tend to be narrow in focus and are typically low-order organisational goals. The higher up in the organisation the employee is, the more difficult it is to measure relevant goals objectively.
According to Gilmore (2008), variables that lend themselves to objective measurement are absenteeism, turnover and job knowledge.

(i) Absenteeism

Absenteeism, when measured from the broader organisational perspective, is viewed as a "cost" and must be reduced, because it has a significant impact on overall labour costs (Gilmore, 2008). At this level, the reasons for absence are less important than the cost thereof.

(ii) Turnover

Turnover is relatively easy to measure. According to Gilmore (2008), the philosophy behind measuring turnover is that it is expensive to recruit, select and train individuals to replace employees who have left.

(iii) Job knowledge

According to Gilmore (2008), job knowledge is a quantifiable objective criterion that can be measured by means of an on-the job questionnaire. However, situational constraints should be controlled and examination conditions should be constant for all employees (e.g. all employees should be examined at the beginning of a shift and not after a night shift).

2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter explored the literature relevant to transfer of training, as well as the factors related to the transfer of training and evaluation of the transfer of training. It began by providing a general overview of transfer of training, with reference to near and far transfer. It also outlined factors related to the transfer of training, namely supervisory support, attitudes towards supervisory support, the measurement of attitudes towards supervision, perceived lack of supervisory support, role of supervisors before and after training, organisational characteristics, trainee characteristics and the climate for transfer.

The evaluation of the transfer of training was discussed in relation to work performance, individual work performance, the relation between work performance and supervision, work performance measurement and work performance criteria. From the literature reviewed, there have been a number of previous studies to assess work environment support factors including supervisory support after training. However, evidence is lacking in the literature with regard to the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support after training and work performance. The study aims to explore the relationship

between the two variables. In the next chapter, the methodology proposed for this study will be presented.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the methodology proposed for this study. It includes the research design, research population, sampling method, data collection techniques, data collection procedure, data analysis, and reliability and validity of the instrument. Finally, a summary of this chapter is presented.

The purpose of this study is to address the following objectives:

1. To determine whether or not attitudes towards supervisory support is significantly related to the work performance amongst employees.
2. To evaluate the role that variables such as gender, age, race, position and educational level play in the attitudes of respondents towards supervisory support.
3. To enhance the sustainability of the positive contributions made by supervisors prior to and after training.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

3.2.1 Correlational design

According to Ekmekci (1997), the aim of the experimental research design is to investigate the possible cause and effect relationship by manipulating one independent variable to influence the other variable(s) in the experimental group, and by controlling the other relevant variables, and then measuring the effects of the manipulation by statistical means. In contrast to the experimental research

design, non-experimental research involves variables that are not manipulated by the researcher, and are instead studied as they exist.

Non-experimental design can be of different forms - for example, correlational design. The correlational method examines the relationship between two or more non- manipulated variables (Emlen, 2006). According to Welman et al. (2005), when using a correlational design, each individual is measured on two or more variables at more or less the same time. The correlation between these variables is then determined using the appropriate technique.

In this study, the aim is to determine whether or not a significant relationship exists between attitudes towards supervisory support after training and the work performance of employees. Employees' ratings of their attitudes towards supervisory support after training (independent variable) will be correlated with the ratings of their work performance (dependent variable), in order to determine whether or not a significant relationship exists. A non- experimental correlational design was applied because the researcher could then describe the statistical relationship between the two variables under study.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Johnson and Christensen (2004) define the study population as the large group to which a researcher wants to generalise the sample results. A population is sometimes called a target population. It is an aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected, and it is essential that the researcher identifies, defines and describes his/her population.

The population of this study consisted of all HR and finance personnel (N=100) at the Mpumalanga Department of Education's Nkangala district office who had participated in the PERSAL system training programme. The sample comprised a complete sampling frame of HR and finance personnel.

According to Welman et al. (2005:57), a sampling frame “is a complete list in which each unit of analysis is mentioned only once”. It was estimated that all of the 100 participants could be used in the study to assess the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance.

A complete sampling frame was developed from a training database, which was made available by the organisation’s training department. Only HR and finance personnel who attended the PERSAL system training in 2008/9 were considered. Sixty (60) useable questionnaires were returned, which resulted in a response rate of 60%. According to Babbie, in Mguqulwa (2008), a 50% response rate is adequate, a 60% response rate is considered to be good, while a 70% response rate is considered to be excellent. Gay and Airasian (2003) postulate that a sample of thirty (30) subjects (or more) is generally considered to be an acceptable sample size in correlational studies.

Table 3.1 outlines the gender, age, race, position and educational level of the sample.

TABLE 3.1

THE SAMPLE

Sample size	Gender	Age	Race	Position	Educational level
n= **60**	Male= 22 Female =38 **Total** = 60	20-25 =1 26-30 =7 31-35 =1 36-40 =6 41-45 =7 46-50 =25 51-55 =12 56-60 =1 **Total** = 60	Black=59 White =1 **Total** 60	Administrative Clerk =9 Senior Administrative Clerk =10 Administration Officer =2 Senior Provisioning Officer =14 Practitioner = 8 Registry Clerk = 8 Chief Registry Clerk = 1 Chief Clerk = 2 Principal Officer = 3 Chief Principal Officer = 2 Assistant Director =1 **Total** = 60	Grade 12 =24 Diploma =23 Degree =8 Postgraduate degree =2 Missing system =3 **Total =** 60

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

3.4.1 INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: Attitudes towards supervisory support

3.4.1.1 Procedure

(a) Introduction

The procedure for collecting data in this study began with a request for permission to conduct the research and to use employees' annual performance scores, followed by the distribution, completion and collection of the questionnaires.

(b) Field work

(i) Permission to conduct research

The researcher submitted a request for permission to conduct his study to the Department of Education's Nkangala District office, and this permission was granted by the District Director.

(ii) Distribution and collection of questionnaires

The questionnaires were administered in the following manner:

- They were distributed by hand to all 100 respondents by the HR and finance managers at the Nkangala District office. During the handing of questionnaires to respondents, a cover letter was included to explain the purpose of the questionnaire, in order to allay any fears and misunderstandings.
- Numbered questionnaires were used in order to identify individual questionnaires and maintain confidentiality.
- The covering letter provided information to the respondents regarding the time frame and where all completed questionnaires should be handed in.

- The researcher identified two officials from whom he collected the completed questionnaires.

(iii) Completion of questionnaires

All respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire during their spare time and to hand them to one of the identified contact persons.

3.4.1.2 The measuring instrument

(a) Introduction

Attitudes towards supervisory support were measured by means of a Likert scale (see Appendix A), which was adapted from Saks and Belcourt's (2006) study. A five-point Likert scale was used, as it required the respondents to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement regarding attitudes towards supervisory support received after training.

(b) The Likert scale

Reddy (2008) states that the most common method of obtaining an estimate regarding a person's attitude is by means of an attitude scale. With this technique, the respondent is asked to express his/her agreement or disagreement with several statements about the attitudinal object under consideration. According to Reddy (2008), the logic behind the use of opinion to measure attitude is that, to some extent, people's actions are correlated with the expressed opinion. Furthermore, attitude indicates a tendency which can be helpful in predicting subsequent behaviour (Reddy, 2008).

