Customized Conceptual Human Resources Processes Model to Facilitate the Administrative Function in the South African Public Sector

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ABSTRACT This study was prompted by the fact that few research studies have focused on non-managerial administrative employees in the South African public service. The study aims to provide a conceptual Human Resources (HR) processes model, which is expected to be of strategic value to middle and top management in their activities pertaining to administrative employees. A mixed methods methodology was employed with data being gathered through semi-structured questionnaires (phase 1) and practical skills tests (phase 2) being conducted. Inductive reasoning was applied. Applied, exploratory and non-experimental research in conjunction with descriptive statistics was used. This paper reflects only on the development of the model and not the outcomes of the two measuring instruments outlined previously. The model is designed in the form of various process maps. The outcome provides definite guidelines to HR practitioners and line managers concerning recruitment, selection and appointment as well as post-appointment support available to administrative staff.

INTRODUCTION

Government undertakings worldwide are regarded as very labor intensive. Through these undertakings, governments are responsible for providing services, enforcing laws and regulations, and solving problems. Their varied missions include protection of the physical environment, safety, and education and civil rights enforcement. All these activities require intensive use of human resources. The quality of these employees is directly related to how well the individual government departments involved perform. Two essential tasks of human resources managers (HRMs) are to find qualified employees for government positions and to promote an attractive working environment (Adams et al. 2016; Al-Hawary 2015; McDonnell 2016). Managers should be responsive to the needs of a diverse workforce, ensure that all organizational policies are fair and provide equal opportunities to diverse job applicants and job incumbents, for example, in terms of race, age and gender.

The purpose of this article is to report on a conceptual HR processes model designed on the basis of the findings of an empirical investigation conducted at various government departments in South Africa. The investigation consisted of two phases. Firstly, semi-structured questionnaires were distributed to establish the operational and professional profile of the public sector and to investigate key success factors (job commitment and job satisfaction, available and required skills, representation of equity, effect of the physical environment on morale, recruitment processes and potential external barriers to employee productivity) within the work environment of administrative employees (n=219). Secondly, the actual productivity levels of administrative employees were measured through the use of skills tests (MS Word skills, MS Excel skills, speed and accuracy and general office-related knowledge) with n=32. The results of the first phase revealed that the respondents were satisfied with their current working environment and generally happy. The skills tests revealed their productivity to be far below standard when compared to the competency levels of first-year students at the National Quality Framework (NQF) Level 5 (Van Antwerpen 2013, 2014a, b).

This conceptual model is comprehensive in the sense that it guides HR practitioners in the South African public sector to ensure that the most suitable candidates are appointed in ad-

ministrative positions, and as such, it makes a positive contribution to ensuring a productive and accountable workforce. Thebe and van der Waldt (2014) conducted a study focusing on the recruitment and selection processes in the South African public sector, but this study included pre-recruitment and planning as well as post-appointment support. The conceptual model includes key success factors focusing on pre-recruitment and planning, screening and selection, the hiring process and post-appointment support.

Background and Motivation

It is a global trend that public sector employees represent a significant proportion of all employees in a country. One of the sole responsibilities of HRMs is to accomplish their mission by partnering with employees and citizens to create a responsive atmosphere in which creativity, risk-taking, integrity and diversity are valued and supported in order to enable the employees to provide excellent customer service. The literature and the media tend to focus on service delivery and customer service. Jacobs and Cornwell (2007), Adams et al. (2015) and Adler (2015) studied labor markets and organizations and their recruitment processes. They elucidated that organizational factors contributed to the labor market network that such organizations were using in order to fill vacancies. Despite the importance of such issues, no integrated theory about these critical processes is available. The studies by Jacobs and Cornwell (2007) and Al-Hawary (2015) present a combined organizational and network framework that is based on the human characteristics that condition administrative decisions about hiring, careers and other labor market outcomes. The authors also focused on the screening methods used by the sample group. They found that organizations used the same hiring procedures to fill dissimilar positions, perhaps because their hiring choices have to be legitimized or because administrators have to abide by externally imposed uniform standards.

Quah (2010) asserts that Singapore has established a Public Service Commission (PSC) whose core function is to maintain impartial systems for the recruitment, promotion and dismissal of employees in key positions. Quah (2010) found that a country that wanted to succeed had to maintain a system that enabled the best and most suitable candidates to perform a particular job with specific requirements. He adds:

"You have got to find the right person to do the job. To do that, you must have an open recruitment system, proper appraisal systems, and not just go by word of mouth of some individuals. The PSC had to adopt useful and relevant techniques from the private sector to improve performance in the public sector. It is interesting that one of the PSC's focal points was to ensure that it recruited local qualified candidates into the public service. The PSC in Singapore placed a high value on the fact that new appointees had to be suitably qualified for their proposed positions. All promotion and advancement of staff were based on merit. This policy attracted the 'best and the brightest' citizens to the government and *the civil service of Singapore"* (Quah 2010: 91).

Glen (2012) and Fernandez and Lee (2016), commenting on their studies that focused on public performance measurement, say that one central part of managing for quality is the development of human resources. Quality managers furthermore need to recruit the "best and brightest, and then provide them with systematic training and ongoing employee support. The best managers recognize the value of diversity, and they build services by building teams within the organization. They understand the importance of balancing the needs of employees and the needs of the organization". Employees should also be empowered. They should receive the necessary physical and emotional support, and they should be adequately trained and be recognized for their unique contribution to the institution. It is in the best interest of both the institution and the administrative employee to ensure that employees are able to perform their assigned tasks efficiently and effectively. "The public sector can only benefit from recruiting employees who are the best candidates for vacant positions" (Government of South Australia 2011: 5).

