

**SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING PERFORMANCE
IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO
GREATERLETABA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Thato Seopetsa, Student Number: 14014018, declare that this dissertation, titled “*Skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality*”, hereby submitted by me for the degree of Master of Administration at the University of Venda, has not been submitted previously for a degree at this University, or any other University and that this is my own work in design and execution, and that all reference materials contained therein have been duly acknowledged.



18 June 2021

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This study focuses on Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government. The focus area is the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. Lack of skills is one of the factors identified as being responsible for poor performance in many municipalities in South Africa in the Auditor-General of South Africa's report of 2019. According to this report, evidence of poor performance of most municipalities is largely due to poor service delivery and infrastructure backlogs. The Skills Development Plan is a tool which was developed to enhance performance in service delivery and infrastructure development. Effective service delivery and infrastructure development will improve the quality of life of all South Africans, especially the poor.

This study followed the mixed methods, in which both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were used. The mixed method was used to investigate the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. Quantitative research methodology was used in this study because it enabled the researcher to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data to be transformed into usable statistics. Qualitative research methodology was used because it covered issues in great depth and detail, and it allowed the researcher to interact with the research subjects. The researcher used the contextual and descriptive design for the study, while the sampling of respondents was done through non-probability sampling, under which the sub-type, purposive or judgmental sampling was used to collect the data. Purposive sampling was chosen because the researcher wanted to use her judgement to select a sample that is most useful to the purposes of the research. Two instruments; namely, questionnaires and interviews were used to collect the data. The reason for selecting structured questionnaires and open-ended interview schedule is that the researcher wanted to collect the primary data to obtain relevant information about the study. The researcher used descriptive statistics and thematic analysis for data analysis. Finally, the researcher adhered to the research ethics.

The Major findings of the research study are:

The study findings discovered that majority of the respondents at ninety (90) constituting 90% responded that skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents, 88 who constitute 88% indicated that skills development programmes are properly coordinated. It was found that the majority of respondents, 80 who constitute 80% affirm that municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes. The findings attest that the skills development plan play a role in filling the skills gap, training and developing the municipal officials' scarce skills according to the plan and also in terms of career development for the municipal officials to perform work better. The study

found that budget constraints, time and poor skills audit are the challenges of implementing the skills development plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality.

The recommendations of the research study are as follows:

The researcher recommends that the municipality should identify municipal officials who at all categories are struggling to operate and maintain their services standard and infrastructure in a cost-effective and sustainable manner and train them. The researcher recommends that the skills development programmes will be properly coordinated when municipal actors collaborate to achieve skills development goals and consequently ensure that the skills development programmes are linked to the organisational objectives. The researcher recommends that there is a need for mentorship in the municipality as a means of encouraging municipal officials to attend skills development programmes with the intention of supports in improving the welfare of communities. The researcher recommends that training of administrative and political component, technical staff and managers in both “hard” technical skills, as well as “soft” skills development including supervision, leadership, organising, coordination, monitoring and control are further required. The researcher recommends that the municipality should overcome the capacity challenges and manage unsatisfactory performance in several ways such as achieving targets on a regular basis with limited time, money and human resources who are not allowed to work every day to comply with the COVID-19 regulations.

Key Words: Local Government; Municipality; Performance; Plan; Skills Development and Training

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACELG	Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIT	Agreement on Internal Trade
ANC	African National Congress
ARMTI	Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institution
ASCON	Administration Staff College Of Nigeria
ATR	Annual Training Report
BCE	Before Common Era
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BTVET	Business, Technical and Vocational Educational Training
CAF	Canadian Apprenticeship Forum
CCDA	Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship
CDWs	Community Development Workers
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CET	Continuing Education and Training
CFO	Chief Financial Officers
CPF	Compte Personnel de Formation
CMD	Center for Management Development
COGTA	Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs
Constitution, 1996	Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)
COSATU	Congress of South African Trade Unions
DA	Democratic Alliance
DBSA	Development Bank of South Africa
DCoG	Department of Cooperative Governance
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
DTA	Department of Traditional Affairs
EPS	Employer Perspectives Survey
ETD QMS	Education, Training and Development Quality Management System
FE	Further Education
FET	Further Education and Training
FLC	Foundational Learning Competence
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GET	General Education and Training
HDR	Human Development Report
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HET	Higher Education and Training
HETIs	Higher Education and Training Institutions
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HR	Human Resources
HRD	Human Resources Development
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
HRM	Human Resource Management
HRDSF	Human Resource Development Strategic Framework
HRDS-SA	Human Resources Development Strategy of South Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IBM	International Business Machinery
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
ILGM	Institute for Local Government Management
IPM	Institute of Personnel Management
ITE	Institute of Technical Education
ITF	Industrial Training Fund
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDPs	Integrated Development Plans
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
KSG	Kenya School Of Government
LED	Local Economic Development
LGWSETA	Local Government and Water Sector Education and Training Authority
LGSETA	Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority
LOGOLA	Local Government Leadership Academy
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MECs	Members of the Executive Councils
MFMA	Municipal Finance Management Act
MOHRSS	Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NBTE	National Board for Technical Education
NDP	National Development Plan
NECC	National Education Crisis Committee

NTB	National Training Board
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NIM	Nigeria Institute of Management
NIPSS	National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies
NPM	New Public Management
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSG	National School of Government
NUMSA	National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa
MOE	Ministry of Education
OD-ETDP	Occupationally Directed-Education, Training and Development Practitioner
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFO	Occupational Framework for Occupations
OPCA	Organismes Paritaires Collecteurs Agréés
PALAMA	Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy
PET	Pre-employment Education and Training
PIVOTAL	Professional, Vocational, Technical and Academic Learning
PSE	Process Systems Enterprise
PSETA	Public Service Education and Training Authority
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SA	South African
SAIGA	South African Institute of Government Auditors
SALGA	South African Local Government Association
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDF	Skills Development Facilitators
SDP	Skills Development Plan
SETAs	Sectoral Education and Training Agencies
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SETAs	Sector Education and Training Authorities
SIWES	Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme
SKA's	Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes

SONA	State of the Nation Address
SPSS	Statistical Product and Service Solutions
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
U.S	United States
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VTE	Vocational and Technical Education
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This study focuses on Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. According to Statistics South Africa (2016:1), local government is the third sphere of government closest to its constituents. Because of its nearness to communities, it is expected that it is best-placed to understand the needs of the people, and hence provide municipal services and infrastructure to cater for these needs. Nekhavhambe (2017:iv) asserts that municipal residents, in particular, expect the delivery of services and infrastructure that are of acceptable standard. However, the performance of municipalities is not up to the required standard to enable them to meet these needs and the developmental goals of the state. This was confirmed by Mbeki and Phago (2014:204), who observed that there is a critical skills shortage which leads to underperformance in South African municipalities. Mukwevho (2015:94) posits that skills shortage of leadership (supervision), appropriate planning, finance (budgeting, prioritisation and supply chain management), strategic management, operations management (organising and coordinating), project management, technical, analytical, soft skills (creativity, complex problem solving, relationship building, teamwork, effective communication, and critical thinking), as well as emotional and spiritual intelligence skills contribute to poor performance in the municipalities.

Mbeki and Phago (2014:204) further contend that the shortage of skilled staff in key areas, such as engineering, accounting, finance, waste, water, sanitation and management, fails to deliver quality services and infrastructure to the municipal residents. Vivian (2015:1) is of the view that skills requirements need to be redefined, in order to improve the capacity of the people responsible for the administration and delivery of services and infrastructure. Furthermore, employees must possess a holistic skills set, which focuses equally on the emotional and spiritual intelligence required to deliver and motivate municipal officials with the requirements of their work. Tshilongamulenzhe and Coetzee (2013:18) state that it is necessary for the local government to train and develop the skills of their personnel, for the improvement of individual, team and organisational performance for the ultimate achievement of state goals. Section 68 (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) stipulates that municipalities should develop their human resource capacity to a level that enables them to perform their functions and exercise their powers in an economical, effective, efficient and accountable way. On the basis of the above provision, it can be argued that municipal officials who are properly trained and developed would perform better and deliver quality services and infrastructure to meet the municipal goals.

This section focuses on the following aspects: introduction and background of the study and the problem statement. Special focus is on the aim of the study, objectives of the study with research questions set out as well. The significance of the study and delimitation of the study will also be addressed. Finally, the definition of operational concepts and the organisation of the study are presented.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The South African Workforce's Skills Development Plan has a long and interesting history of isolating the skills gap of the Black majority; thus, promoting the training needs and skills priorities of the White minority (Reddy, Borhat, Powell, Visser and Arends, 2016:15). Van Zyl (2018:60) argues that government policies before 1994 artificially skewed the skills base of the South African workforce towards a minority higher-skilled White segment and a majority lower-skilled Black segment. The inadequate skills development plan and skill imbalance within the labour force was caused by historically discriminatory legislations. This statement is supported by Vally and Motala (2014:1), who assert that under apartheid both the basic and post-secondary education and training sector was separate and unequal, and the vast majority of Black Africans had very limited access to education (basic or post-basic) or training or workplace-based learning. Groener (2014:2) concurs and contends that the current training and skills development in South Africa is premised on the struggle to abolish past imbalances and inequalities created by the apartheid regime.

Groener (2014:2) further posits that, after the 1994 democratic elections, the country had to reconcile and drive a transition process that would harmonise and mobilise all sectors of the economy in a new direction. These changes meant that government had to review training and skills development policies in both the private and public sectors. In the public sector, according to the White Paper on Training and Education (1995), government had to develop training and skills development legislations that would address past imbalances and promote equal access to skills development. These changes also affected the administration of municipalities in South Africa in terms of the Skills Development Plan. Unfortunately, Everatt (2014:205) contends that the Auditor-General's reports show the ineffective and inefficient administration of the municipalities, which raise concerns on the prevalent and implementation of the Skills Development Plans in the municipalities.

Venter and Landsberg (2013:151) observe that there have been dilemmas of local government in South Africa, such as the municipalities premised on the unrest of the 1980s, which left the urban governments with significant and indeed almost insurmountable problems. At the heart of the dilemmas at local government level were the shortage of skills,

lack of clear performance management policies and lack of professionalism. The Diagnostic Back to Basics Report across Municipalities (2014:3) put in place an action plan to deal with issues of human resource development at local government level. Ngobese (2017:20) points out that the former Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, Pravin Gordhan, tabled a Back to Basics Municipal Diagnostic Report and directed Provincial Members of the Executive Council (MECs) of Cooperative Governance to engage municipalities extensively on the strategic pillars of a turnaround strategy.

The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs' Annual-Report (2014:12) further states that the strategy focused on first putting people through a robust assessment of the performance of ward committees, financial and procurement management system, human resource and development and delivery of basic services. However, there are no managers and employees with the requisite skills to implement the Back to Basics Municipal Strategy (Ngobese, 2017:20). Political instability and divisions within the ruling African National Congress (ANC), cadre deployment, corruption, and a new phenomenon of coalition government by the municipalities have delayed the implementation of some key council resolutions, such as the appointment of Municipal Managers (Pretorius, 2017:7). This argument is supported by Ngobese (2017:20), who further indicates that due to cadre deployment and political interference, some decisions are delayed because of disagreement over candidates, as there is a trend by political parties to reward incompetent and unqualified people with strategic positions at municipal level.