According to Welman et al. (2005), there are four different types of attitude scales, all of which comprise sets of items that measure different degrees of attitude towards the attitudinal object, namely the summated or Likert scale,

semantic differential, the Guttman scale and the Thurstone scale. Likert scales are called summated-rating or additive scales because a person's score on the scale is calculated by adding the number of responses a person gives together (Neuman, 2006). The Likert method is basically the construction of an internally consistent scale.

According to the article entitled *Likert scale* (n.d.), Likert's idea, innovative for its time during the 1930s, was to use the total score as the criterion for item selection, on the assumption that the total score was the "best estimate" of a respondent's attitude. Likert proposed two different methods of item selection: (1) item analysis, in which selection is based on the correlation of item score with total score; and (2) the employment of a criterion of internal consistency, which is used to examine, for each statement, the difference in average item score between high-scoring and low-scoring groups defined on the basis of total score. Both methods turned out to be variants of the same general method for constructing internally consistent scales (Likert scale…, [n.d.]).

For the purposes of this study, the Likert scale was used as an instrument to collect quantitative data for the measurement of attitudes towards supervisory support received after training. Ratings on the Likert scale were used for quantitative analysis. Ratings of individual respondents were added together to produce the total attitudinal score of individual respondents (Mogane, 2010).

(c) Description of the questionnaire

(i) Introduction

The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A contained six biographical and demographical questions, and section B contained ten statements used to measure the respondents' attitudes towards supervisory support received after the training programme. The questionnaire took approximately 5 to 10 minutes to complete.

(ii) Biographical and demographical information

The questions in section A were aimed at obtaining biographical and demographical information about the respondents. The information was used to evaluate the role played by gender, age, race, position and educational level in the attitudes of respondents towards supervisory support. Respondents were requested to make a choice from the listed elements.

(iii) Application of the attitude scale (Likert)

A rating scale with five response choices was used to measure attitudes in relation to the statements given. The possible responses were as follows: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= not sure; 4= agree; and 5= strongly agree. This scale was applied to questions one to ten.

Each response was given a numerical value, so that it could be subjected to statistical analysis and interpretation. The Likert scale was used because it is relatively easy to develop and is a less time-consuming method of collecting information from respondents. The Likert scale was self-administered by respondents, i.e. completed without the help of the researcher. This method is often used because it has a low financial cost implication and allows respondents time to think about the questions (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

(iv) Validity of the Likert scale

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure. Literature shows that the validity of an instrument may be shown through construct validity, criterion-related validity, content validity and face validity. For the purposes of this study, the construct and face validity of the instrument were investigated. According to Welman et al. (2005), the construct validity of a measuring instrument refers to the degree to which it measures the intended construct, rather than irrelevant constructs or measurement error. In other words, it is the extent to which what was intended to be measured was actually measured.

Convergent validity and discriminant validity are two methods that can used to measure construct validity. According to Wikipedia, convergent validity is the degree to which an operation is similar to (converges on) other operations that it should theoretically be similar to. For instance, higher correlations between two measures measuring the same construct would be evidence of convergent validity. On the other hand, discriminant validity describes the degree to which the operationalisation is not similar to (diverges from) other operationalisation that it, theoretically, should not be similar to (http://en.wikipedia.org). In this case, the construct validity of an instrument may be supported by low correlations with measures of different constructs (Welman et al., 2005).

In order to ensure face validity, the questionnaire was sent to two researchers in the HRD field for scrutiny. They both reported back that the instrument appeared to be a good measure of respondents' attitudes towards supervisory support after training. Their inputs further enhanced the validity of the instrument. Face validity is the validity of an instrument at face value.

In addition, in order to determine whether to omit or retain an item on the instrument, item-total correlations were calculated and the item was omitted if the item-total correlation was very low or negative. In correlating questions one to ten, each with the others, it was found that all the questions were significantly correlated with each other. Therefore, all of the ten questions were retained. One measure to determine validity of an instrument is the extent to which items measuring the same trait are related to each other.

Table 3.2 presents the results of an item-total correlation.

Table 3.2

Item analysis of the section: Attitudes towards supervisory support

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q1 Continuous improvement support to use acquired skills	24.89	67.497	.627	.596	.932
Q2 Opportunities to practice	24.70	65.307	.794	.725	.924
Q3 Praise and reward	24.52	69.802	.589	.583	.933
Q4 Booster session	24.78	64.704	.772	.715	.925
Q5 Availability of necessary resources	24.91	68.350	.587	.641	.934
Q6 Setting of goals	25.17	67.311	.719	.633	.928
Q7 Setting of realistic goals	24.93	64.334	.886	.877	.920
Q8 Appreciation through performance appraisals	24.54	64.253	.767	.708	.925
Q9 Consultations on challenges faced	24.81	62.003	.848	.831	.921
Q10 Pairing for feedback and reinforcement	24.93	64.334	.784	.812	.924

(v) Reliability of the Likert scale

Reliability is concerned with the accuracy of measurement and how consistently the instrument will measure on different occasions. According to Welman et al. (2005), five different kinds of reliability may be distinguished, namely test-rest reliability, parallel-forms reliability, internal consistency reliability, split-halves reliability and measurement-scorer reliability. In this study, internal consistency reliability was established by computing Cronbach's (1951) alpha.

According to Awases (2006), internal consistency reliability refers to the extent to which all subparts of an instrument will measure the identified attributes. The

closer the correlations coefficient is to 1 or -1, the more reliable the instrument is. The Cronbach's alpha was applied to the ten questions to determine whether or not they showed consistency and internal reliability in their responses. Given that the Cronbach's alpha value was so high (.9.34), it showed that the responses to the questions were consistent. Garson, in Bergh (2005), postulates that the widely- accepted social science cut- off is that alpha should be .07 or higher for a set of items, in order for it to be considered a scale.

Table 3.3 below presents the results of Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3.3 Reliability statistics

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items	No. of Items
.934	.933	10

3.4.2 DEPENDENT VARIABLE: Work performance

3.4.2.1 Procedure

(a) Introduction

In order to determine the work performance of respondents, annual performance scores for 2008/9 were used. These scores were supervisors' ratings, as generated by the organisation's performance management system.

(b) Field work

(i) Collection of data

All respondents' scores during the 2008/9 performance cycle were collected from the organisation's HR advisory department, with prior permission from the District Director. These scores were gathered in a form of a spreadsheet and were verified by the HR Advisory Practitioner. The scores were correlated with respondents' ratings of attitudes towards supervisory support received after the training programme.

3.4.2.2 Measuring instrument (PMDS)

The organisation used in this study makes use of the performance management and development system (PMDS) to manage and measure employee performance. Employee performance is reviewed quarterly by immediate supervisors, and quarterly scores are then divided by four to obtain the final annual scores.

According to Wilson (2001), supervisory ratings are generally more reliable, based on the findings of Harris and Schaubroek's (1988) study. The performance rating scale used was as follows: 1 – poor, 2 – unsatisfactory, 3 – satisfactory, 4 – good, and 5 – exceptional. Based on the literature review (chapter 2), it was concluded that the organisation under study used subjective measurement criteria. Therefore, supervisory ratings are the central part of employees' performance evaluation.

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data from this study was analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 17 (SPSS). This software was used because it contains the algorithms required to analyse the data. The researcher used a statistician to run

the data through the SPSS program. Data analyses were done using descriptive statistics, correlations and analysis of variance. These procedures will be used to report on the results of the study in the next chapter.

