

# An Exploration of the Alignment between Managers' Competencies and their Job Functions in the South African Post Office

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*This study explores the alignment of managers' competencies with their job functions in the South African Post Office. Before alignment was explored, managers' competencies were determined through self-assessments by managers and peer-assessments by subordinates. Fifty-five managers across four levels of management and 74 direct subordinates participated in the survey. Forty-four job profiles of managers were utilised to determine the job competencies of managers at SAPO. Twenty competencies were identified as job competencies against which the competencies of managers are aligned. Not only are the competencies of managers aligned to their job functions and competencies, but their job competencies are also aligned to researched competency models for management. This quantitative research study contains valuable information regarding the competencies of managers at SAPO and could contribute positively to leadership development, not only at SAPO, but also to other similar state-owned enterprises. Based on the results of the research recommendations are made for leadership development, performance management and an on-boarding programme for new managers at SAPO.*

**Keywords:** leadership development, management competencies, management models

**JEL Classification:** J24

## 1. Introduction

An organisation's people are central to achieving the highest possible customer satisfaction and in building its competitive advantage capabilities. Organisations do not achieve their goals on their own. Managers play an important role to realise an organisation's mission and goals. The task of managers in a free-market economy is, therefore, to manage the organisation's resources in such a way that the organisation earns the highest possible income with the lowest possible costs.

Managers perform management functions such as planning, organising, leading, and controlling, together with interpersonal, informational, and decision-making, roles in organisations on different levels and functional areas. To perform these roles and functions, managers require certain competencies. A competency can be described as the knowledge that a person has about the task that must be performed, together with his

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or her ability to perform the task and the manner in which he or she completes the task. Effective performance is achieved when a person has the required competencies that his or her job requires and then executes the required tasks consistently in line with company policies and procedures (Boyatzis, 2008, p.12).

Although much literature has been written on management styles and strategies to improve specific management styles and performance, not much is available on manager effectiveness. Manager effectiveness refers to the amount of time that a manager spends on doing work that adds value to the bottom-line of the organisation. Effective management has all the components of performance management that evaluate how well work is done, but it goes further; it focuses on doing the right things.

This study investigated the relationship between managers' competencies and their job functions in the South African Post Office.

### **1.1. Research Context**

The South African Post Office is a state-owned enterprise (SOE) owned by the South African government. It is a provider of postal, logistical, and financial services. It has an expenditure budget of approximately R 6.5 billion, revenue of approximately R 7 billion and a staff complement of more than 22 000 people. Prior to 1991, the South African Post Office and Telkom was one entity known as the Department of Post and Telecommunications. Revenue was generated through telecommunications which subsidised the Post Office (Horwitz, 1992, p.1).

Prior 1991, very few employees had tertiary qualifications. Employees were recruited to deliver limited services. Grade 10 was the minimum requirement for most jobs. Grade 12 and business acumen only became requirements after commercialisation in 1991. The purpose of commercialising the Post Office in 1991 was to make it self-sufficient and to do away with the subsidies paid by government.

Some managers in the South African Post Office have more than 25 years of service and therefore worked in this environment of cross-subsidisation where it was not necessary to generate revenue to sustain business. A collapse in management was blamed for the losses during the 2015/2016 annual report presentation to Parliament. During the past two decades, in an effort to generate revenue, the South African Post Office has expanded their services. Three courier companies were bought to enter the courier market and it also became an agent for many third party companies. As a commercialised business, SAPO is faced with challenges such as an increasing growth of competitors, migration of consumers, operational inefficiencies, the decline in revenue, and a low performance culture.

The CEO and top management of SAPO are appointed by government on a contract base for a period of five years. Very few of these contracts have been renewed over the past two decades. This has led to a high turnover of managers in SAPO and a very diverse management team in relation to qualifications and experience. Some managers have been in the employ of SAPO prior to commercialisation and others have less than one year of service.