Nekhavhambe (2017:v) asserts that the shortage of skills impacts negatively on municipalities' efforts to provide acceptable services, as it hampers the delivery of quality goods and services, which demonstrates the poor performance of municipalities. The Human Resource Management and Development Blueprint (2014:30) also maintains the view that the South African public service has been greatly and publicly criticised for poor performance, particularly on service delivery and infrastructure development, with specific reference to municipalities. In this regard, Phago (2013:37); and Mello (2013:127) advocate that the Skills Development Plan is important when it comes to the acquisition and assimilation of employees into the workplace. This is because after human capital acquisition, there is pressure to deliver services and infrastructure of the highest quality under limited resources. According to the South African Local Government Association (2015:9) for local government organisations, it is vital for municipalities to retain efficient and effective human resources because they are the government at the grassroots and they have a responsibility to account for service delivery and infrastructure development pertaining to the well-being of the local communities.

The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority Skills Plan Report (2012-17) on South African municipalities has indicated that the purpose of the Skills Development Plan in local government was to improve performance, enhance employee skills, develop councillors, involve traditional leaders, and ensure sustainable training and leadership programmes for line managers. The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority Skills Plan Report (2012-17) further noted that the training and skills development components were underdeveloped and lacked awareness of the requisite and critical skills needs forming part of the process of performance growth for employees. Cloete, Eigelaar, Fortuin and Sewell (2017:1) concur that the status of training and skills development in South African municipalities, as indicated in this context, is premised on the grounds that the human resource development systems to enhance the performance of managers and employees are underdeveloped. This raises questions on the current South African Skills Development Plan, on whether the plan meets the skills needs for addressing the consequences of poor performance or whether the plan is there for the sake of complying with the legislations.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The South African government has been instrumental in placing the Skills Development Plan of the South African workforce high on the national agenda of priorities (Erasmus, Loedolff and Hammann, 2010:1). After the advent of democracy, a plethora of policies and Acts were promulgated, including training and Skills Development Policies and Acts (Mohlala, 2011:7). The purpose of these policies and Acts is to show the need to have a compulsory Skills Development Plan in organisations (Reddy, Wildschut, Luescher, Petersen, Rust and Kalina, 2017:2). The policies and Acts which show that the skills development plan is compulsory at the local government, include Section 195 (1) (h) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) which stipulates that public administration must be governed by basic values and principles, such as good human-resource management and career-development practices, in order to maximise human potential, which must be properly cultivated. Section 2 (1) (a) of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) provides that municipalities should improve performance through giving employees prospects for acquiring new skills and knowledge by encouraging employers to use their workplaces as dynamic environment for learning. According to the National Planning Commission (2012:263), the National Development Plan (NDP)'s vision for 2030 is that South Africans should have access to education and training of the highest quality, characterised by significantly improved learning outcomes.

Despite the above legislative prescription, the current researcher believes that there are some challenges facing the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality with regard to implementing

the Skills Development Plan to enhance performance. Some of these challenges are inadequate attention paid to critical skills such as appropriate planning, leadership, financial management, supply chain management, strategic management, operations management, and project management required by municipal officials, as well as associated accredited programs to build such skills (Anupama, 2018:10). This is confirmed by Maake and Holtzhausen (2015:269), who argued that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality's failure to conduct a skills audit to identify the skills and knowledge that the organisation requires, results in the municipal officials lacking skills to plan for water services with the available resources. Lack of capacity by municipal officials is also experienced in financial allocations, as there is a certain water infrastructure that receives a higher allocation but brings too little income or, at worse, nothing (Mopani District Municipality's Integrated Development Plan, 2011-2016).

The researcher also believes that the Skills Development Plan does not influence appointments and promotions in the municipality, where there is evidence of rampant incidents of irregular or inappropriate appointments and promotions, coupled with political influence and nepotism. Mohale and Kanjere (2019:658) support the researcher's viewpoint by stating that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality has several cases of alleged corruption and nepotism, wherein a municipal councilor was found to influence the appointment of a relative to an administrative position. This raises concerns on why the municipality should value skills development plans when they are not an influential factor in appointments and promotions. An additional challenge identified by the Auditor-General of South Africa reports (2019), also found by Sheoraj (2015:92), is that municipal role players fail to implement skills development plans. This is because on many occasions municipal officials even ignore the Auditor-General's recommendations on improving the audit outcomes, which are linked to improved performance through investment in training and skills development programmes.

In support of the researcher's opinion, scholars such as Van der Westhuizen, Wessels, Swanepoel, Erasmus and Schenk (2016:1) argue that some political office-bearers and officials still resist the investment of time and money in training, while funds allocated for training and skills development are used for other purposes. In other words, the Skills Development Plan is not properly implemented because funds are shifted to other uses and there are insufficient planned financial statements for training programmes. The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) further states that the skills development plan is not regarded and treated as a strategic priority. In many cases, skills development plan is delegated to middle management, with limited accountability at the executive leadership level (LGSETA, 2013:51). The exacerbating challenge, as pointed out

by the Public Service Commission (2011:10), is that other managers fail to release their employees to attend planned training and skills development interventions on the pretext that they are workloaded. In this regard, there is a common perception that municipalities are failing to implement the Skills Development Plan which is the best alternative for improving performance.

Vivian (2015:1) agrees with the researcher's viewpoint by stating that the skills development plan is much more than personnel issues. In addition, equipping staff is an integral factor in effectively overcoming these challenges. There is enough research on performing governments around the globe to proclaim that with the right skills, even the worst performing governments can be transformed. However, organisations must spend their efforts on the mechanics of the system and not the humans behind the system. Hence, the system which is emphasised in this context is the proper implementation of the skills development plan (Jehanzeb and Bashir, 2013:244).

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to assess whether the Skills Development Plan can positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance and recommend mechanisms which can be used to enhance performance at the local sphere of government.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following were the objectives of the study:

- To determine the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality.
- To evaluate the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance.
- To find out the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the GreaterLetaba Local Municipality.
- To recommend mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions of the study:

- What is the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality?
- What is the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance?
- What are the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the GreaterLetaba Local Municipality?

- What mechanisms can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan?

1.7 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important to researchers, as it stimulates the development of new theories or ideas about the challenges facing municipalities with regard to the implementation of skills development plans and appropriate suggestions to overcome such challenges. Therefore, researchers such as Ngobese (2017:ii) had questions pertaining to how challenges in training and skills development can be addressed in rural-district municipality and other South African municipalities. This shows that this study was worth investigating because it will help researchers and future researchers on putting the debate of skills deficit to the attention of the municipalities. These will provide appropriate recommendations. Furthermore, this study highlights new developments emerging within the field of skills development; thus, benefiting human resources practitioners and theorists. Sebola (2013:1) agrees with the current researcher by stating that human resource development practitioners and theorists of training and skills development should learn how to apply training, skills development, and educational concepts in addressing contextual challenges to their day-to-day operations. According to the study conducted by Sibanda (2018:6), research studies pertaining to skills development will add value to the already existing body of knowledge, and used as a point of reference in the field of Public Administration and sub-field of Public Human Resource Management.

This study will also add value to the scholarly literature on skills development in local government. The Local Government Seta Skills Plan Report (2012:17) indicated that there were no specific studies on training and skills development directed at local government level in organisations responsible for the skills development. Most studies are directed at the private sector. Plant (2016:1) reiterates that the literature on the development of skills and competencies within the public sector is limited. The Local Government Seta Skills Plan Report (2012:17) further asserts that there is weak training and skills development systems in most of the country's municipalities. For this reason, this study may enlighten municipalities on concerns such as whether the municipalities' current skills development plan is addressing critical skills needs or not. Erasmus, Schenk and Tshilongamulenzhe (2014:562) state that the investment in human resource development should be playing a much more prominent role in South African organisations, today and in the future.

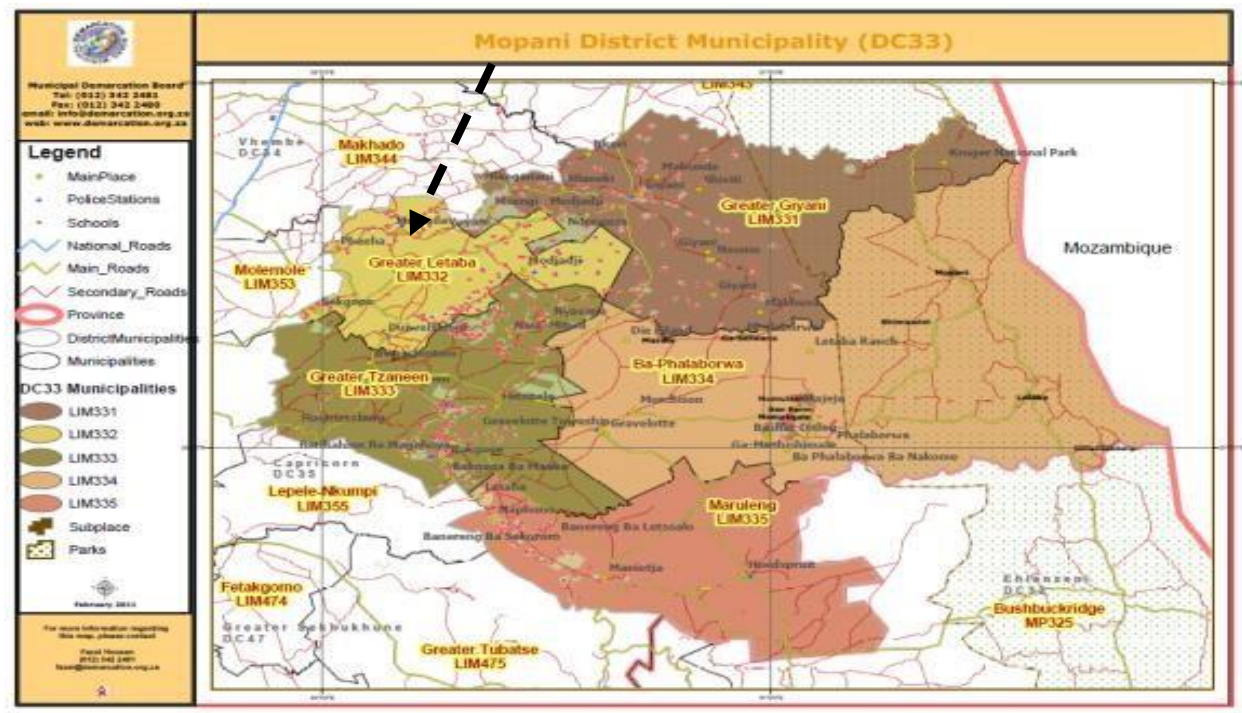
The Presidential Local Government Summit (2014:3) noted that most municipalities do not have the proper training and skills development programmes to motivate employees to remain afloat and become productive in their day-to-day activities. This study will thus assist policymakers to draw policies for municipalities, in order to determine the skills development

needs for the whole South Africa. The study findings will benefit government institutions, especially the municipalities, by providing them with possible solutions to address skills deficit challenges, which negatively affect quality service delivery. This is because South African municipalities are key institutions that are close to the heart of communities and therefore, their employees form the cornerstone of service delivery to communities (Ngobese, 2017:15). Hence, researchers such as Sibanda (2018:6) states that municipalities in South Africa should strive towards the enhancement of service delivery and there is no way this constitutional mandate will find fulfilment without building the capacity and the competence of the employees. Furthermore, the insights from the study might help the private sector with information that would help them improve productivity and efficiency. According to Werner, Schuler and Jackson (2012:240), skills development plan is often used in companies for the purpose of improving its workforce and its business strategy. This could be achieved if these organisations adopt the results of the study.