3.5.1 Calculation of the respondents' mean attitude scores

The questionnaire used to collect data on the attitudes of respondents towards supervisory support after training consisted of ten, five-point Likert scale statements. The ratings of statements were used to calculate the mean score for each individual respondent. This was done by adding together the ten scores (from the ten statements) for each respondent and then dividing them by ten.

Relevant responses were reversed prior to all analyses. This brought all statements in line, so that the results could be easily interpreted and made sense. Positive attitudes of respondents are reflected by high scores and negative attitudes by low scores. The maximum score that could be obtained by a respondent was 50 and the minimum score was 10.

3.5.2 Calculation of the respondents' mean score on work performance

The respondents' mean score on work performance was calculated using individual performance scores. The scores were annual work performance scores attained by respondents during the 2007/8 performance cycle. The highest performance score was 5 (exceptional performance) and the lowest score was 1 (poor performance).

The mean was calculated by adding together all respondents' performance scores and then dividing them by the number of scores (60 respondents). The score will be used to measure the correlation between the attitudes towards supervisory support received after training and work performance. If a correlation

exists it will be interpreted as follows: the higher/lower the attitude score, the higher/lower the performance score.

3.5.3 Evaluation of the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance

The aim of correlation is to describe the strength and direction of the linear relationship that exists between two measured variables (Gilmore, 2008). According to Kalanda (2005), statistical techniques such as Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient (PPM), regression analysis, the chi-square and many more are used to provide answers to different questions that a researcher may be asking. For example, PPM is computed to establish whether or not a relationship exists between two or more variables.

The PPM was used to determine whether or not a correlation existed between the independent (attitudes towards supervisory support) and dependent (work performance) variables. The degree of association was expressed as a correlation coefficient (r). According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (2002), this coefficient can range in value from +1.00 (positive relationship) through 0 (no relationship) to -1.00 (negative relationship). The results of the correlations are presented in the next chapter.

3.5.4 Evaluation of the role played by gender, age, race, position and educational level

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied for these analyses, in order to determine whether or not there was a significant difference across categories (gender, age, race, position and educational level). According to Gay and Airasian (2003), analysis of variance is used to determine if there is a significant difference among the means of three or more groups. In order to describe

possible differences between categories, the means were compared. The results of the ANOVAs are presented in the next chapter.

3.6 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the detailed research design and methodology proposed for investigating the hypothetical relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance. A Likert scale and performance scores were used to collect data. Data was analysed using a computer software package (SPSS). The next chapter will present the results obtained in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the research results are presented. These results will be presented in the form of descriptive statistics, correlations and analysis of variance (ANOVA). They will provide the basis for the rejection or confirmation of the hypothesis, as indicated in chapter one of this study. This chapter concludes with a summary.

4.2 RESULTS

4.2.1 Descriptive statistics

Because data is of no value merely as data, the extraction of meaning from accumulated data is necessary (Van der Linde, 2005). Descriptive statistics of the sample (regarding gender, race, age, position, educational level and years of experience) will be described in the form of frequencies and percentages. Frequencies and percentages with regard to respondents' choice of ratings of their attitude statements are also described by means of frequency tables.

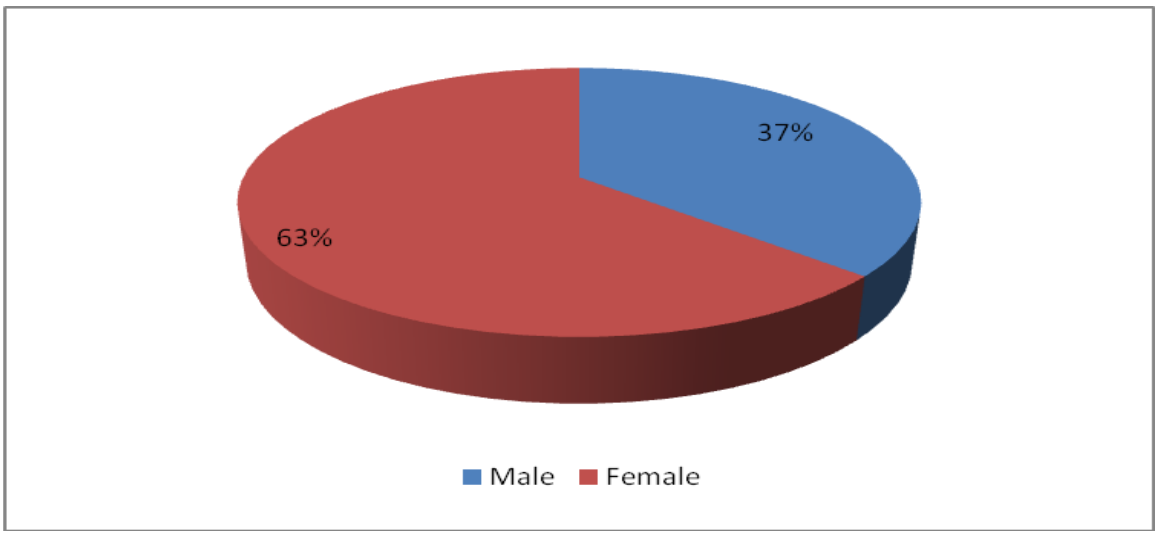
4.2.1.1 Demographic and biographical information

A summary of the demographic and biographical profile of the research sample is presented below. The objective of this section is to provide demographic and biographical information about the sample and use some of the information to determine whether or not there was a significant difference of opinion based on gender, race, age, position, educational level and years of experience. The tables and figures below represent this information.

Table 4.1 Gender

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	22	36.7	36.7	36.7
	Female	38	63.3	63.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.1 Gender

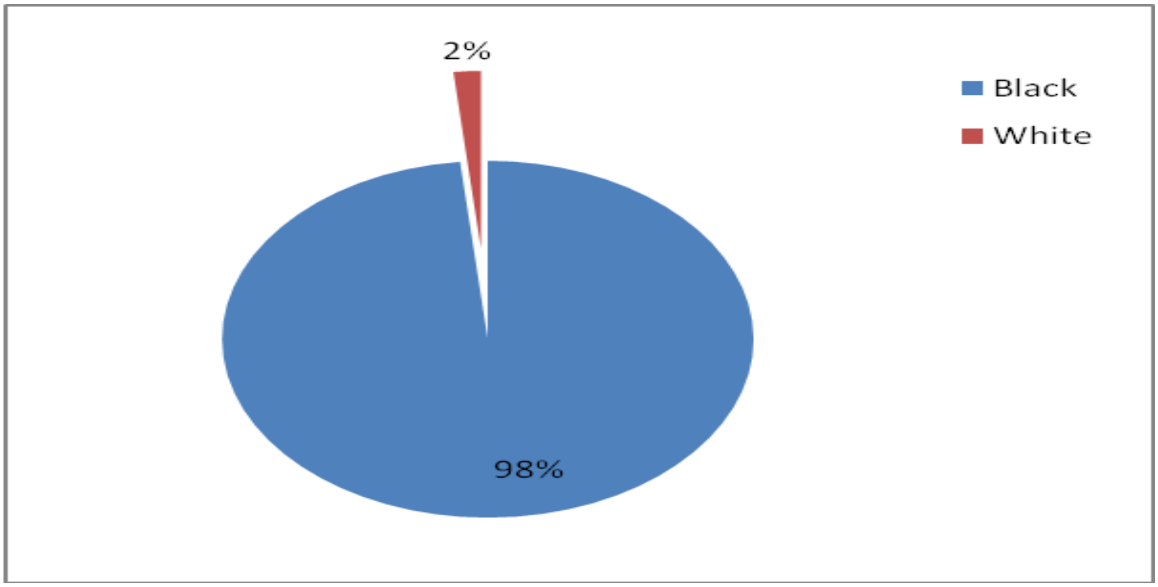


Of the sample, 22 (37%) were males and 38 (63%) were females. It is imperative to determine whether or not respondents, based on their gender, will provide any significantly different views regarding their attitude towards supervisory support.