### **1.2. Research Problem**

The ability of managers at SAPO was questioned during the 2015/16 report presentation to Parliament. The audit revealed that no reliable records were available of managers' performance or competencies and that the internal systems of control and risk management are inadequate and does not meet legislative requirements (SAPO, 2015). To establish responsibility for the poor performance, and to improve the performance of managers at SAPO, it is necessary to establish the competencies that they possess, as well as the competencies that they ought to have. Effective performance can only be achieved if incumbents have the required competencies which their jobs demand.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The following questions resulted from the research problem:

- What competencies do managers possess at SAPO?
- To what extent are managers' competencies aligned to the competencies required by their jobs at SAPO?
- To what extent are the competencies of the managers at SAPO aligned to a competency model for effective management?
- What leadership development strategies would be suitable for SAPO, if required?

### **1.4. Significance of the Study**

Effective managers have several competencies that allow them to perform at different managerial levels in an organisation. Competencies are also described as personal and task-orientated abilities that

individuals possess which make them effective as leaders and managers. Although much research has been done on defining managerial competencies required to be effective and developing management competency models, not much is available on the assessment or evaluation of manager's competencies and effectiveness. Competency assessment is still a key research area across the globe and minimal research has been done to assess the competencies of managers (Bhardwaj, 2013, p.60).

This study contributes to the concept of managers' effectiveness and the measurement of managerial competencies, an area in which very little research has been conducted thus far. This study provides valuable information regarding managers' competencies and job competencies at SAPO, which could assist the organisation in building its competitive advantage in the marketplace.

## **2. Literature Review**

There are a plethora of definitions of competencies in the extant literature (Abdullah, 2011, p.240; Azmawani, 2013, p.50; Bamey, 2010, p.113). Even though the terminology and concepts of competency in use do vary, there is consensus that a competency refers to a set of behaviour patterns an individual needs to display to perform an activity in an effective and efficient way (Geyer, 2013, p.158). Mondy (2012, p.56) defines a competence as the knowledge, skills and behaviour a person can apply in the work environment. Organisations that have competent employees are likely to develop innovative ideas that help the business to survive in an ever-changing environment (Scott, 2010, p.59). David McClelland is the first person to document the concept of competencies and indicated that the use of aptitude tests to predict performance does not serve their intended purposes because of various factors involved, such as cultural biases (Nash and Tarkin, 2012, p.38). McClelland suggested that individual competence may be used to predict employee performance (Azmi, Ilhaamie, 2010, p.235). He defined competencies as a representation of a group of behaviours that show individual characteristics which facilitate superior job performance

### **2.1. Types of Competencies**

The competencies that can be applied in an organisation are broad. It is imperative that the right skills for each position in the organisation are properly defined. According to Kellerman (2014, p.236), competencies can be divided into three categories; namely, competencies related to leading self, others, and the organisation.

#### **2.1.1. Leading Others' Competencies**

Leading others' competencies is related to the ability of an individual to influence the behaviour of other individuals. A discussion of various competencies related to leading others is presented below.

#### **2.1.2. Communication**

Communication is a vital business function that could ensure that all employees have the right information at the right time (Botha and Musengi, 2013, p. 85). Some organisations have a lot of employees with different levels of understanding about the way information is presented (Robbins et al., 2014, p. 62).

#### **2.1.3. Conflict Management**

Conflict is inevitable in organisations (David and David, 2015, p.410). Managers should approach conflict situations in an objective way and exercise fairness in the process of addressing it (Scott, 2010, p. 225). The ability to resolve conflict is determined by the power vested in an individual.

#### **2.1.4. Diversity Management**

Diversity is the differences found in the organisation that can be utilised to achieve the goals of the organisation (Bhardwaj, 2013, p.70). Due to globalisation, diversity has become a common phenomenon in most organisations (Scott, 2012, p.18). All employees in the organisation must have the skills to work together with individuals from a different race, gender, culture, age, and religion. Furthermore, the policies of the organisation must be designed in such a way that the needs of all employees are considered.

#### **2.1.5. Employee Development**

The business environment is dynamic and over time the skills of employees may fall short of the challenges faced by the organisation (Vazirani, 2010, p.121). The development of employees should link to skills gaps and the relevance of the skills required by the organisation.