1.8 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The researcher conducted this study at Mopani District Municipality. Therefore, it is limited to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality, which is a rural-based municipality. This makes the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality a strategically positioned place to investigate training and skills development pertaining to this research. The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is one of the five local municipalities in the Mopani District Municipality. The others are BaPhalaborwa, Greater-Giyani, Greater-Tzaneen and Maruleng. The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is situated in the North-Eastern quadrant of the Limpopo Province. The gates to the municipal area are considered to be Sekgopo in the West and Modjadjiskloof in the South, Mamaila-Kolobetona in the North and Makgakgapatse in the East. The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality incorporates the proclaimed towns of Modjadjiskloof, and Ga-Kgapane, situated in the extreme South of the municipal area, and Senwamokgope towards the North-West of the area of jurisdiction (Greater Letaba Municipality's Draft Integrated Development Plan, 2017-2018:43).

Figure 1.1: Map of Mopani District Municipality, indicating the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality



(Source: Municipal Demarcation Board, October 2019).

1.9 DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL CONCEPTS

According to DePoy and Laura (2013:87), operational concepts define concepts by their functionality. Operational concepts require the researcher's own views or understandings of the concepts. Consequently, defining operational concepts helps researchers to focus on what they are going to discuss in the study. On the other hand, operational concepts clarify to the reader early on exactly what the researcher is talking about in the research (Little, 2016:1). In this regard, key concepts that include training, skills, development, skills development, plan, skills development plan, performance, local government, municipality, local municipality and Greater-Letaba Local Municipality will be defined below.

1.9.1 Training

Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda and Nel (2010:2) state that training is the organised activity aimed at imparting information and/or instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help him or her attain a required level of knowledge or skill. Du Plessis (2015:145) defines training as the acquisition of appropriate skills to a desired standard that can bring employees into a position where they can do their job correctly, effectively, efficiently and conscientiously that result in improved performance. According to the current researcher's understanding,

training refers to the technique used by employers to provide their employees with requisite skills needed to address skills shortages, to enable employees to perform to the required level in their job.

1.9.2 Skills

William, O'Donohue and Fisher (2012:13) contend that skill is the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in execution or performance. The Green Paper on Skills Development Strategy for Economic and Employment Growth in South Africa, 1997 defines skills as the necessary competencies that can be expertly applied in a particular context for a defined purpose. The current researcher defines a skill as an ability to perform tasks effectively and efficiently with the intentions of achieving the organisational goals.

1.9.3 Development

According to Fourie (2014:23), development is an inclusive term that can be regarded as a process of moving from a position of (unconscious) incompetence to a state of (unconscious) competence. The South African Board for Personnel Practice (2013:31) asserts that development can be regarded as the process by which long-term changes in thought and behaviour processes (competencies) are brought about as a result of formal and informal development experiences or practices. According to the current researcher's perspective, development is the process of providing ongoing learning opportunities so that employees can improve over a longer period and learn skills other than those required in their current jobs, which will enable them to perform better.

1.9.4 Skills development

Coetzee (2013:1) contends that skills development is the enhancement of employees' applied competence in their jobs by improving their knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes through formal education, training, and continuous development. Jacson (2018:1) states that skills development is a programme that is designed to increase skills, knowledge, efficiency, and productivity of the employees for carrying out any specific task in a much better way. In this study, skills development is understood to be the process of identifying the skill gaps and developing or sharpening those skills for meeting performance standards.

1.9.5 Plan

According to Power (2019:1), the concept of plan is a preliminary decision that may be adjusted and changed by circumstances before an action is actually executed. Allen, Kautz, Pelavin and Tenenberg (2014:1) define a plan as a proposed or intended course of action for accomplishing an objective. Based on the current researcher's understanding, a plan is a

directive course of action which explains in detail what needs to be done, when, how, and by whom, and often includes best-case, expected-case, and worst-case scenarios.

1.9.6 Skills Development Plan

Trautman (2017:1) states that the Skills Development Plan (SDP) is a schedule of skills and knowledge that must be learned in a given role and the resources available needed to ensure that the right knowledge is being transferred. Maclean, Jagannathan and Sarvi (2012:124) define the Skills Development Plan as a well-thought-out employee development plan that provides employees with opportunities and clear direction on how to increase their skills. According to the current researcher's perspective, Skills Development Plan is a set of developmental goals, with action steps, that articulates how the organisation is going to address the training and skills development needs in the workplace. The Plan further supports the organisation in the recognition and implementation of skills development programmes which specifically deals with existing skills gaps within the organisation. In this way, scarce and critical skills shortages are identified.

1.9.7 Performance

Nzambu (2015:1) defines performance as the accomplishment of a given task, measured against present known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. Korschun, Bhattacharya and Swain (2014:1) assert that performance refers to how well an employee performs at his or her work using its opposites, high and low. High performance entails the provision of high quality, cost effective and accessible services to the community, and low performance entails the opposite. The current researcher considers performance as the completion of a task with an expected level of requisite knowledge, skills and abilities necessitated in a given role and responsibility.

1.9.8 Local government

Ugwu (2016:182) states that local government is the third tier or level of government, deliberately created to bring government closer to the grassroots population and give these grassroots structures a sense of involvement in the political processes that control their daily lives. Reddy (2016:3) defines local government as an administrative and political subsystem that is tasked with the development and provision of municipal goods, benefits, activities and satisfactions that are deemed public, to enhance the quality of life in local jurisdictions. In this study, the researcher defines local government as a form of public administration which exists as the lowest tier of administration, with a given constitutional developmental mandate of serving the needs of communities at grassroots level.

1.9.9 Municipality

According to Thornhill (2012:57), a municipality can be defined as a political and administrative entity of the government, including the people that live within a specifically defined area, to uplift their communities. Section 2 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) defines a municipality as an organ of state within the local sphere of government consisting of political structures, office bearers and administration of the municipality. The researcher defines a municipality as an organisation deemed with political and administrative authority with intentions of improving the livelihood of the communities.

1.9.10 Local Municipality

Ndudula (2013:3) points out that a local municipality is an institution that signifies grassroots governance and local democracy, situated closer to the people, and more importantly, it is at the coalface relative to the delivery of basic services such as water, electricity, sewerage, sanitation and solid waste. Section 155 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) states that the Local Municipality is a Category B Municipality that shares municipal executive and legislative authority in its area with a Category C Municipality under whose area it falls. According to the current researcher's understanding, a local municipality is a municipality which includes rural areas, as well as one or more towns or small cities, characterised by a high rate of social ills, such as poverty and unemployment.

1.9.11 Greater-Letaba Local Municipality

The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is a Category B municipality situated in the Mopani District in the Limpopo Province wherein communities heavily rely on the municipality for the provision of services such as water and electricity supply (Mohale and Kanjere, 2019:652). According to Maake and Holtzhausen (2015:251), the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is the smallest local municipality in the district in terms of land area and is situated in the west of the Mopani District. The Municipality incorporates the proclaimed towns of Modjadjiskloof, Ga-Kgapane and Senwamokgope, which are situated in the South. The Municipality is characterised by contrasts such as varied topography, population densities and vegetation. The population of the municipality is denser in the north-east than in the south, whereas, vegetation is denser in the south (timber) than in the north (bushveld). The current researcher defines the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality as also stipulated by the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) and another scholar. The current researcher believes that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is a developing municipality with commercial farmland in the west and 108 mostly small settlements on communal land in the rest of the area.

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study consists of five chapters. These divisions were made in order to have systematic and logical presentation of tasks. The chapters of the study are presented as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of the study

Chapter one consists of the introduction and background of the study, problem statement, aim of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and definition of operational concepts as well as organisation of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter two reviews relevant literature on skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government. Focus is on the role of skills development plan in enhancing performance and challenges facing the municipalities as a result of poor skills. This chapter puts into context issues pertaining to the theoretical aspects and legislations relating to skills development plan. This review focuses on the endeavours provided by various scholars on the improvement of performance through skills development plans.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter three focuses on the research paradigm, design and methodology followed in conducting the research study. This section will also outline the study area, population of the study, sampling procedures used, sampling size, data collection methods, and pilot study. Two data analysis methods were used, that is thematic and statistical analysis. Ethical considerations and organisation of the study were followed in this study.

Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation

Chapter four will provide a detailed account of data analysis from field findings and the discussion of the findings. Two data analysis methods were used that is thematic and statistical analysis. The data collected through the questionnaire were analysed using a computer programme called International Business Machinery (IBM): Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), Latest Version 25.0. The data is presented in a graphical tabular form, frequencies and percentages. The data collected through interview will be analysed using thematic analysis. The information is grouped into themes, memos, and coding. In addition, the information will be presented in a narrative form.

Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Chapter five concludes and provides the following information: the summary of the research, conclusions and recommendations for further study. This chapter outlines the major findings on skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with

specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. It also presents the conclusion for the findings of the study. In addition it provides recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Mohapi (2011:88), successful researchers depend on a well-planned review of the available literature. A review of the literature is the way information about what is already known and not known is learned. This chapter reviews the literature relevant to skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government. The researcher reflects on the literature of prior research on the topic and the contribution of studies in skills development. The literature review focuses on the theoretical and legislative framework for the skills development plan within the scope of the research. This is because the researcher wants to identify what has already been done in the area of the skills development plan. Montero on Prezi (2016:32) states that the purpose of the literature review is to help the researcher and readers to understand the subject area better, thus gaining insight and understanding into the research problem. It also helps the researcher to find out what other researchers have found with regard to the same or similar questions, what theories have been put forward and what gaps exist in the relevant body of knowledge (Paré, Trudel, Jaana and Kitsiou, 2015:1).

Kumar (2014:51) asserts that a literature review attempts to determine what suggestions are made for further research. Therefore, the reason why the researcher reviews literature for this study is that the researcher wants to broaden the knowledge base in the research area (Snyder, 2019:333). This will enable the researcher's study to contribute to the discipline of Public Administration in the national and international arenas. The literature review will help the researcher to answer questions pertaining to whether the local government indeed fulfils its mandate with regard to the proper implementation of the skills development plans. It will also answer questions regarding whether municipalities' skills development plans are aligned with their development priorities and objectives. The significance of a literature review is that the researcher continues with the ongoing story or debate on skills development plan whilst adding new ideas and value to the story. There are four steps in a literature review, namely a search for current literature in the area of study, a review of selected literature, the development of a theoretical framework and the development of a conceptual framework. This process was followed in this study.