Jacob Zuma, the President of South Africa, highlighted this problem when he asked the directors-general (DGs) of government departments in Cape Town, "Since we have highly skilled managers, budgets and other resources, what is the problem? Why is the public service not working in an efficient, effective and caring manner as it should?" (Zuma satisfied… Octo-

ber 12, 2010) He added that people are appointed on merit, on the basis of their assurance that they know the work related to the position for which they have applied. However, once these candidates have joined the particular department, it appears that they do not have the necessary skills to perform their duties efficiently. In another meeting with DGs, held in Kempton Park, Zuma announced that, after almost two decades in power, the African National Congress (ANC) can no longer offer excuses for not delivering faster change in the lives of South Africans (Raga and Taylor 2005; Zuma satisfied… 2010: 2; Petersen 2016). He concluded that, unless attitudes in the public service changed and delivery ethic improved, there would be no progress. Collins Chabane, the then Minister of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation, announced in 2012 that the South African government had identified twelve measurable outcomes as central performance indicators in all government departments. Three of these outcomes are especially relevant to this paper namely, basic education, a skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path and an efficient, competitive and responsive economic environment (RSA 2010; Adams et al. 2015; Fernandez and Lee 2016).

Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to reflect on the key success factors included in the development and design of a conceptual Human Resources (HR) processes model pertaining to administrative employees in the South African public sector. The aim of this model is to assist the HR function during pre-recruitment, screening and selection and hiring and finally to outline how post-appointment support should be offered to administrative employees so as to ensure a productive workforce.

PLANNING CYCLE FOR HUMAN RESOURCES

In order to achieve excellence in the international arena, every organization depends on attracting, developing and retaining a high quality workforce (Adams et al. 2015). Several factors play a role in this endeavor, including a mature workforce, skills shortages, changes in government funding, budgetary constraints, increasing competition in the tertiary education sector and in the private sector and technological innovation. Workforce planning (step 1) is an iterative discipline and a critical step in achieving the objectives of the organization. It is the first step in the HR planning cycle and is linked to recruitment (step 2), selection (step 3), appointment (step 4) and induction and orientation (step 5). These steps will be discussed briefly in the sections that follow.

Step 1: Workforce Planning

An important function of workforce planning is to ensure suitable access to talent, including skills, knowledge, predisposition and the ability to undertake activities (for example, decision-making) to ensure the organization's future success and ensure that the organization is able to meet its objectives because all its future needs for skilled staff have been identified (UWA 2015; Fernandez and Lee 2016). South Africa also has to abide by important legislation enacted by the state to address historical imbalances in the country, for example, the South African Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. Such policies and legislation are primarily aimed at correcting institutional discrimination. Policies, decisions and procedures that were not necessarily explicitly discriminatory nevertheless had a negative impact on people of color and also in terms of gender and disability (RSA 1998; Fernandez and Lee 2016).

Step 2: Recruitment

A primary objective of the HR function is to attract talented and skilled individuals to an organization (Thebe and van der Waldt 2014; Al-Hawary 2015). Recruitment commences through two channels, that is, internally, where supervisors nominate employees for positions or employees apply via a job-posting system (intranet), and externally, where candidates apply for vacant positions that were advertised in the media (Breaugh 2008). Proper recruitment practices are crucial. In today's economy the knowledge and intellectual abilities of workers may matter more than the traditional forms of capital (for example, technology). To remain competitive, an organization has to increase its focus on knowledge to attract, motivate and retain the best workers (Adams et al. 2015; Adler 2015; Fernandez and Lee 2016). According to Breaugh

(2008), most early research studies focused on realistic job previews (for example, providing accurate information to applicants about a position in the organization), traditional recruitment methods (for example, newspaper advertisements) and the recruiter's characteristics (for example, behavior). However, the research shifted from these three areas and began to explore topics such as the timing of recruitment actions, site visits by recruits and online recruiting. Administrative employees have to possess unique skills for the execution of the duties detailed in their job descriptions.

Positions in the South African public sector are advertised in local and national newspapers and on the sector's websites. Vacancies published on websites offer a link to all available positions and applicants are requested to complete the generic Z83 application form obtainable from all government offices. A copy of this form may be obtained from HR offices or downloaded from their individual websites. Applicants have the option to attach a curriculum vitae (CV) as supporting evidence to accompany the generic application form as well as copies of qualifications obtained and details of trainings successfully completed.

Step 3: Selection

In order to comply with South Africa's labor legislation, HR departments have to follow preselected guidelines when they recruit and select a candidate for a vacancy (for example, formal qualifications, prior learning, relevant experience or capacity to acquire such experience within a reasonable period and the candidate's ability to do the job).

The primary objective of an HR system is to improve the match between employee capabilities and job requirements. Selecting the right employee is critical to maximizing individual and organizational performance and HR practitioners and specialists have researched each link of the HR cycle and its benefits. South African employers have to comply with legislation pertaining to employment equity and affirmative action. Because of these requirements, advertised positions often cannot be filled as capable candidates with the required expertise are either unobtainable or do not apply for the job. This has resulted in thousands of vacancies having an impact on the economy. This inability to ap-

point candidates also has a direct impact on the performance and output measured by superiors in the higher ranks. Applicants differ in terms of knowledge (K), skills (S), abilities (A) and other (O) characteristics (KSAOs) and these differences have a direct effect on their job performance. Organizations therefore have to use a variety of selection techniques to assess the KSAOs of applicants and make predictions about their job performance (Stone et al. 2007; Al-Hawary 2015).