### **2.1.6. Relationship Management**

There are two categories of relationships that are found in the organisation, which are internal and external relationship management (Kotler and Keller, 2012, p.185). Relationship management is the ability of the organisation to sustain trust and honest conversations with all the stakeholders of the organisation.

### **2.2. Leading the Organisation**

The organisation is complex because it has a lot of elements that should be managed and coordinated in an organised way (David and David, 2015, p.10). The failure to lead the organisation properly may lead to different functional areas operating in silos (Scott, 2010, p.88).

## **3. Research Methodology**

Research philosophies are grounded into three categories; namely, positivism, interpretivist / constructivism and realism / pragmatism (Cooper and Schindler, 2011, p.379). A positivist philosophy is associated with quantitative studies and normally utilises a deductive research approach (Choy, 2014, p.101). The nature of the research questions and the population of the study supported the adoption of a positivism research philosophy.

Quantitative research is a method of conducting research in which the phenomena can be understood by using numerical data, which can be analysed mathematically and statistically (Isaacs, 2014, p.318). 3.4 Research strategies

A research strategy is a systematic process of conducting research that allows the presentation of detailed results and reporting (Saunders et al., 2012, p.173). Cooper and Schindler (2011, p.158) indicate that the chosen research strategy should be aligned to the adopted research paradigm and method. A survey research strategy was adopted in this study.

### **3.1. Target Population**

Saunders and Lewis (2012, p.225) define a population as a total number of potential respondents for a study from which the researcher intends to make inferences. In this study, the population is defined as all employees at SAPO. The organisation has a population of about 18 000 employees, of which 397 are managers.

### **3.2. Data Collection Instrument and Administration**

A questionnaire was used to collect data. Cooper and Schindler (2011, p.318) define a questionnaire as a set of questions that request information which help to answer research questions. The research objectives and relevant literature review informed the development of the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to a total of 100 managers and 200 employees. The questionnaires were distributed through emails of managers and employees.

### **3.3. Data Reliability**

Reliability refers to the stability and consistency of data (Van Zyl, 2012, p.115). This occurs when a test measures the same thing more than once and the results will be the same or almost the same. Reliability of data can be enhanced by increasing the number of observations, minimise the effect of external events and standardise instructions and scoring procedures (Van Zyl, 2012, p.118). Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure the reliability of data.

### **3.4. Pilot Study**

Saunders et al., (2012, p.394) recommend that a questionnaire should be pilot tested before it is used to collect data. A total of ten managers and ten subordinates were randomly selected to participate in the pilot study. The objectives of the pilot study were explained to the participants before requested to consent to completing piloting questionnaire. The responses from the participants were tested for reliability by using Cronbach Alpha.

### **3.5. Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations should be practiced when collecting data so that research participants are left at the position they were or better before providing information to the researcher. The following are ethical considerations that must be practiced by researchers. Participants must give informed consent before participating or providing information to the researcher. According to Van Zyl, (2012, p.86) this is a core principle and requirement in any research. The researcher ensured that the participants signed the consent form

before completing the questionnaire. All participants must be protected from any form of physical and psychological harm. All the participants in this study were assured that no harm will happen to them as a result of their participation in the study. Participants were also informed that they could withdraw their participation anytime they felt uncomfortable to continue participating in the study. The confidentiality of the participants were assured and sustained throughout the research process. The participants were not required in any way to disclose their identities. Participation in the study was voluntary and there was no participant coerced to participate in the study.

### **3.6. Limitations of the Study**

There are three limitations to this study. Firstly, the response rate from subordinates was low. Two hundred questionnaires were sent out to subordinates of managers and seventy-four were returned. Secondly, the study adopted a quantitative research approach. It is likely that more valuable information may have been collected if a mixed methodology was used in this study. Lastly, the study was conducted on a population that is geographically spread. It might have been better if the research was conducted at regional level only. This is likely to have influenced the response rate because it was difficult to coordinate the responses from participants that were located in different parts of the organisation.