Table 4.2 Race

Race					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Black	59	98.3	98.3	98.3
	White	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.2 Race

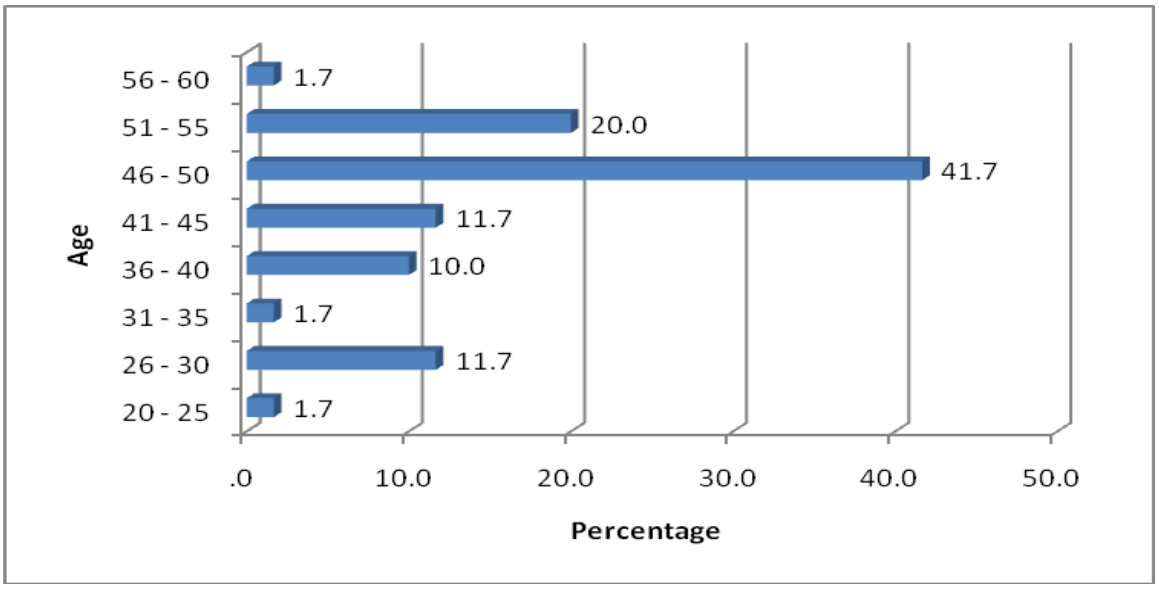


The sample comprised 59 (98%) blacks and one (2%) white respondent. It is thus clear that the majority of the sample consisted of black respondents. This could possibly be attributed to the fact that the majority of the employees within the organisation are black. Comparatively speaking, race did not play a major role, since the sample was not adequately representative of other race groups.

Table 4.3 Age distribution

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20 – 25	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	26 – 30	7	11.7	11.7	13.3
	31 – 35	1	1.7	1.7	15.0
	36 – 40	6	10.0	10.0	25.0
	41 – 45	7	11.7	11.7	36.7
	46 – 50	25	41.7	41.7	78.3
	51 – 55	12	20.0	20.0	98.3
	56 – 60	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.3 Age distribution

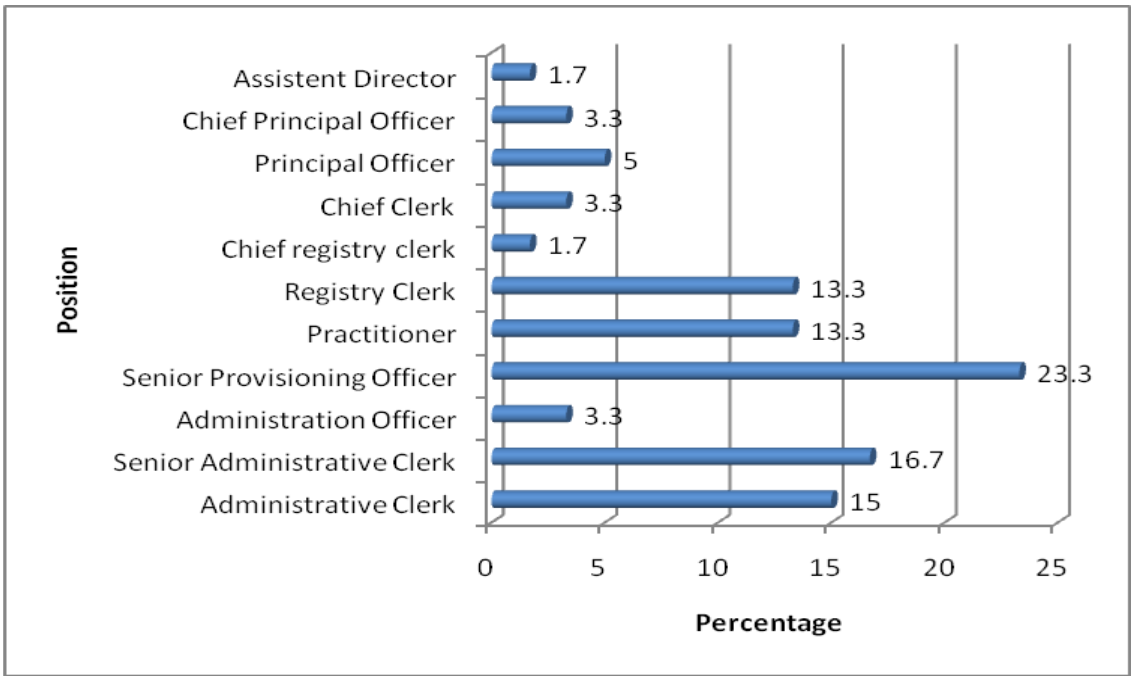


The sample's age distribution ranged from 20-25 to 56-60 years old. The majority of the respondents were between 46 and 50 years of age. Only 15 respondents were between the ages of 20 and 40, which is considered to be the most productive years of an individual's life (Cloete, 2004).