The then Deputy Minister for Local Government, Yunus Carrim, was quoted in an article published in *The Economist* and entitled *Hold your nose - the smell of corruption* (June 3, 2010). The article highlights graft, nepotism, maladministration and sheer incompetence among local councilors and employees in the South African government. In Carrim's words, "The current model in use by the local government is simply not working." In the same article, President Jacob Zuma is recorded as agreeing with this comment and concluding that the South African civil service is among the worst in the world. Another issue is that the private sector has to comply with the same transformation targets and often recruits and selects university graduates by offering higher remuneration packages and benefits than the state can afford. These transformation targets are another reason why the South African public sector has to deal with thousands of unfilled positions. Another problem in the public sector is that a large number of skilled candidates leave, or have left, the country to gain expertise and to explore opportunities in foreign countries. Employees in key positions are often moved to other departments if they fail to perform, and portfolio shifting is common. This rapid shifting means that employees gain some knowledge and expertise in one department and then lose it all when they are transferred to other departments (Marrian 2015). This practice has an impact on productivity and output as well.

The question is whether the same caring attitude would apply when dealing with non-managerial, administrative employees in the public sector. Five priority areas were listed during the 2010 Public Service Summit, namely, health, education, rural development, creating decent jobs and the fight against crime (PAWUSA 2010). Educating the nation is an important priority on the African continent, but the question can be

posed as to whether the same applies to educating the masses in the working environment. Are there guidelines in place to assist employees in matters such as additional training, reducing work-related stress and receiving additional help when necessary?

Step 4: Appointment

Restructuring in terms of the neoliberal process requires creating a "lean and mean" state, downsizing employment, outsourcing "non-core" activities, utilizing labor brokers as service-delivery providers and transferring state employment to individual institutions such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), agencies and the private sector. The ANC's manifesto for the 2009 general election clearly stated: "An important aspect of a successful developmental state is investment in public service workers, and in turn our people expect that they execute the tasks with which they have been entrusted" (PAWUSA 2010:11). This manifesto implied that it would be important to deal with employment difficulties, including existing vacancies, transferring employment to agencies and the private sector and improving training and redeployment. At the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) summit in January 2010, it was emphasized that performance and productivity should be based on an adequately staffed and better-resourced public service, which would include improved remuneration and training as well as better working conditions. The eradication of wasteful expenditure and inefficiency in the public service was also called for (PAWUSA 2010; Marrian 2015). Mabugu and Dawood (2015:1) mention, "In the public sector, there is a false notion that productivity should be improved by cutting costs, for example, by reducing personnel or other resources, to produce the same services, instead of expanding services and the quality of services without using more resources". Statements such as these made in the media further highlight the need for suitable staff to be appointed.

Step 5: Induction and Orientation

An employer will explain the following to a new employee during the induction process the following, that is, the objectives of the organization and where the employee will be placed, the organization's policies, procedures and structure, the employee's own key performance indicators (KPIs) and how they relate to the organization's strategic plan, all aspects of the employment relationship, communication channels in the organization, and the layout and geography of the workplace.

Chapman (2011) and Geiben (2015) identify the following four elements of induction training, namely, general training relating to the organization, including values, philosophy, structure and history, mandatory training relating to health, safety and other essential or legal aspects, job training relating to the role of the new employee, and training evaluation, entailing confirmation of understanding and feedback about the quality of and response to the training.

The subsections making up the planning cycle outline the value of various HR processes to organizations. HR practitioners identify and select the best candidate for a position in order to ensure that their organization functions optimally. The administrative employee is part of the working corps, the backbone of the public sector, and functions in a supporting role to ensure that the organization is able to deliver quality services.

Public sectors in developing nations continue to function without the requisite skills to execute developmental programs, with mainly unemployment and underemployment to blame. Many of these public services tend to be overstaffed in the lower ranks. The actual shortage is of trained, technologically competent administrators with developmental and management skills to accomplish administrative duties (SAIMA 2014; Adams et al. 2015). Mabugu and Dawood (2015) point out that the South African government makes little if any effort to measure public sector productivity. These authors furthermore mention that "few can even agree on what an accurate measure of productivity is. As a result, no clear standards, targets and procedures are in place to guide the implementation of improvement plans in departments". The HR processes model, uniquely developed for administrative employees whose skills and knowledge directly impact the productivity, might address the abovementioned concerns.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE HR PROCESSES MODEL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE EMPLOYEES

Key success factors (KSFs) and HR models represent ideas, concepts and objects in the real world's problem domain. RapidBI (2012) and Al-Hawary (2015) believe that KSFs and an HR model can be tremendous assets to any organization. Abstract concepts are presented visually as simplified versions of a topic that is seemingly complex. The relationships between elements are visible at a glance, and the image is easily understandable and ties together all the components relevant to the model.

Development of the Model

Milstein and Chapel (2012) describe a model as a road map, showing the route travelled (or the steps taken) to reach a particular destination. A model also expresses the rationale behind an initiative. The model should clearly provide direction and should present a holistic picture of change. Milstein and Chapel (2012) list the typical components of a model and these, together with the theoretical guidelines and the practical considerations for this study, are presented in Table 1.