## **4. Analysis and Results**

The questionnaire used to collect data requested respondents to provide two categories of information, which are: demographic information and competencies of managers. The response rate for managers was 55% and for subordinates it was 37%.

The reliability testing results show internal consistency in the standardised items in the questionnaires used to collect data. Most of the managers (58.2%) and 69.3% of subordinates who responded are male and 41.8% of managers and 30.7% of subordinates are female. 58.2% of managers are African, 3.6% Asian, 5.5% coloured, and 30.9% whites. Blacks represent the majority of the population in South Africa and it could be the reason why the organisation hired more blacks than any other ethnic group. A total of 41.3% of subordinates are Africans, 9.3% Asian, 13.3% coloured and 36% white.

The diversity of employees at SAPO is likely to support the growth of the organisation, as they all bring different competencies to the table, especially with regard to communication. 2% of managers are 26-30 years of age, 3.6% are 31-35 years old, 5.5% are 36-40 years old, 20% are 41-45 years old, 36.4% are 46-50 years old, 20% are 51-55 years old, 7.3% are 56-60 years old, and 5.5% are 61-65 years age old. Most (88.9%) of the managers are over the age of 40. A total of 2.7% of subordinates are 26-30 years old, 1.3% 31-35 years old, 8% 36-40 years old, 17.3% 41-45 years old, 38.7% 46-50 years old, 21.3% 51-55 years old, 10.7% 56-60 years old, and 0% in the 61-65 years age group.

The statutory retirement age in SAPO is 65. Most of the managers (34.5%) have degrees, 30.9% have higher degrees, 27.3% master's degrees, 5.4% grade 12, and 1.8% grade 10 as highest qualifications. Managers with grade 12 and 10 as highest qualifications might have difficulty to lead subordinates who have higher qualifications than themselves.

The results also show that most of the subordinates (49.3%) have degrees, 9.3% higher degrees, 8% master's degrees, 28% grade 12, and 4% grade 10 as highest qualifications. It is likely that SAPO benefits from the knowledge of employees that have attained at least a degree. Most managers (52.7%) are based at the head office of SAPO, 25.5% at regional offices, and 21.8% at area offices, while 29.3% of subordinates are based at head office, 42.7% at the regional offices, and 28% at area offices. Most managers with specialized skills work at Head Office. Results show that there are more experienced managers than newly appointed managers at SAPO. Most of the subordinates have spent more years at SAPO than managers.

### **4.1. Job Competencies**

To align managers' competencies with those of their jobs, the job competencies of various SAPO management positions were determined. Competency requirements of forty-two managerial job profiles across four managerial levels were utilised to determine the job competencies. Fifty-two job competencies were identified and summarised according to the most frequently used in job profiles to the least used. The top twenty most frequently used competencies together with accountability; ethics and technical competencies were utilised as the measurement criteria in the research

Self-assessment questionnaires were sent to 100 managers across three managerial levels and peer-evaluation questionnaires were sent to 200 subordinates in SAPO.

#### **4.1.1. Information Sharing with Team Members**

The results show that, while most employees (62.7%) were satisfied with the way managers shared information from senior leadership, some employees (20%) were not satisfied. This could mean that communication expectations of employees, whose expectations were not met, might have led to employee dissatisfaction.

#### **4.1.2. Clarity of Verbal and Written Communication**

The majority of employees (41.3%) agreed and 25.3% strongly agreed that their managers communicated verbal and written messages in clear and meaningful language. It must be noted that 22.7% of respondents were neutral, and 5.3% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively.

#### **4.1.3. Effective Use of Company Resources**

A total of 52.7% of managers agreed, 38.2% strongly agreed and 9.1% were neutral that they use resources effectively. The results show that most managers have the ability to effectively use organisational resources. This bodes well for productivity, elimination of wastage and keeping costs down.