Table 4.4 Position

Position					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Administrative Clerk	9	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Senior Administrative Clerk	10	16.7	16.7	31.7
	Administration Officer	2	3.3	3.3	35.0
	Senior Provisioning Officer	14	23.3	23.3	58.3
	Practitioner	8	13.3	13.3	71.7
	Registry Clerk	8	13.3	13.3	85.0
	Chief registry clerk	1	1.7	1.7	86.7
	Chief Clerk	2	3.3	3.3	90.0
	Principal Officer	3	5.0	5.0	95.0
	Chief Principal Officer	2	3.3	3.3	98.3
	Assistant Director	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.4 Position

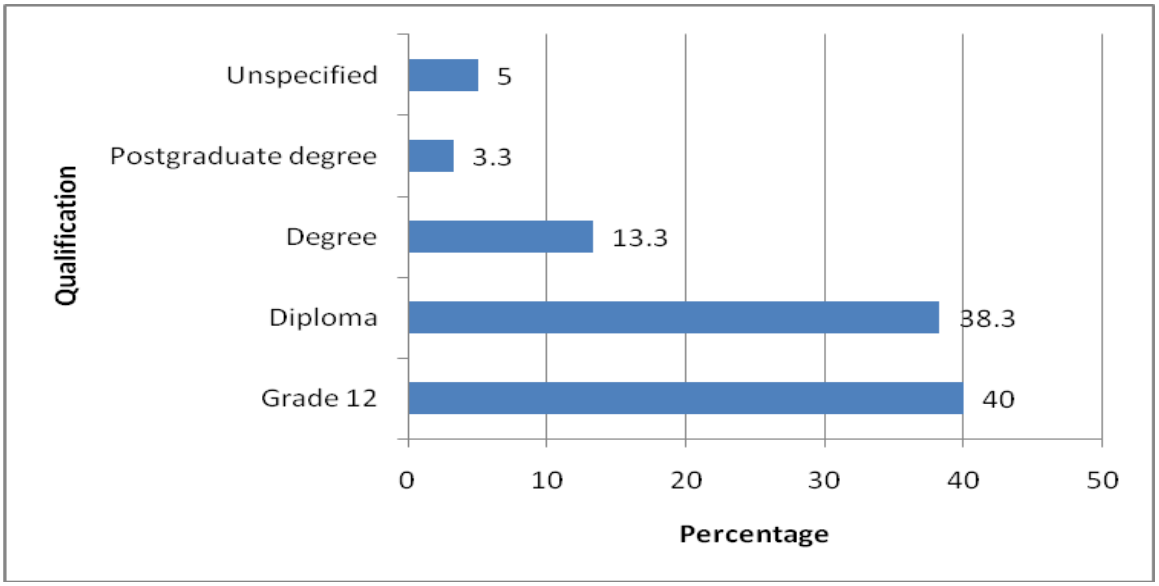


The sample consisted of respondents from different occupations. Of the sample, 14 (23.3%) were Senior Provisioning Officers and ten (16.7%) were Senior Administration Clerks. Only nine (1.5%) were Administration Clerks, who are at the entry point of the administrative occupation.

Table 4.5 Educational level

Qualification					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Grade 12	24	40.0	42.1	42.1
	Diploma	23	38.3	40.4	82.5
	Degree	8	13.3	14.0	96.5
	Postgraduate degree	2	3.3	3.5	100.0
	Total	57	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	5.0		
Total		60	100.0		

Figure 4.5 Educational level

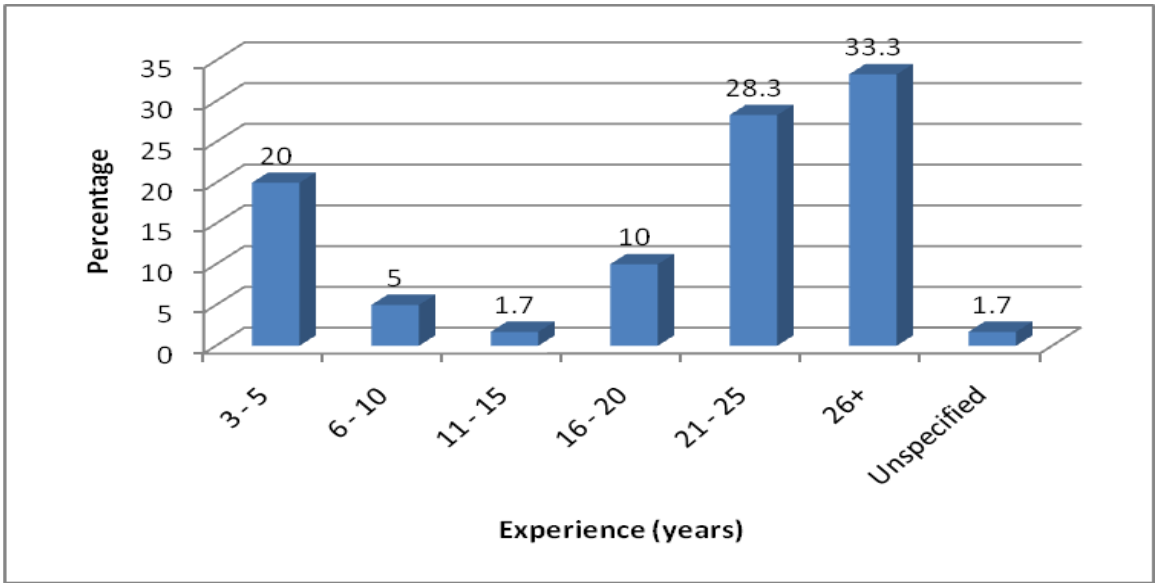


The majority (40%) of the respondents reported having Grade 12 (matric) as their highest qualification, while 23 (38.3%) respondents had a diploma and eight (13.3%) had a Bachelor's degree, and two (3.3%) respondents had a postgraduate qualification.

Table 4.6 Years of experience

Years of experience					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3 – 5	12	20.0	20.3	20.3
	6 – 10	3	5.0	5.1	25.4
	11 – 15	1	1.7	1.7	27.1
	16 – 20	6	10.0	10.2	37.3
	21 – 25	17	28.3	28.8	66.1
	26+	20	33.3	33.9	100.0
	Total	59	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.7		
Total		60	100.0		

Figure 4.6 Years of experience



20 (33.3%) respondents had been employed by the organisation for 26 years or more, and 12 (20%) had been employed for three to five years.

4.2.1.2 Attitude scores

Tables 4.7 to 4.16 show the frequencies and percentages of respondents' choice of ratings for statements obtained via the instrument that measured attitudes towards supervisory support on a five-point Likert scale.

Not all the statements were rated by all respondents - therefore, the frequencies indicated in the tables and figures are often less than the total number of respondents. However, in cases where the number of respondents was less, the actual figure was indicated as the n=value and missing values were noted (Mogane, 2010).