The basic structure for the model is created when all individual KSFs that have a major impact on value and cost (Al-Hawary 2015) are grouped together, and these will finally be used in the designing phase of the HR processes conceptual model for administrative employees. Four steps that include identifying objectives, pinpointing participants, conducting the planning process and, finally, drafting the model, were followed to draft an HR processes model based

Table 1: Typical components of a model

Typical components	
Theoretical guidelines	*Practical considerations for this study*
Purpose or Mission: What motivates the need for change?	To provide a constructive model for HR practitioners in the public sector and provide line managers with competent, efficient and knowledgeable administrative support staff.
Context or Conditions: What is the particular climate in which change will take place?	The South African (SA) government follows a generic procedure to appoint prospective staff (i.e. the "one-size-fits-all" principle). The Z83 generic application form does not make provision for testing a candidate's general job-related skills (for example office management, practical computer skills, language skills). Administrative employees in the SA public sector are currently appointed to vacancies if:the generic application form prescribed by the government is completed and submitted,the candidate is on a shortlist of possible candidates, the requirements identified in the advertisement are met, andthe job interview is successful.
Inputs, Resources or Infrastructure: What materials will be used to conduct the effort or initiative?	*Inputs:* HR personnel (recruiting, testing, selecting, appointing processes),line managers (identify their needs, requirements and expectations),academic expertise (assist in assessing the tested candidates), andindustry expertise (advice from industry experts and corporate stakeholders).*Resources:* Up-to-date technology (computers, printers, external data storage devices),invigilators to conduct skills tests, and standardised tests (practical and theoretical).
Activities or Interventions: What will the initiative do with its resources to direct the course of change?	The most suitable candidate is considered for employment. Management would know that the appointee meets the minimum requirements identified by HR. The conceptual model may be used for strategic workforce planning, employee selection, promotion, performance management, training and development, succession planning, compensation, rewards, recognition and career planning.
Outputs: What evidence is available that activities were performed as planned?	Testing practical skills and productivity, andHR observing the candidates' language ability and people skills during an interview.
Effects, Results, Consequences, Outcomes or Impacts: What types of changes came about as a direct or indirect effect of the activities?	The image of the SA government could improve in the eyes of the general public. Competent administrative employees who support management at all levels may be appointed, increasing productivity and output. The entire process will improve service delivery in the public sector.

on the KSF outcomes and results from the measuring instruments described previously (data analysis).

A draft of the model was developed to provide an overview of this research project as well as to identify the main concepts and the stakeholders. Although the management sphere of the draft model is important and has a particular role to play, it does not have a major influence on the focal point that is the administrative employee. A final HR processes conceptual model would therefore be generic for the South African public sector.

As outlined earlier, two measuring instruments were designed for data collection purposes. The results from these measuring instruments were also helpful in identifying the stakeholders to be included in the HR processes conceptual model, namely, individual segments of the management hierarchy (top, middle and lower management) and the HR department, the HR department, which is directly involved (focusing on HR processes), industry partnership, and administrative employees.

When the participants and their relationships in the SA public service were identified, the researcher had to decide on the most suitable design for the HR processes conceptual model. The theoretical and empirical results from this study contained a large volume of information that had to be captured in a single model. An appropriate outline was compiled by streamlining the model to fit into a practical model comprising the following two main sections, that is, the HR department and all its processes (for example, advertising, recruiting, appointing, appraising), and the administrative employee (job applicants and post-appointment support).

Drafting Process

The main purpose was to draft a model that would reflect its various users, and ultimately, the South African public sector. The researcher started with a broad overview of the global model and added secondary detail as appropriate for each specific stakeholder. Multiple layers were used as building blocks to create the holistic model of the HR processes conceptual model. The different phases in developing the HR processes model are discussed, reflecting the role of HR in ensuring that prospective administra-tive employees in the public sector meet the job requirements.
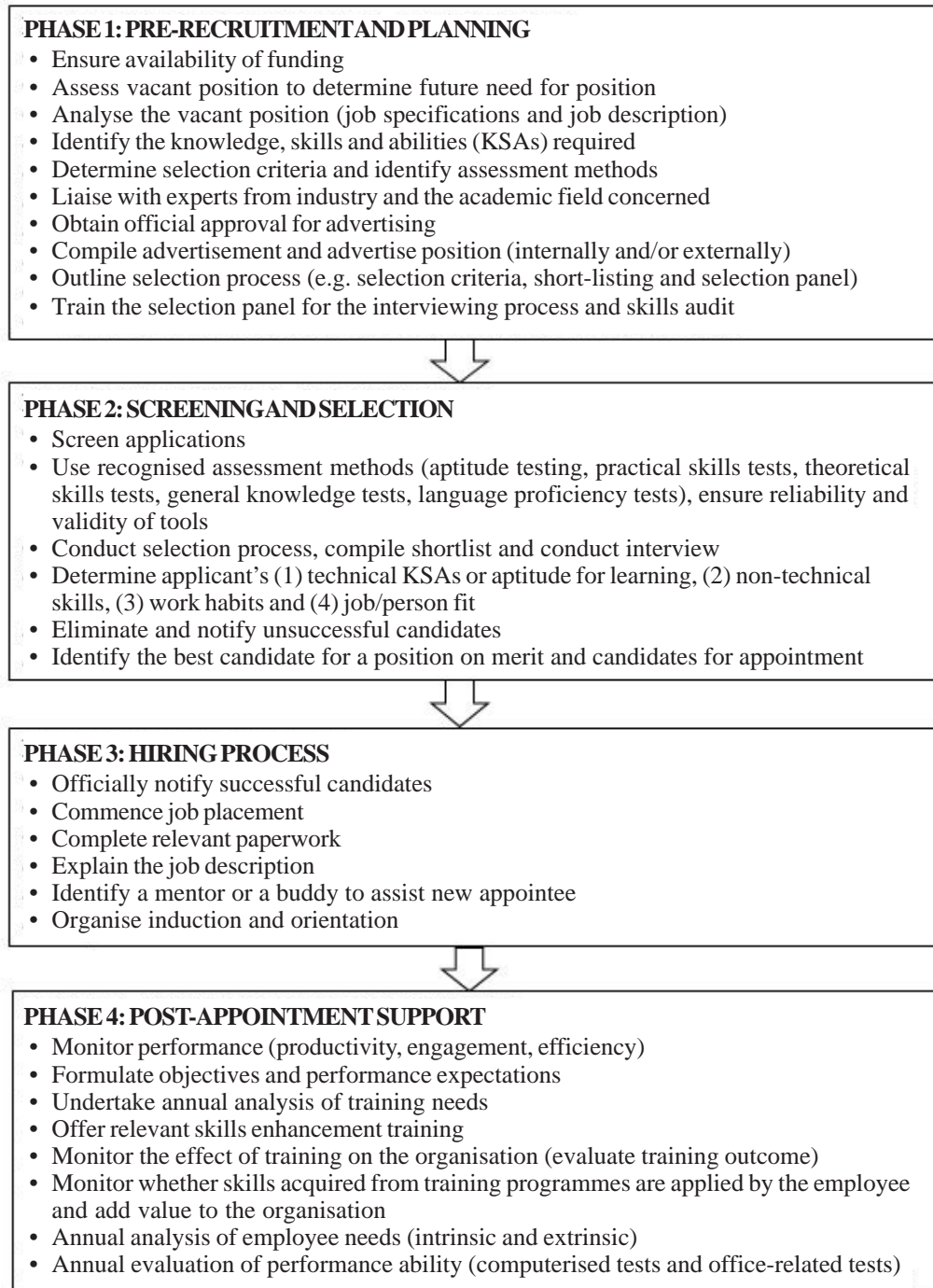
Figure 1 outlines the four functions of HR as identified by the results from the two measuring instruments used in this study, namely, the semi-structured questionnaire (phase 1) and practical skills test (phase 2). These functions played a significant role in drafting the model. Although the generic functions of HR are outlined in the available literature, the researcher proposes an alternative process for the appointment of administrative employees to accommodate practical skills. A question was posted on the LinkedIn© website, requesting administrative employees globally to list the top three competencies they considered important in their working environment. The most frequently raised competencies are summarized as follows, that is, a positive attitude, communication skills (verbal and written), organizational skills, telephone etiquette, energy, tact and diplomacy, initiative, drive and resourcefulness, ability to deal with stress and pressure, interpersonal skills, ability to handle criticism, professionalism, time management, cultural awareness and sensitivity, productive and proficient work, ability to work independently, and ability to handle basic office finance (LinkedIn© 2012). These competencies were incorporated in drafting the conceptual HR processes model to cater specifically for administrative employees.