2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK THAT UNDERPINS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Theory helps to identify important aspects of a problem or a specific situation; predicts and investigates relationships between events; sets guidelines for determining and evaluating methods and sets criteria for the selection of important information for use in the decision

making process (Swanson and Chermack, 2013:14). In this regard, a theoretical framework is conceptualised as a structure that holds or supports the research study (Maxwell, 2013:36). It can be deduced that a theoretical framework introduces and explains the theory that shows that the study problem exists (Abend, 2013:1). This means that theories are important because they identify a problem which needs to be addressed. Consequently, this study advocates for theories of skills development which addresses a problem of poor performance through the implementation of skills development plan.

Ahmad, Jehanzeb and Alkelabi (2012:181) assert that skills development theories play a significant role in guiding and development of effective training programs, as organisational performance depends upon the employees' skills, knowledge, and experiences. Skills development plan utilises the theories of change and how they relate to the organisation. Milhem, Aróstegui and Abushamsieh (2014:1) suggest that training and skills development are also considered as continuous improving process that should be up to date to face the dynamic changes in workplace. There are several theories which emphasise on the importance of training and skills development in the organisation and provides different alternative methods for training and skills development. A discussion of six major theories of skills development is follows.

2.2.1 Social Learning Theory

Lack of the skills required to complete a task at an acceptable performance standard is one of the reasons for poor performance in organisations (Pillay, 2020:1). Thus, the current researcher believes that in order for the employees to acquire these skills required for completing a task at an acceptable performance standard; they have to undergo a process of learning. Mann (2009:1) argues that almost 60% of the people find learning uninteresting. This is because there is no spirit of socialising and motivation, which yield interaction that can make learning interesting. Shumba and Manzini (2014:5) indicate that the Social Learning Theory emphasises that people learn from their interactions with other people. This interaction promotes mentorship and observational learning, which are associated with the understanding of different human behaviors. Frank, Landy and Jeffrey (2010:324) confirm that the Social Learning Theory is at work when trainees are being mentored and instructed whilst learning the ropes, by watching more experienced colleagues performing certain tasks and behaving.

Frank *et al.*, (2010:324) further assert that the Social Learning Theory introduces the concept of role model. It suggests that people will seek to model themselves on others, who they perceive to be successful. Trainees will try to imitate the knowledge, skills and behaviours of their role models. They would have acquired these through mentorship, observation, and instructions, when they are approaching tasks. This will be advantageous for the trainees, to improve their performance. Therefore, the relevancy of the Social Learning Theory for this

study is that it promotes learning, coupled with socialising, which yields mentorship (Kurt, 2020:1). Hence, mentorship is a type of skills development plan where a wise and experienced employee or manager, who serves as a role model to an employee, identifies the performance gaps of the employee, and determines the skills needs of the employee through interaction and then decides how best to address them (Mkhonza and Letsoalo, 2017:9). This means that the mentor will know the strength and weaknesses of the mentee pertaining to his/her performance and then determine the best possible way to assist the employee to perform at the acceptable standard (Masango, 2011:1).

2.2.2 Cognitive learning theory

The Cognitive Learning Theory engages employees in the learning processes of utilising their brains and thoughts more effectively. On the other hand, Lawless (2019:1) is of the view that the Cognitive Learning Theory suggests that employees as the trainees are an active participants in the process who come to the table with their own skills, knowledge, memories and relevant information learnt in the past. When learning something new, employees process and construct their own understanding of an issue based on their past experiences and knowledge. Maxwell (2012:13) acknowledges this viewpoint by stating that the late great Roman leader Julius Caesar's proverb stipulates that experience is the best teacher. This proverb indicates the fact that people learn a lot of useful lessons from their own experiences. Therefore, cognitive learning theory is relevant to this study because it enforces utilisation of brains, thoughts and past experiences and knowledge more effectively (Ertmer and Newby, 2013:1). Hence, in this regard, municipal officials are the representatives of the communities they serve, and all their efforts must be directed towards improving the lives of the communities (Seate, 2016:9).

However, situations arise which do not allow municipal officials to meet the community expectations and the real community needs (Molaba, 2016:6). This means that municipal officials should address their own understanding of an issue based on their past experiences and knowledge. Thus, municipal officials should be careful on how they address such issues, with reference to past experiences and knowledge, using their brains and thoughts because what worked for them in a previous situation might not work for them in a current situation. For this reason, municipal officials develop some analytical skills to help solve community problems and improve upon municipal performance (Public Service Commission, 2014:2). Analytical skills help municipal officials make right decisions essential for community development as they are held accountable for the decisions which they make. Mailovich (2019:1) points out that the President Cyril Ramaphosa in his State of the Nation Address (SONA) argued that in local government, as in all parts of the state, where systems fail there

must be accountability. Ramaphosa further emphasised that the government supported the call made by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) that they should professionalise local government and enhance the training of officials (SONA, 2019).

2.2.3 Cognitive decision-making theory

Bob (2014:69) states that cognitive decision-making theory is convenient to problem solving, decision-making and explanation. In other words, cognitive decision-making theory include the ability to analyse and reason, and to evaluate and decide. This theory is advantageous to organisations making critical decisions of improving performance. Doyle (2019:1) asserts that for example, important financial decisions will require analytical, critical thinking and creative skills for budgeting, prioritisation, and supply chain management. Cognitive decision-making theory assist employees to do specific tasks that require thinking. Hitchcock (2018:1) agrees that critical thinking about causes of poor performance, identifying alternatives of solving the problem of poor performance and deciding which of several possible solutions is appropriate. This requires the trainer to come up with brainstorming as a training strategy.

Puljak (2016:8) observes that brainstorming allows the trainer to ensure that employees as trainees participate by responding or presenting views on one topic. This technique encourages new ideas among trainees which would never have happened under normal circumstances. Rudy (2020:1) concurs that brainstorming is designed to generate new ideas and solutions. Trainees comes up with a long list of possible solutions without stopping to analyse which ones might be correct. This means that analysis itself is a good and necessary skill which employees can learn through brainstorming as it leads to solutions and usually enables employees to be creative in thinking (Kampylis and Berki, 2014:6). Analysis further establishes team building required for improving performance. Consequently, cognitive decision-making theory is relevant to this study because it allows employees to come up with new ideas on how to improve performance (Korzynski, 2013:1). For this reason, after brainstorming, employees as trainees will know that some decisions do not need one to possess only project management skills; thus they need one to also think critically on how a problem can be solved that arises throughout the project phases which would not hinder the completion of a project (Landau, 2019:1).

2.2.4 Cognitive Behavioural Theory

According to Braithwaite (2017:13), every organisation has its own unique culture. Therefore, organisational culture refers to the values, beliefs, norms, and behaviour of the organisation that ascertains the way in which employees and management operates. The dominant culture in organisations depends on the environment in which the organisation functions.

Heath (2006:16) points out that the quality of the employees' workplace environment impacts on their motivation level and hence performance. For this reason, Chandrasekar (2011:1) argues that the workplace environment that is set in place impacts employee morale, productivity, and engagement both positively and negatively. In other words, employees behave positively or negatively through interaction with the environment. Woods and West (2010:74) confirm that behaviourists believe that employees' responses to environmental stimuli shape their actions. Chandrasekar (2011:1) further asserts that the type of workplace environment in which employees operate determines whether organisations will prosper. If the environment is a learning environment which pursues skills development, employees' behaviours will change positively when they have undergone training and acquired new skills which enable them to perform better (Jehanzeb and Bashir, 2013:247).

The Cognitive Behavioural Theory shows its relevancy to this study because it promotes skills development as a plan which changes the behaviour of those trained. Nanzushi (2015:9) agrees that the objective of training is to achieve a change in the behaviour of those trained. Because there are many ways of overcoming deficiencies in employee performance at work, and training is one of them. Cherry (2019:6) states that strict behaviourists believed that any person can potentially be trained to perform any task, regardless of genetic background, personality traits, and internal thoughts (within the limits of their physical capabilities). Thus, this only requires the environment with a positive culture that promotes and encourages training and skills development. Consequently, the reality of this theory is seen in the municipalities wherein Manyaka and Sebola (2013:80) observed that municipal officials are involved in scandals pertaining to unethical conduct. Pretorius (2017:7) reveals that unethical behaviours of municipal officials manifests in high political in-fighting and instability, noncompliance with rules and regulations, high vacancy rates, high levels of incompetency among staff, inappropriate spending of public budgets, low levels of capital budget spending, compromised service delivery and a high level of community dissatisfaction that result in protests.

The study conducted by Mufamadi (2018:iv) contends that effective and efficient service delivery is negatively affected by unethical behaviour resulting in the waste of government millions of rands each year, money that could have been spent on delivering services. The fact that there is unethical behaviour in municipalities can be interpreted as a total absence of ethical culture in the behaviour of municipal officials. Mufamadi (2018:89) further maintains that public servant professionals must behave in a way that is acceptable to the rest of the community. Although these professionals cannot be expected to be perfect, they must strive to ensure that their conduct is consistent with what is valued as correct by the society.

Mafunisa (2000:81) supports this viewpoint by stating that professionalism promotes the development of a positive work ethic as it ensures that people who meet the relevant educational and training requirements, and share similar work values, are appointed and promoted to specific positions. Manyaka and Sebola (2013:80) suggest that emphasis therefore needs to be placed on ethics education and training. In addition, specific provisions should be made to ensure that all employees are trained in terms of public service ethics.

2.2.5 Adult learning theory

O'Neill (2019:1) states that adult learning theory, also known as andragogy, is a concept that has been around for years. Developed by Malcolm Knowles in 1968, adult learning theory is the concept of how adults learn and how their learning differs from children. This theory outlines the general ways in which adults perceive learning and how they prefer to be trained. As people grow older, they shift from being dependent to being more independent. Therefore, how adults prefer to learn changes from being instructor-led to a more self-directed approach (Pappas, 2013:1). This is because adults have lots of experience from which they draw knowledge and references. Hence, adults take from these experiences and learn from them. According to the Western Region Training Consortium (2011:6), the best way for adults to learn is through their interaction and talk about life experiences relating to the learning process. Adults want learning to be applicable to their everyday lives, instead of being general learning about a subject. Adults want to learn practical skills that would help them to solve problems and perform better.

The Adult Learning Theory is relevant to this study because it emphasises about adults as employees developing skills for the sake of solving organisational problems such as poor performance. As a result, adults develop analytical skills which enable them to reason (Darling-Hammond, Flook, Cook-Harvey, Barron and Osher, 2020:100). Adults want to learn for their own reasons, for example, to progress in work. In this regard, when it comes to learning, adults want or need to be involved in how their training is planned, delivered, and executed. Adults want to control what, when, and how they learn (Palis and Quiros, 2014:18). In this context, employees are adults who differ from children in learning. Memorising facts and information is not the right way for adults to learn. Adults need to solve problems and use reasoning to best take in the information they are being presented with and improve performance. This gives adults an opportunity to develop problem solving skills (O'Neill, 2019:1).