Table 4.7 Continuous support

Continuous improvement support to use acquired skills					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	13	21.7	22.0	22.0
	Disagree	14	23.3	23.7	45.8
	Not sure	17	28.3	28.8	74.6
	Agree	13	21.7	22.0	96.6
	Strongly agree	2	3.3	3.4	100.0
	Total	59	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.7		
Total		60	100.0		

Table 4.8 Opportunities to practice

Opportunities to practice newly acquired skills					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	8	13.3	13.6	13.6
	Disagree	11	18.3	18.6	32.2
	Not sure	17	28.3	28.8	61.0
	Agree	22	36.7	37.3	98.3
	Strongly agree	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	59	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.7		
Total		60	100.0		

Table 4.9 Praise and reward

Praise and reward for using newly acquired skills					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	15.0	15.3	15.3
	Disagree	7	11.7	11.9	27.1
	Not sure	19	31.7	32.2	59.3
	Agree	24	40.0	40.7	100.0
	Total	59	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.7		
Total		60	100.0		

Table 4.10 Booster sessions

Booster sessions as an extension of the training programme					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	13	21.7	22.0	22.0
	Disagree	8	13.3	13.6	35.6
	Not sure	18	30.0	30.5	66.1
	Agree	20	33.3	33.9	100.0
	Total	59	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.7		
Total		60	100.0		

Table 4.11 Necessary resources

Supervisors ensure that necessary resources are available					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	15	25.0	25.0	25.0
	Disagree	9	15.0	15.0	40.0
	Not sure	22	36.7	36.7	76.7
	Agree	13	21.7	21.7	98.3
	Strongly agree	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.12 Setting of goals

Setting of goals after the training programme					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	14	23.3	23.3	23.3
	Disagree	22	36.7	36.7	60.0
	Not sure	13	21.7	21.7	81.7
	Agree	11	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.13 Setting of realistic goals

Setting realistic goals for performance after training					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	14	23.3	23.7	23.7
	Disagree	13	21.7	22.0	45.8
	Not sure	18	30.0	30.5	76.3
	Agree	14	23.3	23.7	100.0
	Total	59	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.7		
Total		60	100.0		

Table 4.14 Appreciation through appraisal

Appreciation through performance appraisals					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	9	15.0	15.0	15.0
	Disagree	10	16.7	16.7	31.7
	Not sure	19	31.7	31.7	63.3
	Agree	17	28.3	28.3	91.7
	Strongly agree	5	8.3	8.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.15 Regular consultation

Consultations with trainees on challenges encountered					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	14	23.3	23.7	23.7
	Disagree	16	26.7	27.1	50.8
	Not sure	11	18.3	18.6	69.5
	Agree	13	21.7	22.0	91.5
	Strongly agree	5	8.3	8.5	100.0
	Total	59	98.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.7		
Total		60	100.0		

Table 4.16 Feedback and reinforcement

Pairing trainees following training for feedback and reinforcement					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	14	23.3	25.0	25.0
	Disagree	11	18.3	19.6	44.6
	Not sure	13	21.7	23.2	67.9
	Agree	18	30.0	32.1	100.0
	Total	56	93.3	100.0	
Missing	System	4	6.7		
Total		60	100.0		

Figure 4.7 Compressed results of statements

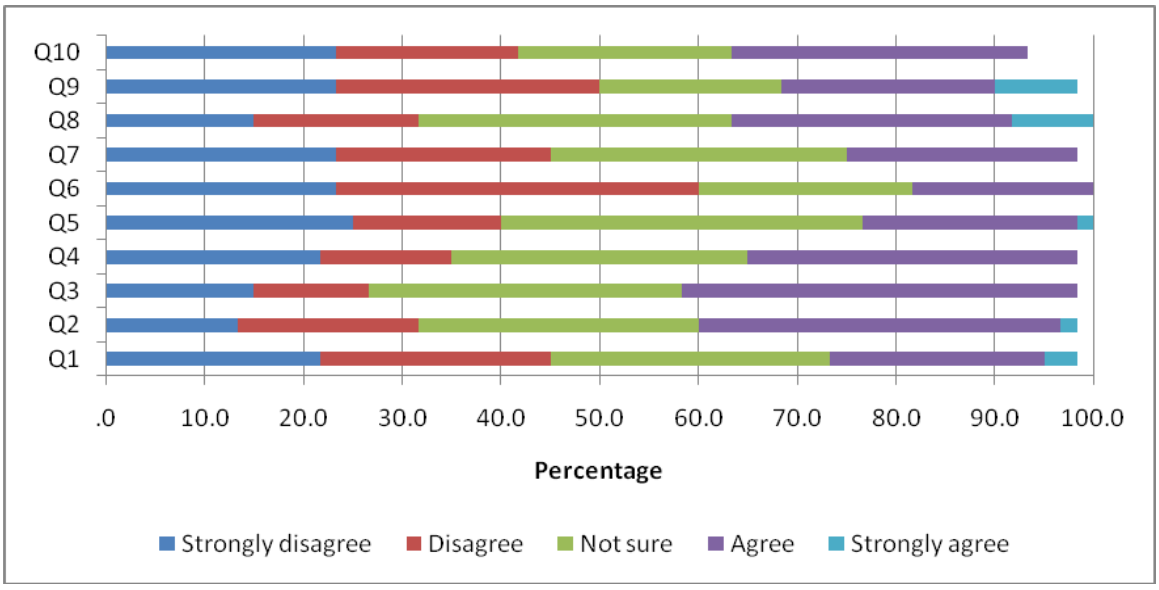


Figure 4.7 above depicts how respondents rated their degree of agreement or disagreement with the attitudinal statements given to them. The bars that do not reach the 100% mark indicate missing data, as indicated in the frequency tables above. There is a significant spread in terms of respondents' ratings on the figure. Therefore, there is no clear agreement or disagreement for any of the statements concerned.

Q1 – Reveals that only 3.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that supervisors provide trainees with continuous improvement support to help them use newly acquired skills after attending the PERSAL system training programme.

Q2 – 36.7% agreed that supervisors made certain that trainees have opportunities to practice and apply newly acquired knowledge and skills after attending the PERSAL training.

Q3 – 31.7 % of the respondents were unsure as to whether supervisors praised or rewarded them for using newly acquired skills after the training programme.

Q4 –30.0 % of the respondents were unsure and 33.3 % agreed that some form of booster session was conducted as an extension of the training programme, in which the trainer met with trainees.

Q5 – Most respondents (36.7%) were unsure about whether or not the supervisors made an effort to ensure that they have the necessary resources to apply the knowledge, skills and/or abilities developed in training programmes.

Q6- 36.7% of the respondents were unsure about whether or not the supervisors met with them to set goals following the PERSAL training.

Q7 –23.3 % of the respondents strongly disagreed and 23.3% agreed that the supervisors helped them to set realistic goals for performing their work after the training programme.

Q8 – Only 8.3 % of respondents strongly agreed that the supervisors, through performance appraisals, appreciate employees who do their jobs as taught in training.

Q9 – 26.7% of respondents disagreed that supervisors had regular consultations with them to deal with the challenges they faced when applying their newly acquired skills.

Q10 –23.3% of respondents strongly disagreed and 21.7 % were unsure as to whether or not supervisors paired them following completion of the training programme, in order for them to assist each other by providing feedback and reinforcement, thereby ensuring that they used the skills developed during the training programme.

Table 4.17 indicates respondents' mean attitude scores.

Table 4.17 Mean attitude scores

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1 Continuous improvement support to use acquired skills	59	2.61	1.160
Q2 Opportunities to practice	59	2.95	1.090
Q3 Praise and reward	59	2.98	1.075
Q4 Booster session	59	2.76	1.150
Q5 Availability of necessary resources	60	2.60	1.138
Q6 Setting of goals	60	2.35	1.039
Q7 Setting of realistic goals	59	2.54	1.104
Q8 Appreciation through performance appraisals	60	2.98	1.186
Q9 Consultations on challenges faced	59	2.64	1.297
Q10 Pairing for feedback and reinforcement	56	2.62	1.184

All mean values are <3, as shown in the table above. This indicates the presence of a significant disagreement.

4.2.1.3 Work performance scores

In order to determine the work performance of individual respondents, final 2008/9 annual performance scores were utilised. These scores were obtained by respondents during the final performance review between them (respondents) and their supervisors. Work performance was reviewed quarterly by immediate supervisors, and quarterly scores were then divided by four to obtain the final work performance scores.