Figure 2 outlines the key to the HR processes conceptual model. It illustrates the HR processes in an administrative environment in the South African public sector.

Figure 3 illustrates the final draft of the HR model in the form of a graphical presentation that was designed to outline the processes used to introduce administrative employees to the public sector as well as to offer post-appointment support to ensure that the productivity and wellbeing of the employee are catered for.

Analysis of HR Processes for Administrative Personnel Professionals in the Public Sector
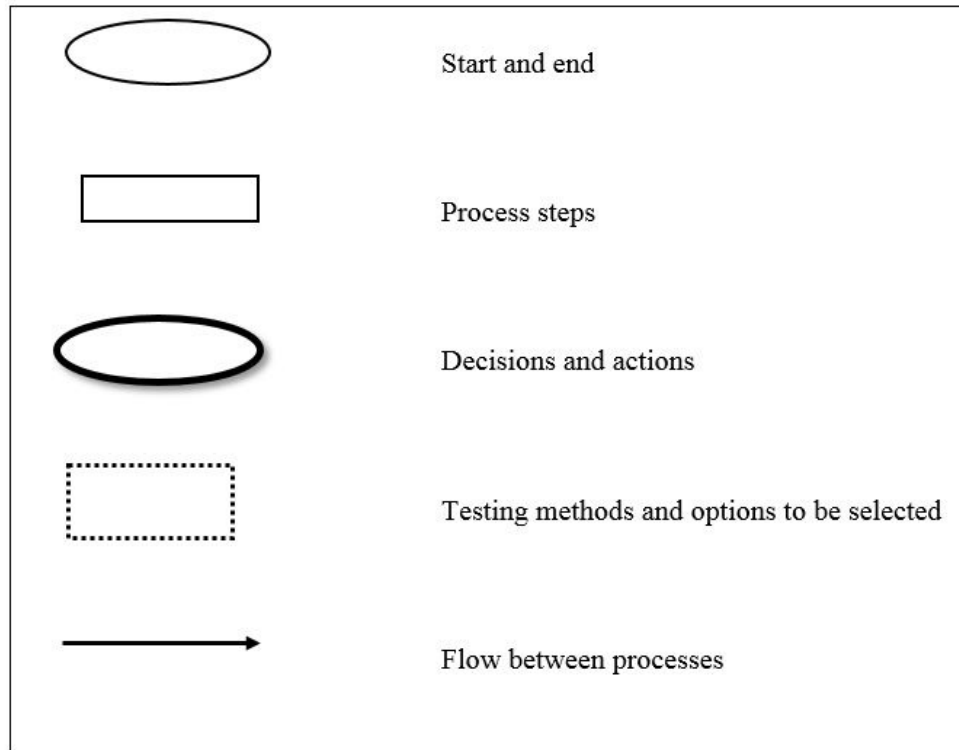
The purpose of recruitment is to select and appoint the person most suitable for a particular position (Brandenberg 2012; Al-Hawary 2015). Four main functions of HR in this model are pre-recruitment planning, screening and selection, hiring, and providing post-appointment support to administrative employees. The departmental