#### **4.1.4. Taking Responsibility for Own Actions**

The majority of managers (65.5%) strongly agreed and 32.7% agreed that they took responsibility for their actions, while 42.7% of the subordinates agreed and 21.3% strongly agreed that managers take responsibility. A total of 20% of the subordinates were neutral, 12% disagreed, and 4% strongly disagreed that managers took responsibility for their actions. It is likely that the 16% of SAPO employees, who disagreed, experienced dissatisfaction that was led by managers that had a tendency to blame others for their actions.

#### **4.1.5. Weighing Priorities of Things to Do**

52.7% of the managers strongly agreed and 47.3% agreed that they carefully weigh the priority of things to be done. SAPO is likely, as a result of such prudence, to have pursued organisational decisions that did not unnecessarily drain the resources of the organisation. Many of the subordinates (48%) agreed and 13.33% strongly agreed that their managers carefully weigh priorities when things need to be done. The results show that most of the managers of SAPO have the skills to prioritise their work. A total of 24.7% of the subordinates were neutral, 10.7% disagreed, and 2.7% strongly disagreed. The results show that some subordinates (13.4%) felt that some managers did not have the competency to prioritise their work.

#### **4.1.6. Identification of Possible Causes of a Problem**

Most of the managers (58.2%) agreed and 27.3% strongly agreed that they identified possible causes of the problem and 14.5% were neutral. A total of 41.3% of subordinates agreed and 10.7% strongly agreed that managers identified many possible causes of the problem, while 25.3% were neutral. This strong competency could have helped SAPO to develop solutions for the many problems that they face in their operations. Some of the subordinates (16%) disagreed and 6.7% strongly disagreed that managers identify possible causes of problems. It is likely that these employees experienced managers who might have struggled with solving organisational problems. The possibility that SAPO made losses because of failing to identify the causes of organisational problems cannot be overruled.

#### **4.1.7. Clear Understanding of all Business Units' Roles and Responsibilities**

Almost half of managers (47.3%) agreed and 20% strongly agreed that they have a clear understanding of all Business Units' roles and responsibilities at SAPO. Most subordinates (33.3%) agreed and 30.7% strongly agreed with what was confirmed by managers.

#### **4.1.8. Acquainted with the Latest Legislative Requirements**

21.8% of managers strongly agreed and 61.8% agreed that they were acquainted with the latest legislative requirements that affect their job, while 17.3% of subordinates strongly agreed and 42.7% agreed with the statement. SAPO is likely to have minimised the possibility of being sued because most managers have knowledge of the legislative requirements that affect their work.

#### **4.1.9. Stay Up-to-Date with Business Information**

The majority of managers (61.8%) agreed and 21.8% strongly agreed that they stay up-to-date with business information that affects the organisation, while 16% of subordinates strongly agreed and 44% agreed.

It is likely that the number of employees (16%) who disagreed felt that some of the decisions that were developed by the managers at SAPO did not reflect the business environment.

#### **4.1.10. Help Others Understand Changes in the Organisation**

The results show that the majority (61.80%) of managers agreed and 27.30% strongly agreed that they help employees understand changes in the organisation, while 9.1% were neutral, 1.8% disagreed and 1.8% strongly disagreed. The results show that 44% of subordinates agreed, 16% strongly agreed, 24% were neutral, 13.3% disagreed and 9.3% strongly disagreed that managers help them understand the changes in the organisation.

#### **4.1.11 Doing More than Expected**

36.4% of managers strongly agreed, 50.9% agreed, and 10.9% were neutral while 16% of subordinates strongly agreed, 34.7% agreed, and 26.7% were neutral that managers do more than what is expected of them. It could be that managers who are doing more than what is expected of them know and understand the changes in the organisation and the reasons for these, especially because most of the managers who responded, are working at Head Office where strategic decisions are made.

#### **4.1.12. Seek Different and Innovative Approaches to Solve Problems**

Most of the managers (61.8%) agreed and 34.5% strongly agreed that they encouraged others to seek different and innovative approaches to solve problems. This was also confirmed by 18.7% of the subordinates that strongly agreed and 40% who agreed that managers seek different and innovative approaches to solve problems.