Table 4.18 below depicts individual work performance scores of sixty (60) respondents in the study. As indicated here, the majority of respondents' performance was rated as 4 (good performance) on the performance scale. The results also revealed that no respondent received a rating of 2 (unsatisfactory performance) or 1 (poor performance) on the scale.

Table 4.18 Work performance scores of respondents

Respondent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Performance Score	**4**	**3**	**3**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3**
Respondent	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Performance Score	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**4**	**4**
Respondent	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Performance Score	**3**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**4**
Respondent	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
Performance Score	**4**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**3**	**5**	**4**
Respondent	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
Performance Score	**4**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**5**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**5**
Respondent	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
Performance Score	**3**	**5**	**5**	**5**	**4**	**5**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**

According to Table 4.19 below, the mean score on work performance is 4.07. This was computed by adding all respondents' performance scores and then dividing them by the number of respondents.

Table 4.19 Mean score on work performance

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Performance score	60	4.07	.607
Valid N (listwise)	60		

4.3 CORRELATION

In order to determine whether or not a relationship exists between attitudes towards supervisory support (independent variable) and work performance (dependent variable), the Pearson's correlation technique was used. It was found that no significant relationship exists (r=.063; p=.0631) between the two variables. Table 4.20 below presents the results of the correlation coefficients.

Table 4.20 Correlation coefficients between average scores and work performance.

Correlations

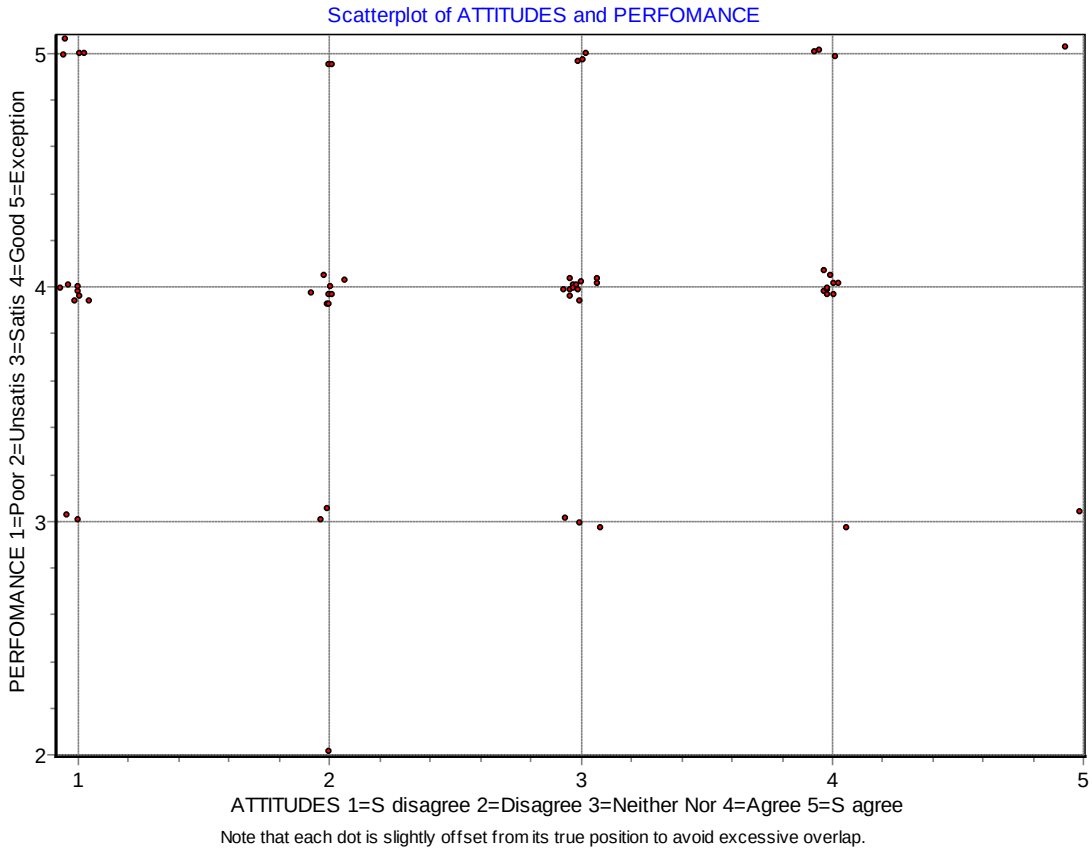
		Performance score	Q1 Continuous improvement support to use acquired skills	Q2 Opportunities to practice	Q3 Praise and reward	Q4 Booster session	Q5 Availability of necessary resources	Q6 Setting of goals	Q7 Set ting of realistic goals	Q8 Appreciation through performance appraisals	Q9 Consultations on challenges faced	Q10 Pairing for feedback and reinforcement
Performance score	Pearson Correlation	1	-.011	.212	-.182	.097	.039	-.065	.060	.237	.009	.140
	Sig. (2-ailed)		.936	.107	.168	.466	.766	.624	.652	.068	.945	.302
	N	60	59	59	59	59	60	60	59	60	59	56

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Figure 4.8 below is a scatter plot representing attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance. From the scatter plot, it is clear that there is no correlation between these variables. This is evidenced by the fact that the data points of the variables are spread across the scatter chart.

Figure 4.8 Scatter plot of attitudes toward supervisory support and work performance



4.4 ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE (ANOVA)

Table 4.21 below summarises the ANOVA results.

Table 4.21 ANOVA table

Variables	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	f-value	Significance level
Gender	.863	1	.863	2.397	.127
Race	.005	1	.005	.012	.913
Age	1.096	3	.365	.991	.404
Position	1.930	5	.386	1.052	.397
Educational level	3.804	3	1.268	3.752	.016*

*** Significant at the 0.05 level**

ANOVA was applied to determine whether the mean scores for the attitudes towards supervisory support were the same for all categories across demographic variables. Gender, race, age, position and educational level were investigated. As shown in the table above, only education plays a significant role in the attitudes of the respondents towards supervision. ANOVA results showed an F value of 3.752 and a significant level p= .016.

Table 4.22 ANOVA by educational level

Educational level	N	Mean
Grade 12	24	3.96
Diploma	23	3.96
Degree	8	4.50
Postgraduate degree	2	5.00
Total	57	4.07

The mean difference with respect to educational level was found to differ significantly amongst categories as indicated by the table above. Post hoc tests

showed that the mean score for those with a postgraduate degree (5.00) is significantly higher than the mean scores for those with Grade 12 or diploma (3.96 in both cases).

4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the research results showed that no significant relationship (negative or positive) exists between attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance. It was also shown that ratings of respondents regarding their attitudes towards supervision were spread across all ten statements. In chapter five, a summary of the study will be presented, and conclusions and recommendations will be discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the results of the study and draw conclusions. It will provide a summary of the study, discussion of the results and its conclusions. The chapter concludes with recommendations for the organisation and a summary of the chapter.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support received after training by employees (HR and finance personnel) of Nkangala District office and their work performance.

This was achieved by assessing the respondents' attitudes towards supervisory support using the Likert scale, and their work performance using performance scores. ANOVA was applied to determine whether or not there was a significant difference across categories.