PHASE 1: PRE-RECRUITMENT AND PLANNING
- Ensure availability of funding
- Assess vacant position to determine future need for position
- Analyse the vacant position (job specifications and job description)
- Identify the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) required
- Determine selection criteria and identify assessment methods
- Liaise with experts from industry and the academic field concerned
- Obtain official approval for advertising
- Compile advertisement and advertise position (internally and/or externally)
- Outline selection process (e.g. selection criteria, short-listing and selection panel)
- Train the selection panel for the interviewing process and skills audit

PHASE 2: SCREENING AND SELECTION
- Screen applications
- Use recognised assessment methods (aptitude testing, practical skills tests, theoretical skills tests, general knowledge tests, language proficiency tests), ensure reliability and validity of tools
- Conduct selection process, compile shortlist and conduct interview
- Determine applicant's (1) technical KSAs or aptitude for learning, (2) non-technical skills, (3) work habits and (4) job/person fit
- Eliminate and notify unsuccessful candidates
- Identify the best candidate for a position on merit and candidates for appointment

PHASE 3: HIRING PROCESS
- Officially notify successful candidates
- Commence job placement
- Complete relevant paperwork
- Explain the job description
- Identify a mentor or a buddy to assist new appointee
- Organise induction and orientation

PHASE 4: POST-APPOINTMENT SUPPORT
- Monitor performance (productivity, engagement, efficiency)
- Formulate objectives and performance expectations
- Undertake annual analysis of training needs
- Offer relevant skills enhancement training
- Monitor the effect of training on the organisation (evaluate training outcome)
- Monitor whether skills acquired from training programmes are applied by the employee and add value to the organisation
- Annual analysis of employee needs (intrinsic and extrinsic)
- Annual evaluation of performance ability (computerised tests and office-related tests)

Fig. 1. Components to be included in the HR processes model for administrative professionals in the public sector
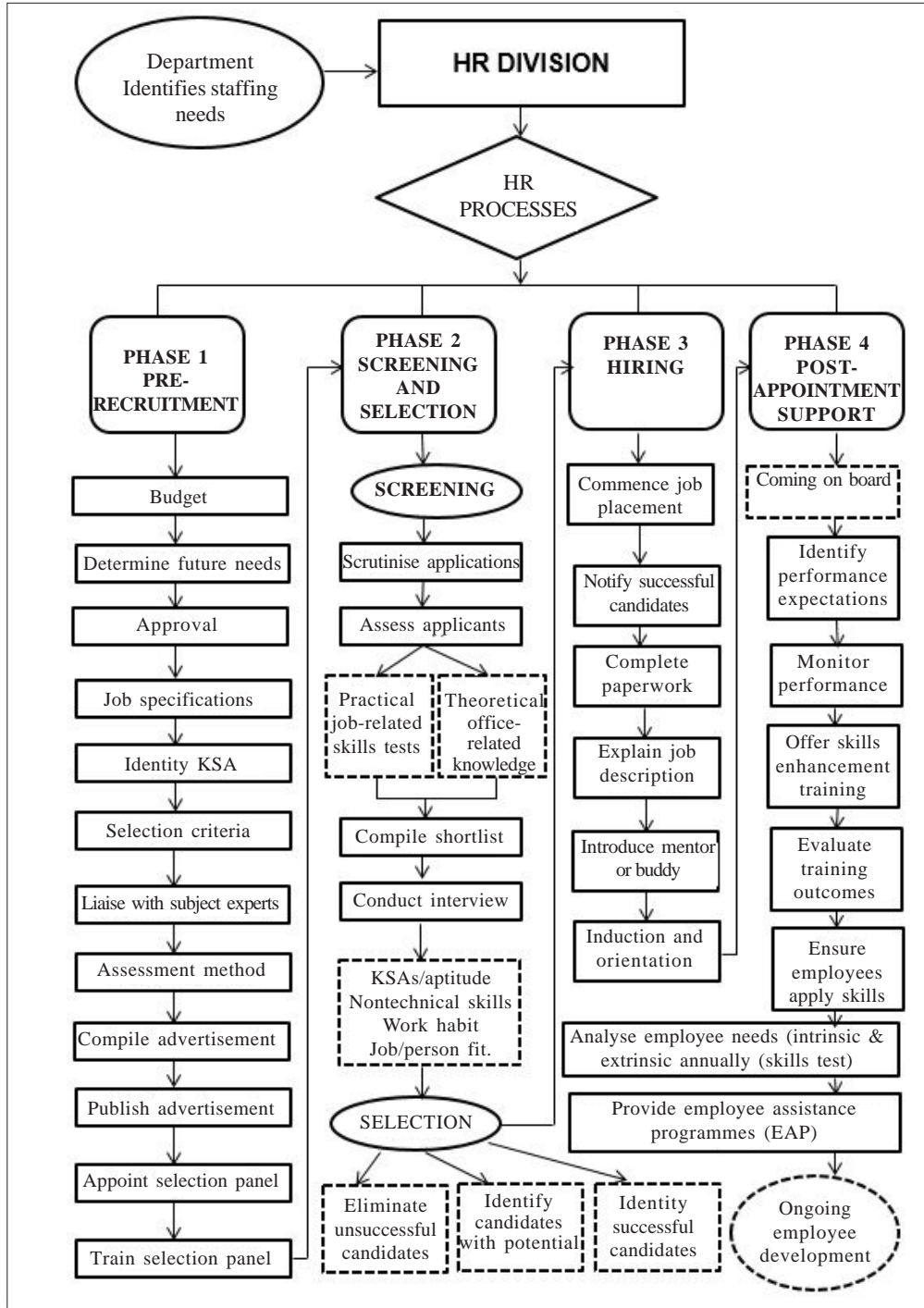*Source:* Van Antwerpen 2013: 285

Fig. 2. Key to HR processes conceptual model for administrative professionals in the public sector
Source: Van Antwerpen 2013

head identifies a vacancy or the need to create a position for an administrative employee. HR is then informed of the existing need or requested to fill the vacancy and thus becomes responsible for initiating and successfully concluding the four main functions identified.