The study conducted by Wessels (2018:84) suggests that andragogy, the adult learning theory, must be taken into account when training municipal officials. This will ensure that the

different needs of the adult learners are considered during the training process, which is fundamental to the success of the training of the municipal officials. Smith (2017:1) concurs that it is deduced that the learner-centred approach should be followed when conducting a training programme for adult learners. In the case of the current study, the focus is on the training of municipal officials at the Greater Letaba Local Municipality, and as they are adult learners who are at the centre of the learning process, a learner-centred approach should be followed. These trainees should be considered throughout the learning process and should be given the opportunity to provide input in the planning of the learning, which will allow them to apply their existing knowledge in the learning process and implement their existing and new knowledge in the workplace (Grossman and Salas, 2011:1).

2.2.6 Experiential learning theory

Experiential Learning Theory was first explored by John Dewey (1859-1952), Jean Piaget (1896-1980) and Carl Rogers (1902-1987). However, the theory was made popular by educational psychologists David A. Kolb, who, along with Ron Fry, developed the experiential learning theory. According to Kolb and Fry, learning is a process whereby knowledge is created in the form of learning through action, learning by doing, learning through practical experience, and learning through discovery and exploration (Harwood, O'Brien, Goldberg, Allwood, Pilnick, Beeke, Thomson, Murray, Parry, Kearney, Baxendale, Sartain and Schneider, 2018:48). In this regard, experiential learning theory enables trainers to purposefully engage with trainees in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, and develop skills (Association for Experiential Education, 2011:2). This means that knowledge and skills is created through learning by doing, which is also known as hands-on learning (Patrick, 2011:1003). The general concept of learning through experience is ancient. Around 350 Before Common Era (BCE), Greek Philosopher Aristotle wrote in the *Nicomachean Ethics* "for the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them".

Consequently, Haynes (2007:1) states that experiential learning involves a number of steps that offer trainees collaborative and reflective learning experience which helps them to fully learn new skills and knowledge. Although learning content is important, learning from the process is at the heart of experiential learning. During each step of the experience, trainees will engage with the content, the trainer, each other as well as self-reflect and apply what they have learned in another situation. The association for experiential education (2011:4) further maintains that experiential learning is advantageous because throughout the learning process, the trainee is actively engaged in posing questions, investigating, experimenting, being curious, solving problems, assuming responsibility, and being creative. The relevancy

of experiential learning theory to this study is that it encourages the utilisation of practical skills which are necessary in the municipalities for infrastructural development. The Department of Cooperative Governance (DCoG) (2019:6) stipulates that capacity development programme ensures that technical capacity is developed in local government for planning, delivering, operating, and maintaining municipal infrastructure.

Capacity development is implemented through various programmes, including apprenticeships, young professionals, experiential learning and rotating key municipal officials to the private sector and academia for exposure. Bursaries are made available for studies in built environment, especially engineering, to build a pipeline of future technical officials for municipalities (Mukwevho, 2015:2). The programme also provides mentorship opportunities for technical officials in municipalities to meet the requirements for professional registration. Robinson (2017:3) argues that technical skills shortage in municipalities results in poor municipal service delivery, specifically largely due to a shortage of artisans, which are not being produced in sufficient numbers to operate and maintain municipal infrastructure. In this regard, artisans are highly skilled in working with their hands - the emphasis here is on practical skills. The Local Government Handbook of South Africa (2015:1) describes an apprenticeship as a learning programme that includes both structured learning and work experience at a practical level. Apprenticeships pertain to specific trades, and learners have to pass a trade test and awarded with a National Trade Certificate before being recognised as a qualified artisan. Apprenticeships include 'blue collar' trades, such as plumbing, fitting and turning, and electrician skills.

The theoretical component of the programme is normally conducted at a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) College or may be done through a learnership while practical training has to be completed at an approved workplace (LGSETA, 2016:23). This national qualification is governed by the Skills Development Act (Act No. 97 of 1998) and runs over a period of three years. As stated in the section on Work-Integrated Learning, the Council on Higher Education (2014:4) also includes apprenticeships in the list of programmes and activities that can fall under work-integrated learning.

2.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Nyoka, Du Plooy and Henkeman (2014:1), skills development today bears scars of the past. The challenges have a long history and are closely aligned to the socio-political events that have marked the past few decades in South Africa. The study conducted by Nhlabathi (2016:1) reveals that the history of skills development in South Africa dates as far back as before 1989 since the beginning of the industrialisation in the 19th century; and was

highly shaped and influenced by international factors through importation of mainly high-level skills. Until 1970, immigration of skilled whites mainly from European countries remained the biggest source of South Africa skills requirements. The South African Qualifications Authority (2014:1) reiterates that Skills development and the formal recognition of it is a topic that has been under discussion in the South African landscape for many years. The debate around the formal recognition of skills development dates back as far as the early 1970s when black unskilled workers sought training as a means to ensure a living wage. Godfrey (2018:22) found that the National Union of Metal Workers of South Africa (NUMSA) was the first to establish a research group comprising workers and union officials who formulated recommendations on training.

The recommendations included the need for basic education as well as the portability and national recognition of training so that workers would not be at the mercy of a single employer. The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) formally adopted this proposal in July 1991. Nhlabathi (2016:11) further agrees that Skills development in the country continued to evolve in the 70s through pressure brought about by the 1976 Soweto uprisings, the Riekert and De Lange Reports, and three (3) joints investigations conducted by the Human Science Research Council (HSRC) and the National Training Board (NTB). The root cause of these problems is highlighted by the Green Paper on Public Service Training and Education (1997:32) which confirms that under the Apartheid system, Whites were educationally most advanced, followed by the Indians, Coloureds and finally the Blacks. In the late 1970s, for example, more than 95% of the country's university graduates were members of the White community, which at the time constituted only 17% of the entire population. The South African Qualifications Authority (2014:1) further acknowledges this reality by stating that along with the skills development debates taking place in industry, the early 1970s also saw a growing demand for a change to the education sector, culminating in the 1976 nation-wide student protests, which eventually led to the entire education system been discredited and rejected by the 1980s.

The study conducted by Van Zyl (2018:54) supports the above statement by pointing out that the Soweto revolt set off a wave of student uprisings that spread throughout the country and could only be brought under control by the end of 1977. This culminated in Afrikaans being removed as a compulsory language of instruction and the offensive use of the word "bantú" being abandoned when the Department of Bantu Education was renamed, to the neutralsounding, Department of Education and Training. Yet, a proposal to create a single education ministry was rejected. Beauzac (2010:41) observed that during 1979, the Education and Training Act repealed the Bantu Education Act and its subsequent amendments. However, the Education and Training Act still maintained the segregationist model by providing specifically for the "control of education for Blacks", with "black person"

defined in terms of the Population Registration Act. Luruli (2014:29) indicates that during 1980, the government requested the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) to perform an in-depth investigation into education provision in South Africa, and make recommendations on an education infrastructure to provide for the manpower requirements of the Republic of South Africa (RSA) and a programme for making available education of the same quality for all population groups.

Van Zyl (2018:54) further argues that the following year, in 1981, the HSRC proposed four policy guidelines for the systematic implementation of a programme to attain education of equal quality for all inhabitants by the reduction and elimination of demonstrable inequality in the provision of education available to members of the different population groups. These policy guidelines were the progressive provision of adequate means to enable every inhabitant to obtain the essential minimum of knowledge, skills and values, will be recognised and maintained as the highest priority in the programme for the provision of education. Conradie (2013:47) is of the view that therefore, the Manpower Training Act 56 of 1981 was enacted in response to the findings of the Commission of Enquiry into Labour Legislation, under the chairmanship of Prof NE Wiehahn (Wiehahn Report); and the Commission of Enquiry into Legislation Affecting Manpower Utilisation (except legislation administered by the Departments of Labour and of Mines), under the chairmanship of Dr P Riekert (Riekert report), in the late 1970's. Joseph (2016:34) asserts that the act repealed inter alia the 1944 Apprenticeship Act, the Training of Artisans Act, the Bantu Employees' In-service Training Act and the In-Service Training Act 95 of 1979.

Van Zyl (2018:55) furthermore asserts that at the time of implementation of the reports, 39.9% of urban Black males had no form of education and 82% of those with an education had only primary education. Only 0.3% of urban Black males had any form of tertiary education. The Manpower Training Act represented the so-called "opening up of South African society" which De Villiers (2003:40) explained it as the provision that all classes of labour should have access to all facilities and opportunities, and the removal of all institutions, processes and situations that give any form of advantage or preferential treatment to any class of worker, irrespective of whether the advantage is linked to colour, sex, or ethnic affiliation. The emphasis in the new dispensation is therefore on justice, fairness and equality. Joseph (2016:34) further maintains that the Manpower Training Act prohibited any differentiation between "any class, group, section, or type of employers or employees" "on the basis of sex, race or colour. "Apprentice", "employee" and "trainee" were all defined in a racially neutral manner. In the early 1980's student rebellions broke out with renewed verve across the country, starting in the Eastern and Western Cape, and then spreading to the Southern Transvaal and Northern Free State.

Van Zyl (2018:56) continue to add that in 1985 the government declared a state of emergency in regions of the Southern Transvaal, Northern Free State and Eastern Cape, as hundreds of thousands of students boycotted their schools; frequent, violent clashes with police became frequent; and students called for “Liberation before Education” and 1986 to be “The Year of No Schooling”. In 1981, 250 578 black students reached Standard 8; by 1984 the number decreased to 109 968. The following year, only 64 806 black students reached Standard 10 (Moloi, 2012:22). In an attempt to quell the escalating unrest, a Ministry of National Education was created to co-ordinate the restructuring of black education along with a progressive increase in government expenditure on black education, but the government had lost its credibility among students. In 1985 the National Education Crisis Committee (NECC) was formed by members of the Soweto Parents’ Crisis Committee, the National Education Union of South Africa and the African Teachers’ Association of South Africa (Tomlin, 2016:851).

The organisation campaigned a strategy that encouraged students to advocate for transformation from within the school system rather than from outside it, whereby the approach was referred to as “People’s Education for People’s Power” (Tomlin, 2016:851). By January 1987, the NECC had successfully encouraged the majority of striking students to return to school. The same year the NECC convinced students to return to school, the Committee for Economic Affairs on a Strategy for Employment Creation and Labour-Intensive Development reported. The report stated that the employment potential of the economy is directly affected by the employability of the country’s labour force; and education and skills extend the usefulness of job seekers (Mathebula, 2013:7). The Committee stresses that equal education for all population groups is a requirement, and further also that the best and full use should be made of all educational facilities to eliminate the large backlogs experienced by Asians, Coloureds and Blacks in education (Van Zyl, 2018:57).