#### **4.1.13. Maintain Positive Relations with Internal and External Customers**

The majority of managers (56.4%) agreed and 41.8% strongly agreed that they maintain positive working relations with internal and external customers while 48% of subordinates agreed and 18.7% strongly agreed with the statement. SAPO is likely therefore to have been viewed by some customers as an organisation that attempts to meet the needs of customers.

#### **4.1.14. Taking Personal Interest in Others to Build Relationships**

Most of the managers (52.7%) agreed and 32.7% strongly agreed that they take a personal interest in others to build relationships, while 13.3% of subordinates strongly agreed and 36% agreed that managers have a personal interest in others to build relationships. The age difference between employees and managers could also have an effect on the relationship between managers and employees where younger managers find it difficult to build positive relationships with older more experienced employees.

#### **4.1.15. Solutions to Internal and External Customers' Problems**

Most of the managers (56.4%) agreed and 34.5% strongly agreed that they effectively solve internal and external customers' problems, while 18.7% of subordinates strongly agreed and 45.3% agreed that managers effectively solve internal and external customers' problems. The image of the organisation may have been enhanced by managers' ability to solve internal and external customers' problems.

#### **4.1.16. Making Timely Decisions**

The success of any organisation is influenced by the perception of employees about the effect of the decisions made by management. The majority (56.40%) of managers agreed and 29.10% strongly agreed that they make timely decisions, while 12.7% were neutral, 1.8% disagreed and 1.8% strongly disagreed, while 34.7% of subordinates agreed, and 13.3% strongly agreed with the statement. A disturbingly large group (28%) showed a lack of confidence in the timeousness of the managerial decision-making competency.

#### **4.1.17. Including Others in Decision-Making**

Most managers (52.7%) agreed, 31.9% strongly agreed and 16.4% were neutral that they include others in the decision-making process to help them make the best decision, while 20% of subordinates strongly agreed, 37.3% agreed, and 20% were neutral on the above-mentioned statement. There is thus a possibility that SAPO managed to get buy-in from most employees when implementing various organisational strategies.

#### **4.1.18. Helping Others to Learn New Systems and Processes**

Most managers (56.4%) agreed and 27.3% strongly agreed that they help others with new systems and processes, while 29.3% of the subordinates agreed and 10.7% strongly agreed. It is likely that SAPO might have managed to create a learning culture that supported innovative methods of executing various activities in the organisation. A total of 1.8% of managers disagreed and 14.5% were neutral while 26.7% of subordinates disagreed, 10.7% strongly disagreed, and 22.7% were neutral that managers help others with new systems and processes. The significantly negative response might suggest that managers are reluctant to learn new systems due to their age and employees learn new systems and procedures through other means, such as a training section, rather than through their managers. It is a possibility that newly appointed managers are not familiar with the systems and processes within SAPO.

#### **4.1.19. Integration of Technology into the Workplace**

The results show that 27.3% of managers strongly agreed, 52.7% agreed, and 16.4% were neutral, while 10.8% of subordinates strongly agreed, 33.8% agreed, and 35.1% were neutral that managers had the capacity to integrate technology into the workplace to improve effectiveness. SAPO is likely to have managed to reduce its operational costs due to the adoption of technology. It is possible that managers do not like to adopt technology because it is associated with painful outcomes such as retrenchment, demotion and transfer.

#### **4.1.20. Developing of Challenging and Achievable Goals**

Most of the managers (58.2%) agreed and 20% strongly agreed and 21.1% were neutral that they develop challenging but achievable performance goals for their teams. Many subordinates (36%) agreed, and 13.3% strongly agreed that managers develop challenging and achievable performance goals for the team.

#### **4.1.21. Provision of Actionable Feedback**

Most of the managers (63.6%) agreed, 27.3% strongly agreed, and 9.1% were neutral that they give actionable feedback to their team that leads to an improvement in their performance, while 38.7% of the subordinates agreed 12% strongly agreed, and 24% were neutral about the statement. The employees of SAPO are likely to have managed to implement a lot of progressive activities based on the feedback given by the managers.