The hypothesis of the study was as follows:

There will be a significant relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support conducted after training and performance amongst employees at the Department of Education in Mpumalanga during 2008.

The literature review (chapter two) was used to provide a conceptual framework that was used to measure the two variables. Chapter three presented the methodology used to investigate attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance and chapter four presented the results of this study.

5.3 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

According to Gilmore (2008), conclusions are drawn on the basis of the findings of the literature review, as well as the empirical studies, in the context of the aims and objectives stated in chapter one of the study.

In this regard, the following research objectives were identified:

1. To determine whether or not attitudes towards supervisory support is significantly related to the work performance amongst employees.
2. To evaluate the role that variables such as gender, age, race, position and educational level play in the attitudes of respondents towards supervisory support.
3. To enhance the sustainability of the positive contributions made by supervisors prior to and after training.

The findings emanating from the analysis of the results are as follows:

5.3.1 Correlation between independent and dependent variables

According to Kalanda (2005), correlational studies are those in which an attempt is made to relate two or more variables to each other. In this study, the aim was to establish whether or not a relationship exists between attitudes towards supervisory support after training and work performance. According to the data presented in Table 4.7 (in chapter four), no correlation exists between attitude and work performance scores. This means that there is no relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support after training and work performance. An r value of .063 was obtained, which is too small, and the p- value is not significant (p>.631). The hypothesis of this study can therefore be rejected.

As the literature suggested, supervisors can be influential in the pre- and post-training environment by holding discussions with employees that focus on the value and relevance of trained skills, the reasons for the employees' selection for training, and how the training fits into the employees' work performance (Patterson, 2009). In the present study, it was established that the attitudes of employees towards supervision did not play a significant role in their work performance.

5.3.2 Analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Kalanda (2008) asserts that analysis of variance (ANOVA) is a technique that permits the researcher to analyse several variables or levels of variables at the same time. This study also investigated whether or not statistically significant differences in terms of gender, race, age, position and educational level could be established. In exploring this, the means for subpopulations (gender, race, age, position and educational level) were compared.

The only significant difference was found between respondents with a higher level of education and lower level of education. Respondents with a post graduate degree were significantly more positive towards supervision than respondents with grade 12 or a diploma. This could possibly be due to the fact that the educational level of a respondent can play a significant role in the attitudes towards supervisory support.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

This study clearly established that no significant relationship exists between attitudes towards supervisory support after training and work performance. However, the literature reviewed in chapter two revealed that if employees' perceptions of supervisory support are positive, their performance is likely to be better (Cohen, 1990).

In addition, this study examined the role played by variables such as gender, age, race, position and educational level in the attitudes of respondents towards supervisory support. Contrary to the literature reviewed in chapter two, which suggests that significant differences across categories (gender, age, race, position and educational level) in terms of attitudes towards supervisory support exist (Brauchle & Azam, 2004), this study found that educational level is the only variable with a significant outcome. It could be concluded, therefore, that employees with a high educational level appreciate supervisory support more than employees with a lower educational level. It can also be concluded that, because the study was conducted in an education orientated environment; therefore, education plays a significant role.

It was also concluded that respondents showed no significant coherance in their attitudinal scores regarding supervisory support after training. In the study conducted by Dodson (2004), it was surmised that supervisors may not be aware of factors in the workplace that can influence the transfer process, including their role in creating a positive transfer climate. A positive transfer climate perhaps also lead to positive attitudes regarding the contribution of supervisory support after training.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations can be made for the organisation under study:

- Since this study found no significant relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance, further research is required to determine whether or not a relationship exists between other work environment factors (such as organisational support, peer support, peer support networks and opportunities to apply new skills) and work performance. This will perhaps assist in creating a positive transfer climate.

- Because this study was limited to HR and finance personnel, it is recommended that a similar study be conducted with other groups of employees before generalisations can be made.

- According to Saks and Belcourt (2006), supervisors play a key role in the post-training environment by providing feedback, encouragement, reinforcement and goal setting, and by ensuring that trainees have opportunities to practice and apply newly learned behaviour on the job. It is therefore recommended that supervisors be trained in specific supervisory support behaviours, and that such behaviours are included in their performance appraisals.

- This is the first study, according to the researcher's knowledge, that investigates the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support after training and work performance amongst employees. It is recommended that this study be used as the baseline for future research, in order to understand the relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support and work performance.

5.6 SUMMARY

The results of this study provide support for the rejection of the hypothesis. The **H_1** hypothesis, which stated that there will be a significant relationship between attitudes towards supervisory support after training and work performance amongst employees at the Department of Education in Mpumalanga during 2008, is rejected because no relationship was found between these variables.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

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A SURVEY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES TOWARDS SUPERVISORY SUPPORT AFTER TRAINING AND WORK PERFORMANCE

TARGET AUDIENCE:

HR and Finance personnel

PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

This research is being conducted as part of a dissertation for the Magister Technologiae: Human Resource Development (MTECH: HRD) degree. The information obtained from this questionnaire will be used as part of the empirical research into training transfer at the Department of Education in the Nkangala district.

DECLARATION

All information will be kept strictly confidential, and at no stage will your name be linked to the survey results.

Please answer the questionnaire in full and hand it in at office no.G04-0029.

NB: All questionnaires must be completed by **1 April 2011**

Section A: Biographical Data

Respondent profile (Confidential)

1. Respondent number ☐

2. Gender:

Male ☐ Female ☐

3. Age group:

20-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐

36-40 ☐ 41-45 ☐ 46-50 ☐

51-55 ☐ 56-60 ☐ 61+ ☐

4. Race:

Black ☐ White ☐ Indian ☐ Coloured ☐

Other: please specify _____

5. Position:

AC ☐ SAC ☐ AO ☐ SPO ☐ PRAC ☐

Other: please specify _____

6. Years' work experience in the Department of Education:

0-2 ☐ 3-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26+ ☐

7. Highest qualifaction:

- ☐ Grade 12
- ☐ Diploma
- ☐ Degree
- ☐ Postgraduate Degree

Other: Please specify _____

SECTION B:

Please indicate with a cross (**x**) the extent of your **AGREEMENT** or **DISAGREEMENT** with each of the statements below by referring to the following scale:

1 = strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = neither agree nor disagree

4 = agree

5 = strongly agree

1	The supervisors provide trainees with continous improvement support to help them use newly acquired skills after attending the PERSAL training.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
2	The supervisors made certain that we have opportunities to practice and apply newly acquired knowledge and skills after attending PERSAL training.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
3	The supervisors praised or rewarded us for using newly acquired skills developed in the training programme.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
4	Some form of booster session was conducted as an extension of the training programme in which the trainer met with trainees.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

5	The supervisors made effort to ensure that we have the resources (e.g., tools, equipment, materials, supplies, etc.) that are necessary in order to apply the knowledge, skills, and/or abilities developed in training programmes.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6	The supervisors met with us to set goals following the PERSAL training.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
7	The supervisors helped us to set realistic goals for performing our work as a result of our training.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
8	The supervisors, through performance appraisals, appreciate the employees who do their jobs as taught in training.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
9	The supervisors conducted regular consultations with us to work on challenges we faced when implementing newly acquired skills.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
10	The supervisors paired us following completion of the training programme in order to assist each other by providing feedback and reinforcement to ensure we use the skills developed in the training programme.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.