Allais (2012:1) points out that after 1994, all of the above developments and negotiations gave rise to the establishment of the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008 (NQF) and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which boosted the Skills Development Act (SDA), 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999). The promulgation of the aforementioned two key skills development legislation created institutional arrangements and frameworks to facilitate implementation skills development in the country and put mechanisms in place for funding of skills development initiatives driven by government (Reddy, Wildschut, Thierry, Petersen, Rust and Kalina, 2017:4). The SDA in particular brought about the establishment of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). To support the implementation of the aforementioned key pieces of legislation, the Human Resources Development Strategy of South Africa (HRDS-

SA) and the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) 1,11 and 111 were developed in order to set performance measures to assess progress made by these SETAs (Ward, 2019:15).

The current researcher is of the view that the historical roots for a skills-driven society has paved a way for a current skills development plan in South Africa. Hence, the current researcher's worrisome is that skills development plan should become the major priority of the government involving the Non-Governmental Organisations, and the private sector (Darko, 2014:7). The government should not wait for crises such service delivery protests and poor audits reports in order to put more emphasis on the proper implementation of the skills development plan (Managa, 2012:4). This current skills agenda, despite no longer being based on the segregationist system of apartheid should continue to dominate educational planning and transformation in South Africa today (Mzangwa, 2019:4). This is because skills development plan was not initiated in vain, there are great people who fought hard whereby blood, and sweat came out for its existence. Vally and Motala (2014:1) warn people against the danger of reducing educational provisioning to meet narrow economic ends and invite educators, researchers and society at large to broaden the horizon of thinking through greater theoretical introspection and through reflection on the broader social mission of post-school education in the country.

2.4 CONCEPTUALISING TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

This section analyses training and skills development. These two concepts are used to correct the skill deficit. Obisi (2011:1) supports this viewpoint by stating that the former is for precise job purposes, while latter goes beyond specifics. This means that training is seen as an event; it starts and ends within a short period of time, while skills development is an on-going process that extends throughout an employee's career (Masadeh, 2012:63). This reveals that training and skills development promotes employee job performance and personal development. On the other hand, Raheja (2015:35) points out that training and skills development is an important function of Human Resource management. It aims to improve employees' skills by making them learn new techniques of doing work. Rafiei and Davari (2015:35) are of the view that training and skills development helps to update employee's knowledge of doing work which results in increasing their efficiency and hence, results in increasing productivity of an organisation. Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013:243) argue that since human resource is the most important asset of an organisation so, making best use of them is possible with the help of training which leads to organisation's development.

2.4.1 Training

Training forms an important feature in human resource development and of organisational development (Prasad, 2012:4). This statement is supported by Heathfield (2016:1) who points out that training forms part of human resource development, which is referred to as the provision of the various abilities, knowledge and personal and organisational skills that enable a person to function effectively within an organisation. The concept of training has gained more popularity in human resources due to its positive association with employee performance (Kiweewa and Asiimwe, 2014:1). Training is an aspect of capacity building in any organisation that is carried out to improve staff performance and to enable an organisation to meet its objectives (Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan and Hashim, 2014:1). Training is a type of activity, which is planned, systematic and its results enhance the level of skills and knowledge that are necessary to perform work effectively (Sultana, Irum, Ahmed and Mehmood, 2012:1). Training is mainly concerned with the improvement and upgrade of the skills and knowledge of the employees, which ultimately adds into the job performance (Azeem, Rubina and Paracha, 2013:1). Hence, Nawaz, Masoodul and Saad (2014:1) are of the view that training is one way of increasing an individual's productivity. In the training process, employees acquire technical skills, interpersonal skills, and solid knowledge in order to perform their jobs efficiently and effectively at the workplace and lack of ongoing training programs leads to lower performance of employees.

According to Elnaga and Imran (2013:1), training not only develops the capabilities of the employee but sharpen their thinking ability and creativity in order to take better decision in time and in more productive manner. Training also enables employees to deal with the customer in an effective manner and respond to their complaints in a timely manner. Therefore, in order to prepare workers to do their job as desired, organisations provide training so as to optimise their employee's potential (Kiweewa and Asiimwe, 2014:1). Most of the organisations, by applying long-term planning, invest in building new skills, knowledge and changing the attitudes of their workforce, enabling them to cope with the uncertainties that they may face in future, thus improving employee performance (Elnaga and Imran, 2013:1). The study conducted by Hameed and Waheed (2011:1) reveals that a well-trained and highly motivated employee may work with less supervision because of the skills and confidence they possess and thereby reduce cost of supervision. The impact of well-trained and highly responsible workforce is capable of improving the organisation's efficiency through their cordial relationships with customers. Maina (2014:155) supports this view by stating that training has evolved due to the pressure placed on quality services and customer service, and to organisations realising the contribution of training to organisational success and improved performance.

Wessels (2014:147) asserts that it can be argued that training improves employee performance only when it is properly done and through proper identification and selection of trainees, timely scheduling of trainings and based on the gaps identified in the areas of knowledge, skills, abilities and change of attitude of the concerned staff. By doing so, training generates benefits for the employee, as well as for the organisation by positively influencing employee performance through the development of employee knowledge, skills, ability, and behaviour. Veeran (2011:1093) suggests that training should be made available to employees to sustain an effective workforce that possesses the necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours to deliver effective and efficient services to the public. Qwabe (2013:33) concurs that employees should be trained and retrained to ensure efficient and effective employees who provide excellent services to citizens.

Blanchard and Thacker (2013:21) state that institutions invest a lot of money in training as properly trained personnel end up yielding positive and acceptable results in terms of their productivity and performance. In this regard, Andriotis (2019:1) asserts that the more focus should be placed on assessing current training programmes, meaning that an organisation should provide guidelines on how to conduct and evaluate training. This is because the effective evaluation of training in an organisation and the continued monitoring of the training are fundamental to continued quality service delivery, improved performance, and the success of the organisation.

2.4.1.1 Types of training

According to Surbhi (2019:1), nowadays, training has become the core requirement for organisations to develop specific skills in their existing and prospective employees. This is because apart from formal education, employees still require skills training in order to fit well into the job market (Mafunisa and Tsanwani, 2011:82). There are two types of training for imparting workers with skills; namely, on-the-job training and off-the-job training. As their name suggests, the former refers to the training imparted at the actual job location involving 'hands-on' training, whereas the latter method involves giving training to the employees at a place other than the real job location. Berman, Bowman, West and Van Wart (2010:256) are of the view that in planning a training programme, a trainer has to decide which type of training will be used. The choice will depend on the type of information to be communicated to the trainees and on the training intervention strategies information and minimise the training costs to the organisation. The two types of training are discussed below.

2.4.1.1.1 On-the-job training

On the-job training refers to workplace-based training that uses real jobs as a basis for instruction and for practical purposes (Tripney, Newman, Hovish and Brown, 2012:1). On-the-job-training is a well-known training strategy that is used often as it can be tailored to meet the needs of a specific job. This type of training can be sporadic or continuous and requires constant guidance, monitoring and feedback to ensure that employees learn the skills required to effectively perform their jobs. This strategy requires a planned approach, and it can sometimes be complemented by training in the form of formal instruction. On-the-job-training is normally used in the case of new recruits but can also be used when employees are appointed to new positions, when job responsibilities change or when technology used in the workplace changes. Lussier and Hendon (2013:256) suggest that one-the-job training should be provided by an experienced employee who has the knowledge and skills the trainee requires to perform the job. Berman *et al.*, (2010:283) points out that this method is favoured as it is a cost-effective manner to transfer important job knowledge and skills.

(a) Induction/Orientation

According to Dragomiroiua, Hurloiuia and Mihaia (2014:369), induction is initial training or orientation of the employees. This is a training which is imparted to a new employee at the time when he or she joins the organisation. This training is imparted to new employees to build up their confidence in the organisation and to give them information about the various procedures, rules and regulations. These new employees are introduced to their work environment and the fellow employees in order to promote a feeling of belongingness and loyalty amongst them. Nel, Werner, Poisat, Sono, Du Plessis, Ngalo, Van Hoek and Botha (2013:210) assert that, induction helps employees to feel welcome into their new employment and this results in job satisfaction and reduces chances of a high turnover. On the other hand, Nassazi (2013:26) points out that induction involves getting new employees familiarised and trained on the new job within an organisation. During this process, new employees are exposed to different undertakings for example the nature of their new work, how to take on their identified tasks and responsibilities and what is generally expected of the employees by the organisation.

Tutara, Nartb and Bingölc (2015:711) specify that new employees are further given a general overview of the organisational working environment including for example working systems, technology, and office layout, briefed about the existing organisational culture, health and safety issues, working conditions and processes. Moreover, Nassazi (2013:26) further alluded that service condition, various amenities available, hours of work, goods produced, techniques of productions and quality of the products are made known to the new recruit

during induction period. Blanchard and Thacker (2013:376) suggest that induction training must be able to provide information to the new employees on the institution's history, culture and what the strategic vision of the institution is. Orientation can take half a day or full day depending on how the programme is designed. Some programmes can even take a week or more by sorting out time in between work schedules. Conducting orientation over a longer period of time helps to avoid information overload. Nel *et al.*, (2013:208) further states that induction is of paramount importance in the sense that it provides newly appointed employees with information which is basic about the institution and the requirements of their jobs and the skills they must possess in order to perform their duties successfully. Induction assists in relieving newly appointed employees off stress and nervousness exacerbated by uncertainty and the unknown prospects.

Therefore, if induction is properly planned and executed according to set specifications in a professional manner, fear and any other thing associated with uncertainty can be easily alleviated thereby leaving the worker more focused and productive. This in a way could help to integrate the employee into the organisation easily. About three approaches can be followed and used to induct workers, *viz.* verbal, written and audio-visual, the last being a combination of the first and second (Nel *et al.*, 2011:209). The study conducted by Dessler, Barkhuizen, Bezuidenhout, De Braine, Du Plessis, Nel, Schultz, Stanz and Van der Waldt (2011:255) indicated that the human resources department has a very important responsibility of preparing a well-planned induction programme. Mchete and Shayo (2020:294) maintain that the new terminology currently being used to refer to induction is "onboarding". Besides the fact that employees need to be acquainted with rules, regulations and any other important aspect of their work, emotional attachment to the organisation is one of the important things that induction needs to achieve. Guiney (2015:7) discovered that today's organisations have started to utilise technology for induction. Employees are given technological gadgets like tablets and laptops pre-loaded with everything an employee will need to know about his/her new employer and colleagues.

Dessler *et al.*, (2011:257) further argues that this affords employees access to important information like the vision and mission of the institution, not excluding policies and procedures the employee will need to master in order to do his/her job professionally and diligently anytime even after the official work periods. Nel *et al.*, (2013:210) furthermore denotes that induction is advantageous to the organisation in the sense that when employees are properly introduced into the organisation, one can rarely be absent from work and the employee quickly fits into the job easily. According to Ncube (2016:81), induction also helps the employee to see and understand the bigger picture and goals of the institution; have a better understanding of institutional policies and procedures; integrate the newly appointed official into the team; and cultivate an amicable employer-employee relationship.

