CHALLENGES FACED BY RESEARCH COORDINATORS IN THE LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

BY

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ABSTRACT

The study was fundamentally based on the challenges faced by research coordinators in the Limpopo Provincial Government. The researcher attempted to describe the challenges; examine research capacity and develop the mechanisms to the extent to which the research is properly and well coordinated by the Limpopo Provincial Government Department officials. The democratic elected government incepted in 1994 established three spheres of government, namely, the national, provincial and local spheres of government. Currently the Limpopo Provincial Government and Administration is composed of twelve government departments including the Office of the Premier. The study therefore facilitated an approach towards a coordinated research initiatives in the province to attain the objectives laid in the Limpopo Development Plan aligned to the National Development Plan (Vision 2030). Decision making, institutional arrangements and planning, policy analysis, policy implementation, policy evaluation, policy design, and policy change and programs improvement need to be evidence-based and that could only be achieved by scientific research conduction, management and coordination.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a triangulation approach where both qualitative as well as quantitative research methodologies were applied. The researcher used non-probability sampling and its subtype purposive sampling method to select the respondents. The researcher used both questionnaires and interviews as data collection instruments. Two data analysis methods were used, namely, statistical analysis (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and thematic analysis. The following ethical aspects were considered and applied when conducting the study and they are: permission to conduct research; voluntary participation and informed consent; no harm to participants; anonymity; confidentiality; and, deceiving of subjects.

The major findings of the study are:

- There are no enough research coordinators in Limpopo Provincial Government and that financial resources are not enough to conduct research;
Most of the government officials are not sure if the provincial government of Limpopo encourages innovation by devoting scientific and technological research, development and biotechnology;

Uncoordinated research results in the duplication of research and that research coordinators are not well trained in research methodology coupled by lack of qualified staff to conduct quality in-house research;

Appropriate coordinated research can improve management and service delivery and that research coordinators, research managers and research practitioners are informed of the South Africa National Research and Development Strategy of 2002 and that it must align with any Integrated Provincial Research and Development Strategy developed or to be developed in future; and,

That each provincial government department ensures that it has a full functional directorate that is well resourced in terms of personnel, financial and skills and promotes collaboration between government departments and research and academic institutions.

The recommendations of the study were:

That there should be enough research coordinators in Limpopo Provincial Government and financial resources shall be made available to conduct research;

That the Limpopo Provincial Government must ensure that government officials that are responsible for research do participate in innovation programmes;

That the provincial research initiatives must be well coordinated to avoid duplication of research and research coordinators and research practitioners must be well trained in research methodologies to conduct quality in-house research;

That research coordinators, research managers and research practitioners must always be well informed of all research and development strategies and the related policies developed or to be developed in future; and,

That each provincial government department ensures that it has a full functional directorate that is well resourced in terms of personnel, financial and skills, and develop research collaboration policy with academic and research institutions.