#### **4.1.22. Support the Development of Employees' Skills**

A total of 36.4% of managers strongly agreed, 58.2% agreed, and 5.5% were neutral on development, while 16% of subordinates strongly agreed, 40% agreed and 13.3% were neutral that managers support employees to develop their skills. There is a possibility that most employees managed to take skills development opportunities that were initiated by their managers.

#### **4.1.23. Appropriate Application of Policies and Procedures**

52.7% of managers agreed and 41.8% strongly agreed that they appropriately apply company procedures and policies, while 3.6% were neutral. Many of the subordinates (42.7%) agreed, 25.3% strongly agreed and 21.3% were neutral that managers at SAPO apply organisational procedures and policies appropriately. The organisation is likely to have managed to treat its employees equitably.

#### **4.1.24. Display High Ethical Standards and Lead by Example**

Most of the managers (52.7%) strongly agreed, 43.6% agreed and 3.6% were neutral that they display high standards of ethical conduct and lead by example, while 17.3% of subordinates strongly agreed, 44% agreed and 20% were neutral about managers' ethical standards. There is a possibility that SAPO has managers that do not abuse the resources of the organisation and most employees are likely to have been treated with respect by the managers. There were a few subordinates (13.3%) that disagreed and 5.3% strongly disagreed that managers display high standards of ethical conduct and lead by example

#### **4.1.25. Monitor Expenditure to Ensure Cost Effective Execution of Tasks**

30.9% of the managers strongly agreed and 58.20% agreed that they monitor expenditure to ensure cost effective execution of tasks, while 49.30% of subordinates agreed and 18.7% strongly agreed with the statement. Thus there is evidence that most managers of SAPO monitor expenditure to ensure cost effective execution of tasks.

#### **4.1.26. Manage Company Resources Cost Effectively**

29.1% of managers strongly agreed, 56.4% agreed, and 10.9% were neutral that they manage resources cost effectively, while 14.7% of subordinates strongly agreed, 45.3% agreed, and 25.3% were neutral on the issue. It is thus likely that most managers are able to manage their operational costs effectively with available resources.

#### **4.1.27. Strong Sense of Urgency**

Resilience refers to having sustained energy and willpower to meet challenging targets regardless of obstacles. Most of the managers (60%) strongly agreed and 32.7% agreed that they have a sense of urgency about getting things done. Twenty percent of the subordinates strongly agreed and 36% agreed that managers have a sense of urgency about getting things done.

#### **4.1.28. Involvement of Employees in Business Processes**

The results show that 61.8% of managers agreed, 27.3% strongly agreed, and 9.1% were neutral about involving others, while 21.3% of subordinates strongly agreed, 34.7% agreed, and 26.7% were neutral that managers involve employees in business processes to ensure their support. SAPO is likely to have implemented most of its strategies with minimum resistance from employees.

#### **4.1.29. Seek Opportunities to Improve or Streamline Work Processes**

63.6% of managers agreed and 29.1% strongly agreed that they seek out opportunities to improve or streamline work processes, while 40% of subordinates agreed and 16% strongly disagreed. There is a probability that SAPO may have improved productivity by streamlining some of its functions and processes.

#### **4.1.30. Level of Tactfulness when Interacting with Team Members**

25.5% of managers strongly agreed, 50.9% agreed, 21.9% were neutral while 14.7% of subordinates strongly agreed, 46.7% agreed and 22.7% were neutral that managers were tactful when interacting with team members and peers. It is likely from these scores that the level of conflict in the organisation might have been minimised.

#### **4.1.31. Respect Confidentiality of Information Shared by Others**

Most managers (60%) strongly agreed, 38.2% agreed and 1.8% were neutral about confidentiality, while 22.7% of subordinates strongly agreed, 37.3% agreed and 26.7% were neutral that managers respect the confidentiality of information and concerns shared by others.

#### **4.1.32. Weighing Risk of Things to be Done**

Managers should have the knowledge and know-how to assess the impact of risk. Most of the managers (45.5%) agreed and 41.8% strongly agreed that they carefully weigh the risks of things to be done. A total of 40% of the subordinates agreed and 12% strongly agreed that managers carefully weigh risks of things to be done.