(b) In-Service training

According to Mirrezaei, Ayoubi, Mosallanejad and Mousavifard (2018:136), training is not just completed through universities, but it includes in-service trainings. In-service training is systematical teaching to employee's necessary knowledge, skills, and behaviours during their work life (Rahmati, Hosseinifard and Alimadadi, 2014:308). In-Service training, like the other forms of training, it aims to update the employee's capabilities. Sarboland and Aghayi (2012:2698) support this viewpoint by stating that in-service training has been found to be helpful in positively influencing employees' personal abilities, loyalty, and their overall organisational commitment. The study conducted by GaniNia, Gilaninia and Sharami (2013:1) reveals that in-service training instils feelings of competence, efficacy, trust, and empowerment in employees. Sammak, Nia, Shafiee and Fahim (2013:1055) reiterate that inservice training has a positive impact on workers' operations and imparts a sense of confidence, competence, and effectiveness. Dzomeku (2016:109) maintains that in-service training enables trainees to build on and put into practice the competences learned during their training. It is most effective when it is used to train new employees who are often illprepared or employees who are newly promoted to the rank of supervisors and managers.

Mirrezaei *et al.*, (2018:136) further assert that the role of in-service training opportunities and their various social aspects in life has encouraged organisations to achieve higher productivity by making benefit of in-service training classes for employees, managers in organisations and institutions. Ahmadi (2014:1) is of the view that in-service training is a strategy by which any organisation hopes to elevate its efficiency. Chaghari, Saffari, Ebadi and Ameryoun (2017:27) point out that it should be proved to managers and the top officials that in-service training may assist the whole organisation to reach higher productivity. This is particularly true with the ongoing developments in science and technology and their influence on cultivating the knowledge and skills base of employees into the highest level.

Ahmadi (2014:1) further argues that some scholars believe training management as a major factor which brings productivity and vitality to organisations. In training programs and during in-service training sessions, effects, characteristics of undesirable behavioural patterns should be clearly described. Ahmadi (2014:1) furthermore indicates that managers gradually notice the importance of training to employees in different aspects; the training assists the organisation to immediately and at the right time bring their ideas into practice facing a changing market. Training employees can positively increase productivity and job satisfaction. Mirrezaei *et al.*, (2018:138) furthermore emphasised that it is recommended that in-service training classes be held continuously which increases job satisfaction among employees and augments employees' performance.

(c) Job Shadowing

According to Heathfield (2020:1), job shadowing is a type of on-the-job employee training in which a new employee, or an employee desiring to become familiar with a different job, follows and observes a trained and experienced employee. Job shadowing is an effective form of job training for certain jobs. On the other hand, Bolliger (2018:1) asserts that when a new employee, or an employee job shadow, he follows a professional employee through his workday, as though he is the professional's shadow. Heathfield (2020:1) further confirms that the interesting point about this training is that the new employee, or an employee spend a given amount of time with the experienced professional in their workplace or another department to learn about their day-to-day working life, ideally within a career field that matches his job description. Luenendonk (2019:1) concurs that during job shadowing a new employee, or an employee familiarise him/herself with another job which matches with his/her job description in order to acquire new skills that will improve his/her performance.

Heathfield (2011:1) maintains that job shadowing is essential when an employee wants to learn about a different job in an organisation. Job shadowing provides an understanding of the tasks associated with their work and thus a wide-ranging understanding of a particular job. The benefit of job shadowing is that new employees can build their confidence much faster and assume responsibilities in a much shorter time. The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2013:72) asserts that the new employee observes and experiences different situations, procedures, methods, and scenarios during the training period. This means that job shadowing is an appropriate way of introducing new staff to the organisation.

(d) Coaching

Raheja (2015:36) states that coaching is one-to-one training. DeSimone and Werner (2012:363) views coaching as a discussion between the supervisor and subordinate conducted on a face to face basis wanting subordinates to display desirable behaviours in the execution of their duties. A coach acts as a guide for trainees to discover new skills and knowledge based on former experience and impending opportunities. Erasmus, Loedloff, Mda and Nel (2015:1) support this viewpoint by stating that coaching reveals an individual's talent to maximise their own performance. This means that coaching can be used to improve employees' performance deficiencies and can also serve as a motivational tool for those carrying out their tasks satisfactorily. DeSimone and Werner (2012:550) further articulate that a coach can simply be equated with a tutor, who consistently observes a learner's work and actions, providing guidance on execution and teaching skills which may be lacking. Burley (2012:1) points out that coaching is essential for training young protégés earmarked for supervisory or leadership positions to enable them to gain knowledge for their future positions.

The study conducted by Passmore and Rehman (2012:1) found that learning occurs much faster with coaching compared with other methods. Coaching has the advantage of interpersonal interaction between the manager and the protégé. It involves regular, structured, and constructive feedback on progress made or needing to be made by the trainee. Coaching allows employees, especially those who are newly-hired, to imbibe a helpful attitude and organisational culture. Raheja (2015:36) further points out that coaching helps in quickly identifying the weak areas and tries to focus on them. Coaching is executed through listening, observation, talking, questioning and reflecting back to the concerned individuals. Scenarios where coaching can be effective include delegating, appraisals and evaluations, aligning management tasks with core values, staff development, problem solving, newly-promoted manager who is finding it challenging to execute in his/her new position. According to Blackwell (2014:1), coaching provides the trainee an opportunity to meet the high demands of managing a career and developing him/herself in addition to the requirements of the work that is being done.

Blackwell (2014:1) further emphasised that coaching helps the trainee to develop skills on how to manage their career through taking control of the process. Coaching also leads to a healthier worker manager relationship, through enhancing the quality of their relationship. Coaches can be employed by the same organisation such as the Human Resources department or another organisation. There are advantages for hiring coaches outside the organisation that can be obtained as a result of contracting other organisations such as the establishment of trust between the workers and the coach, which is crucial for the effectiveness of the process. Nel, Werner, Posait, Sono, Du Plesis and Ngalo (2011:379) suggest that the coach should always be in a position to provide questions and at the same time proper answers to such questions. Furthermore, coaching involves the offering of counselling to an employee in general. In this way, the work situation provides a learning opportunity to the worker. DeSimone and Werner (2012:364) furthermore indicates that a good coach's responsibilities include the gathering of data; the provision of feedback; motivating; making sure of getting results and providing leadership to colleagues by uniting the team. Erasmus *et al.*, (2015:1) further alluded that coaching can be used to unlock human potential in order to maximise performance.

(e) Mentoring

Erasmus *et al.*, (2015:271) state that mentoring is the developmental process that inexperienced employees undergo when they are taught by senior managers through continuous or intermittent coaching sessions to learn and advance in their careers. According to Buchanan, Raffaele, Glozier and Kanagaratnam (2016:25), the mentor assists the employee with long-term goals and objectives, the complex development of skills, provision

of help to carve out a career, provision of guidance, and the establishment of a personal and professional relationship that is founded on the principles of adult learning. This means that mentoring usually involves a relationship between a young or new employee and a more experienced person. DeSimone and Werner (2012:555) reiterate that mentoring is a relationship between a subordinate and a senior member of an organisation that positively contributes to the career development of both members. A mentor, on the one hand, must have broader experience about the institution and its functions and the ability to place an individual into assignments that will help with one's development. Blackwell (2014:1) asserts that mentoring is normally delivered by experienced and influential individuals that often results in professional growth and success.

Blackwell (2014:1) further indicates that most commonly, a mentor is someone within the organisation who can assist with work-related queries, although occasionally the mentor may be external. It implies two unequal levels the guider and the follower, the experienced and the inexperienced, or guardian and protégé. Robinson (2014:7) posits that mentoring is concerned with providing direction and a clear understanding of how the organisation goes about its activities. It is essential in communicating vital information on the organisation's mission and values, bringing about learning transfer which stands the mentee in good stead for his/her future in the organisation. Rolfe (2011:10) articulate that mentoring is cost effective in attracting, retaining and developing staff. For an example, an organisation might be able to retain its graduate employees if it provides for their on-going development. This is because it involves a series of dialogues (between the mentor and mentee), feedback sessions and counselling on the part of the mentor. Mentoring is more effective in helping employees retain their skills than other methods of training. Erasmus *et al.*, (2015:271) further state that mentors may be officially assigned to new employees or people interested in undertaking internship, apprenticeship and learnership which are discussed below:

(f) Internship

According to Galloway, Marks and Chillas (2014:1), an internship or traineeship is a form of professional training during which inexperienced employees are introduced into the organisation's business and the specific job and the tasks they will perform. The main task of the internship is to train people who start working for the first time in their life and allow them to work independently in their workplace. Furco (2011:74) states that internship programmes engage trainees in service activities primarily for the purpose of providing trainees with hands-on experiences that enhance their learning or understanding of issues relevant to a particular area of study and that trainees are the primary intended beneficiaries and the focus of the service activity is on student learning. Trainees are placed in internships to acquire skills and knowledge that will enhance their vocational development. Yaakob, Kamaruizam and Radzi (2018:1) reiterate that the purpose of the internship, is to equip the

graduates for the work environment through experience gained. Bacon (2011:68) asserts that internships are important to individuals seeking to learn a particular area, gain experience in a particular field, build connections, and have a competitive advantage over those who do not have internships.

Benavides, Dicke and Holt (2010:353) indicate that the graduate student internships often result in job offers from host organisations. Koma (2010:58) is of the view that the purpose of Internship Programme is to make available a cadre of dedicated public service employees and to facilitate employment of graduates but if there is no means to ensure that this happens the goal will not be attained. Internship period usually lasts between six months and one year. Koma (2010:56) further identified that the current term of internship is not enough to allow for gaining meaningful experiential training and that it should be extended to 24 months. He furthermore argued that the duration of the Internship Programme is important when analysing the implementation processes, as it measures the perceptions of how long the experiential training should be offered for to render the implementation of this programme effective. Therefore, the South African Graduates Development Association report (2013:10) refers to internship as a temporary position with an emphasis on, on –the- job training rather than merely employment and it can be paid or unpaid.

(g) Apprenticeship

Dimeny, Williamson, Yates and Hinson (2019:5) observe that an apprenticeship is a system of training a new generation of practitioners of a trade or profession with on-the-job training and often some accompanying study (classroom work and reading). According to Raheja (2015:37), apprenticeship is a system of training a new generation of practitioners of a skill. This method of training is in vogue in those trades, crafts, and technical fields in which a long period is required for gaining proficiency. The trainees serve as apprentices to experts for long periods. Johnson and Spiker (2018:1) state that apprentices have to work in direct association with and also under the direct supervision of their masters. The object of such training is to make the trainees all-round craftsmen. It is an expensive method of training. Also, there is no guarantee that the trained worker will continue to work in the same organisation after securing training. However, Greig (2019:27) argues that completing an apprenticeship has been shown to be critical to an individual's future employment, earnings and career development when compared with apprentices who do not complete. The apprentices are paid remuneration according to the apprenticeship agreements.