Pre-recruitment

Pre-recruitment involves a number of steps and functions to ensure that a competent administrative employee is recruited, appointed and supported to contribute to the pool of valuable and productive assets in the public service. The steps are as follows:

1. Budget: Prepare a recruitment budget to ensure that the necessary funding is available.
2. Determine future needs: Establish whether filling the position (for example, a new position, a replacement or temporary vacancy) would meet future needs and would be sustainable.
3. Approval: Obtain formal approval from the relevant authority to fill the vacancy.
4. Job specifications and job description: Analyze the position with reference to the job specification and the job description.
5. Identify knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs): Identify whether the KSAs of the administrative employee to be appointed meet the criteria stipulated in the job specification and job description.
6. Selection criteria: These criteria are crucial to recruiting and selecting an appropriate candidate for a particular position. These criteria should also eliminate systemic barriers or bias during the selection process.
7. Liaise with subject experts (advisory committee): Liaison with experts from industry and academia is important because advertisements should be on par with the industry's needs and requirements.

Fig. 3. HR processes model for administrative professionals in the public sector
Source: Van Antwerpen 2013, 2014b

8. Identify assessment methods: Select a combination of different assessment methods (for example, interviews, occupational tests, simulations) to ensure an objective assessment of each candidate.
9. Compile an advertisement: Prepare the advertisement (job posting) in accordance with public sector policies in order to attract the best-qualified candidates. The advertisement should clearly state the job title, the required skills sets and the required background for the particular position.
10. Publish the advertisement: Adhere to the policies that prescribe the manner in which advertisements should be published (internally, externally or both).
11. Appoint a selection panel: Appoint members for a selection panel early in the process. Any conflict of interests should be declared before the selection process commences. The University of California, Davis (UCDavis 2012:2) describes the core function of a selection panel as follows: "[T]he selection committee will help you pick the candidate best suited for the position and for the unit overall".
12. Train the selection panel: Offer training to the panel members to ensure that the same standard is maintained throughout the selection process. Panel members should ascertain whether additional information will be required or clarified during the interview (UCDavis 2012).

Screening and Selection

This process stands on two pillars, namely, the screening of potential candidates and the selection of successful candidates. "Screening" refers to evaluating the information on the application form (for example, a CV and a cover letter). The selection panel has to determine every candidate's personal qualities, KSAs and qualifications to perform the administrative role effectively.

Screening

1. Scrutinize applications: Validate all the application forms with respect to their completeness and whether all initial requirements are met, and then ascertain from the forms whether applicants meet the job requirements.
2. Assess applicants: Applicants who meet the minimum job-related criteria will be subject to additional selection techniques (for example, practical skills assessments, end-user skills tests) and a theoretical assessment to determine whether they have a basic knowledge of bookkeeping and communication in the office environment. These tests will be assessed before a shortlist of candidates is compiled.
3. Compile a shortlist: Candidates who meet the minimum job-related requirements and who performed well in the additional tests would be shortlisted. These candidates may be invited to an interview.
4. Conduct an interview: The selection panel has to ensure that interviews remain fair and of a high standard, that all candidates are treated in the same way and that all interview questions and selection techniques have been predetermined to help eliminate bias by following a structured approach.

Selection

1. Eliminate unsuccessful candidates: Eliminate applicants who performed well in the practical job-related skills tests and the theoretical office-related knowledge tests, but did not meet the minimum criteria during the interview.
   Reasons for elimination include lack of preparation, poor attitude, insincerity and obvious lies. The skills tests measure the applicant's ability to perform under pressure within a model identified by line managers and designed by subject experts for the administrative environment.
2. Identify successful candidates: Candidates who obtained satisfactory results in the skills tests and whose interviews went well are shortlisted.
3. Identify candidates with potential: The selection panel should identify candidates who presented potential in the skills tests and the interview to decide whether training would overcome such candidates' shortcomings.

This study proposes a non-compensatory model, which implies that positive and negative attributes need not balance because a deficiency in one area would eliminate the candidate from further consideration. When such a model is in operation, a "successive hurdles" approach would be appropriate (Rothmann and Cooper 2015:143). This means that candidates are eliminated during different stages of the selection process as deficiencies are revealed. A practical implication of this approach is that an applicant who does not meet the minimum education and experience requirements will be eliminated early in the screening process.

Hiring

Hiring and managing employees are important steps in the growth and productivity of an organization (Heathfield 2012; Al-Hawary 2015). Further steps are identified in the model for HR processes:

1. Commence with job placement: The top-ranked candidate receives a formal job offer (hard copy or by email), a deadline by which to reply and the job starting date. A letter of acceptance is returned to the HR department to indicate whether the candidate will commence with employment on the starting date.
2. Notify unsuccessful candidates: When the selected candidate has formally accepted the job offer and the organization has a guarantee that the candidate will take up the position, the other candidates should be notified that they had been unsuccessful. However, when for some reason the preferred candidate is unable to accept the position, the next-ranked candidate may be appointed.
3. Complete the paperwork: An HR representative should help the new employee complete the paperwork required by the organization.
4. Explain the job description: Equip newly appointed administrative employees with a job description that explains their generic duties and responsibilities.
5. Introduce a mentor or buddy: Appoint a knowledgeable coworker as a mentor or buddy to bridge all gaps experienced by new administrative employees, offer guid-ance and share experiences to minimize uncertainty
6. Induction and orientation: Effective orientation and induction programs help new employees be productive from the beginning. These programs allow managers and/or supervisors to form sound relationships with new employees and to explain set expectations. Introduce organizational policies, rules and regulations. Post-appointment support of new administrative employees continues for a period of at least six months.