#### **4.1.33. Ability to Perform Tasks Assigned to Subordinates**

The results show that 36.4% of managers strongly agreed, 52.7% agreed, and 7.3% were neutral that they were able to do the tasks performed by subordinates, while 13.3% of subordinates strongly agreed, 32% agreed and 24% were neutral about the statement. Most employees are likely to have managed to improve their performance as a result of the technical support they received from line managers.

#### **4.1.34. Respecting People Regardless of Race, Gender, or Viewpoints**

54.5% of the managers strongly agreed, 41.8% agreed, and 3.6% were neutral that they respect people regardless of race, gender, or viewpoints, while 26.7% of subordinates strongly agreed and 41.3% agreed. An organisation that takes advantage of employee diversity is likely to benefit from the skills that are possessed by employees based on their background.

#### **4.1.35. Seek Different Viewpoints and Leverage the Benefits Thereof**

27.3% of managers strongly agreed, 63.6% agreed, and 5.5% were neutral that managers seek out different viewpoints and leverage the benefits of different perspectives. Conflict management enhances learning and group outcomes such as effective performance.

#### **4.1.36. Managerial Skills are Aligned to the Job Functions**

32.7% of managers strongly agreed, 54.5% agreed, and 9.1% were neutral that the skills and knowledge that they as managers possess are aligned to their job functions. 24% of the subordinates strongly agreed, 42.7% agreed, and 21.3% were neutral that the skills and knowledge of managers are aligned to their functions.

#### **4.1.37. Possessing the Skills and Knowledge that Job Requires**

47.3% of managers strongly agreed, 49.1% agreed, and 1.8% were neutral that managers possess the skills and knowledge that were required for their positions, while 30.7% of subordinates strongly agreed, 36% agreed, and 22.7% were neutral. The results from the study show that most of the managers at SAPO have the competencies that are aligned to their roles and responsibilities. It was also established that managers rated their competencies much higher than the rating on the same competencies by the subordinates.

### **5. Discussion and Conclusion**

The following recommendations are made, based on the findings.

#### **5.1. On-Boarding Programme for New Managers**

It is recommended that SAPO implements a comprehensive on-boarding programme for newly appointed managers which at least include the following:

**Transition from employee to manager:** Newly appointed managers should be familiarised with job, environmental and organisational demands of their new positions. Behaviour for effective job performance, directing subordinates and self-assessment should be included. This will assist the newly appointed manager to build relationships quicker with employees and customers, especially where there are huge age gaps between the newly appointed manager and employees under his or her control.

**Familiarisation with systems, processes and procedures within SAPO:** Newly appointed managers should be familiarised comprehensively with internal systems, processes, procedures and the organisation as a whole. Not only will it equip them with the knowledge and understanding of SAPO systems but it would enable them to integrate innovation quicker into SAPO systems and processes.

**Continuous development:** From the self-assessments during the on-boarding programme, personal development plans should be initiated and contracted between the organisation and the manager. The development interventions could range from mentoring and coaching to tertiary qualifications.

#### **5.2. Management Proficiency Assessment**

It is recommended that all managers at SAPO should complete a management proficiency assessment to determine their specific development needs. The results from the assessment should be the baseline for their personal development plan and continuous professional development.

#### **5.3. Management Development Programme**

Mentoring, Coaching and Buddy system training should be some of the methodologies utilised in Leadership Development at SAPO to ensure transfer of skills in the shortest possible time due to the possible skills drain in the next 5 to 10 years.

#### **5.4. Conclusion**

This research explored the alignment of managers' competencies against the competencies required by their job functions at SAPO. It found that some managers do not possess all the competencies required by their jobs. However, having the competencies required alone is also not enough to be effective. The competencies should be displayed consistently in line with the organisations' policies and procedures and the competencies required should be aligned to the strategic objectives of the organisation. Therefore, the alignment of SAPO's job competencies could be a topic for further research.

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