Post-appointment Support

"New employee orientation can have a significant impact on employee engagement and therefore satisfaction and retention. 'Onboarding', as it is now referred to in the industry, has become a top priority nationally" (UMICH 2016:1). The following eight steps outlined post-appointment support:

1. Onboarding: This process entails more than simply showing a new employee where his/her desk is (Klein et al. 2015; UMICH 2016). It should provide a key connection for new administrative employees validating their decision to join the public sector and paving the way for a productive relationship.
2. Identify performance expectations: The University of California, Berkeley (2016:1) described this process of identifying possible performance expectations as follows: "To perform well, employees need to know what is expected of them. The starting point is an up to date job description that lists the essential functions, tasks and responsibilities of the job. It also outlines the general areas of knowledge and skills required of the employee to be successful".
3. Monitor performance: Employee performance is the key to organizational success. Performance monitoring is a quantifiable way to assess whether an employee is doing his/her job as defined by the official job description. Training and development needs should have been identified and job objectives should have been set.

4. Offer skills enhancement training: Previously known as "job skills training", skills enhancement training refers to obtaining the job skills required by the employer. Administrative employees should be educated to meet the changing demands of the administrative workplace. The productivity of suitably skilled employees saves time and money (Ghosh et al. 2012). Administrative employees who already possess basic skills tend to learn more and faster from participating in job-specific and technical training. Employers who support workplace education programs benefit from more conscientious, resourceful, loyal and dependable workers. Employers often gain because more skilfull employees are also more confident employees.

5. Evaluate training outcomes: UMICH (2016:3–6) describes the evaluation of learning and development in an organization as "…a systematic process of collecting and analyzing information for and about a training program, which can be used for planning and guiding decision-making as well as assessing the relevance, effectiveness and the impact of various training components". The same author discusses the importance of evaluating the perspectives of different stakeholders:

a. Organization (in this case the public sector): To assist the decision-making process with regard to which interventions should (or should not) be replicated in the future and provide evidence of investment in the public sectors' human capital,

b. Employees: Evaluation of training outcomes provides individuals with the opportunity to provide feedback to their trainers. Administrative employees in subsequent cohorts can also benefit from this process if feedback is directed towards the benefit of the program,

c. Trainers or facilitators: Evaluation data can be used as performance indicators that justify the existence of a training department and/or investment in trainers.

6. Ensure employees apply new skills: Employees who have received training in a particular area or field should apply what they have learned. Employers or managers should ensure that administrative employees apply the knowledge they have gained to enhance their skills and increase their productivity. ICT-related skills should be used or practiced to ensure that the new skills do not fade and disappear over time. *Training Today* (2016) emphasizes that a successful training program is always a work-in-progress and that a training cycle is not complete without an evaluation of its effectiveness.

7. Annually analyze employee needs (intrinsic and extrinsic): Davoren (2012:1) says that employees "can make or break an organization, even though top management may be at the helm". Each employee has a vital impact on the success of an organization and managers should research and analyze the drives, characteristics, needs, personalities and individual contributions of their workforce.

8. Provide employee assistance programs (EAPs): Incon Health (2015:1) defines an EAP as "…a worksite-based program designed to assist in the identification and resolution of productivity problems associated with employees impaired by personal concerns, including but not limited to health, marital, family, financial, alcohol, drug, legal, emotional, stress, or other personal concerns, which may adversely affect employee job performance". The purpose of EAPs is to act as an employee benefit and as a means of improving employees' productivity due to fewer personal problems negatively affecting their job performance. Employee wellbeing and performance do not function in isolation but contribute to a financially and psychologically healthy workplace.

The objectives of the HR processes conceptual model were defined and the participants identified during the development process. The next section will provide conclusions and recommendations.

CONCLUSION

A number of HR processes models are available in the industry and are described in literature sources. The purpose of this study was to develop a model for HR practitioners in public services departments and sectors with the holistic wellbeing of administrative employees as point of departure. This study focused devising

means to improve the current processes used in the industry to recruit and appoint administrative employees. Employees in administrative professions should be reliable, work at a reasonable production speed and produce work of high quality, and be appropriately skilled with regard to communication, technology and general office tasks. This model also focuses on the importance of skills improvement courses, not only by creating opportunities for administrative employees to attend these courses, but also by monitoring if the newly gained skills and knowledge are implemented in such employees' working environment to improve productivity and output. This customized HR processes model for administrative employees in the public sector should lead to improved service delivery, higher morale and self-worth, and ultimately, to highly skilled and trained employees who can contribute internally towards their organization and also project a positive image towards the general public as their clients. South Africa must act quickly to improve its public sector productivity and officials should be trained on precise ways to improve productivity (such as ongoing skills training for administrative staff). In addition, those employees who improve services and contribute towards the lowering of costs should be rewarded.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study, this researcher's recommendations are as follows:
1. The current generic one-size-fits-all model of appointing employees should be customized to incorporate well-developed job descriptions, job requirements and job specifications.
2. Preliminary testing of relevant skills and knowledge should be included in the recruitment and appointment phase of administrative employees.
3. Administrative employees should be appointed based purely on their job-specific skills and on merit.

In addition to the above, the study indicated that liaison with an advisory committee is vital in terms of keeping the public sector abreast of changes in the administrative environment. Moreover, if the HR processes model is implemented, stress-related conditions (for example, absenteeism, substance abuse) might be mini-

mized. Finally, a follow-up study might be of use after implementing the HR processes model in order to determine whether productivity levels have increased and to establish the implications that such a model holds for the South African public service.

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