In view of the above statement, an apprenticeship is an agreement between an apprentice and an employer for a set period of time during which the apprentice works and receives training in the workplace (Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority, 2014:1). Therefore, Gessler (2019:145) asserts that internationally, the apprenticeship system has been used as a strategy to develop skills. Noonan, Nicholson and Langdon

(2016:12) are of the view that because apprentices understand the principles behind the work they are doing, they are often more adept at problem-solving, can adapt to new technologies, and can operate with less supervision than employees who are not apprentice graduates. Brewer (2013:1) articulate that apprentices need formal training in both technical, occupation-specific skills and in soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, and professionalism.

(h) Learnership

Learnership training (previously called apprenticeship), started during the Middle Ages. Before the Industrial Revolution, an apprentice had to live in a master craftsman's house to learn the craft. During that time, the apprentices were not paid but only provided with accommodation (Janse van Rensburg, Visser, Wildschut, Roodt and Kruss, 2012:2). The apprentice programme later had to take into consideration the following elements: a minimum starting age of 16 years; a schedule of work experience supplemented by a number of hours (144 hours) per year of related classroom instruction; a progressively increasing schedule of wages; proper supervision; and periodic evaluations of the apprentices (Wildschut, Kruss, Visser, Meyer, Tele, Rust and Hlakula, 2017:9). Similarly, the Skills Development Act of 1998 replaced the apprenticeship model with that of the learnership model. However, during the year 2007, the Department of Labour announced that learnerships were never meant to replace apprenticeships. Therefore, learnerships are learning programmes that require learning on the job supported by structured or institutional learning. They are generally designed in the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETAs), approved by the Department of Labour, funded from the Skills Levy and must lead to a qualification on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority, 2014:1).

In this method Nel *et al.*, (2011:381) argue that, a trainee is guided by a skilled employee. This is an opportunity that is afforded to inexperienced learners so that they can get exposure to the working environment to confirm the theory they learned. Mathenjwa (2011:1) is of the view that a learnership has been designed as a mechanism that would facilitate a linkage between structured learning and the accumulation of work experience so that one could obtain a registered qualification that shows that one is ready for work. This could therefore mean that a learnership should be seen as a combination of structured learning and work experience components.

(i) Job Rotation

Raheja (2015:36) contends that job rotation is the process of training employees by rotating them through a series of related jobs. DeSimone and Werner (2012:227) posit that job rotation refers to the periodic redeployment of employee/s from one department to another

or from series of jobs with the aim of helping them to become familiar with the different phases of the work process. Baro (2012:389) states that job rotation can take two different forms: job rotation within-function and job rotation across function. It also helps employees to familiarise themselves with the responsibilities associated with different jobs. Job rotation is task-based because the exercise is done in the work area and focuses on real job processes. The main assumption is that the trainees will be able to gain an overall perception of the organisation and how the different parts relate to one another. More importantly, it offers employees the chance to enlarge the range of their experience, skills, and ability by working in different divisions, organisational units and functions. This was confirmed by the study conducted further by Baro (2012:398) which found that job rotation is an important programme for employees to acquire new skills, improve their productivity, develop new relationships across the organisation and acquire new skills for future career development.

DeSimone and Werner (2012:227) further asserts that the trainee should not be left to find his/her way on his/her own while doing the job. Senior officials in the department, division or section the trainee falls under should therefore always provide the necessary supervision. The employee in this instance will be able to learn various tasks also mastering some key roles, policies and procedures on each task. Alquraan (2011:7) suggests that when the trainee completes the rotation cycle, evaluations conducted after each task should help to determine permanent placement of an employee if it is a new employee. This approach assists to determine the interests and abilities of employees leading to fit them in proper positions where they can most probably enjoy their job. The approach is most appropriate for newly employed workers. When moving workers from one job to another, Nel *et al.*, (2011:379) are of the view that, the exercise should be cautiously done in a systematic way. Because workers are provided with a general knowledge and skill about the institution, it helps them to can decide on their career paths in future.

Dessler, Barkhuizen, Bezuidenhout, De Braine, Du Plessis, Nel, Schultz, Stanz and Van der Waldt (2011:281) opine that job rotation helps in testing the abilities of employees as they are moved from one unit to another. In this regard, the Department of Traditional Affairs (2014:20) indicates that job rotation is seen as the best approach of multi-skilling workers. This approach was once tested by the South African Department of Traditional Affairs (DTA) where individuals were identified and moved from capacity building section to research and policy development section. The intention was to afford them an opportunity to expand their understanding of the institution by getting first-hand experience on what other sections are doing. This proved to be very successful as staff members concerned developed new knowledge and skills on what the organisation is doing in other sections.

(j) Secondment

According to Masalimova, Muhammet and Shaidullina (2016:1482), secondment is similar to rotation, difference is in the fact that a 'job-swap' may take place not only in another division of the same organisation, but also in external organisation, in different sphere and then returning to previous positions. Johnson (2019:1) points out that secondment is the provisional attachment or relocation of employees to another organisation to promote their development and that of their establishment. This method allows the employee to take up a different role in a different division of the organisation or in a different organisation for a set period of time, normally from a few months to about two years. Simpson (2018:1) articulate that secondment allows employees to develop new experience and knowledge, organisational competencies, known-how and to learn additional ways of doing things. It helps employees to develop their present knowledge and skills in a different environment free from constraints. It can also be used as a functional choice to address performance problems and skills shortages. Jenkinsa and Ansteya (2017:2) posit that secondment allows employees the opportunity to gain new cultural insights and retain and share knowledge. Secondment has been shown to offer employees greater increases in competency than other methods of training. Employee secondments offer employees a valuable career development opportunity, with the chance to make new contacts and gain experience within a different setting.

Masalimova, Muhammet and Shaidullina (2016:1484) are of the view that secondment requires creating conditions for free systematic movement of employees from one job to another and prevents them from using previously acquired skills; risk of possible discrepancies between desired and proposed jobs or positions in the organisation. On the other hand, Jenkinsa and Ansteya (2017:2) state that secondments enable staff from both organisations to walk in the shoes of the other and thus promote better understanding of how each one approaches and uses knowledge in the context of their own organisation. Through this process, both organisations learn to share information in a manner that better ensures that the information can be used and understood in a meaningful and relevant way. Renshaw and Holland (2013:2) assert that professional placements give employees the opportunity of acquiring new skills whilst continuing their employment with the same organisation. Employers benefit from allowing employees to take secondments in many ways. Employees that have taken a secondment acquire transferable skills and knowledge that they can put into practice once they return to their original position. These skills can then be communicated across the team and other departments within the organisation to improve and enhance the skill set of other staff.

(k) Delegation

According to Morake, Monobe and Mbulawa (2012:153), a delegation refers to the process of entrusting authority and responsibility to other people. In its strictest form, the person to whom authority is delegated acts on behalf of the one from whom authority is delegated. Yukl (2010:149) states that delegation is the assignment of new responsibilities to subordinates and additional authority to carry them out. Chapman (2012:1) reiterates that delegation is a two-way process where a manager or supervisor takes the initiative to allow his/her subordinate to make decisions and carry out action on his/her behalf. Akrani (2010:1) agrees that delegation involves the assigning of certain responsibilities along with the necessary authority by a superior to his subordinate. Delegation is not a process of abdication. The person who delegates does not divorce himself/herself from the responsibility and authority with which she/he is entrusted. He remains accountable for the overall performance and also for the performance of his/her subordinates. Oviawe (2015:3) argues that delegation does not mean surrender of authority by the higher level manager; it only means transfer of certain responsibilities to subordinates and giving the subordinates the necessary authority, which is necessary to discharge the responsibility properly.

Oviawe (2015:3) further asserts that delegating the authority to someone else does not imply escaping from accountability. Accountability still rest with the person having the utmost authority. It must be noted that delegation is not an avenue to set up a subordinate to fail. Care should be taken to ensure that the employee has the capability to succeed in the assignment (Oviawe, 2015:5). Chapman (2012:1) reiterates that delegation is one of the most effective methods to develop a subordinate's growth and development. Oviawe (2015:4) furthermore point out that delegation can improve quality of work by allowing the employees who have direct knowledge and interaction with clients to make decisions and complete tasks. Chapman (2012:1) further articulate that delegation enables organisations to improve their job capabilities and knowledge. Akrani (2010:1) postulates that well-organised managers empower their subordinates to accomplish assignments by entrusting them with responsibility and authority. Another advantage of delegation is that it allows employees to develop and gain much needed experience. Delegation builds morale, improves job performance and boosts job satisfaction. Empowering employees through delegation is one of the most effective tools to enhance productivity in an organisation (Carpenter, 2020:1).

(l) Committee/Work Group

Davis (2011:1) contends that in this training method, organisations train their employees by involving them in different management discussions and activities aimed at generating ideas to solve the organisational problems. Masalimova, Muhammet and Shaidullina (2016:1483) agree that workgroups, or teams, consisting of specialists of different levels are formed to

solve specific problems in certain time interval; develop the algorithm of the tasks set, and determine the length of time needed to solve them. The team proposals are considered by the organisational management and can be either accepted or rejected. Different trainee groups enrol regardless of their level of qualification; development of self-determination and independence of employees; forming decision making skills and increasing their motivation. This method of training requires that the group has been previously informed and trained on methodology and analytical methods of problem solving. Davis (2011:1) further points out that this is primarily necessary when an organisation is preparing individuals to take over managerial positions or as head of organisational units. This method involves interactional techniques of agreeing, disagreeing, negotiation of meaning and clarification. It gives the trainees the opportunity to share real information about the issues discussed. It allows for the maximum sharing of ideas and motivates the trainees to contribute to their own learning.

(m) Role playing

Martin, Kolomitro and Lam (2013:17) state that role playing is on-the-job training that requires trainees to assume a character and act out the role in a make-believe scenario or series of scenarios; learning comes by way of reflection on the play. Raheja (2015:37) points out that each trainee takes the role of a person affected by an issue and studies the impacts of the issues on human life and/or the effects of human activities on the world from the perspective of that person. It emphasises the “real- world” side of science and challenges for students to deal with complex problems with no single “right” answer and to use a variety of skills beyond those employed in a typical research project. Vlachopoulos and Makri (2017:3) assert that particularly, role-playing presents the trainee a valuable opportunity to learn not just the course content, but other perspectives on it. The steps involved in role playing include defining objectives, choose context and roles, introducing the exercise, trainee preparation/research, the role-play, concluding discussion, and assessment. Types of role play may be multiple role play, single role play, role rotation, and spontaneous role play.

Nassazi (2013:26) is of the view that role playing involves training and development techniques that attempt to capture and bring forth decision making situations to the employee being trained. Trainees are provided with some information related to the description of the roles, concerns, objectives, responsibilities, emotions, and many more. Following is provision of a general description of the situation and the problem they face. The trainees are there after required to act out their roles. Miri, Mansor, Chasempour and Anvari (2014:232) posit that this role-playing is more effective when carried out under stress-free or alternatively minimal-stress environments so as to facilitate easier learning. It is a very effective training method for a wide range of employees for example those in customer service area,

management, and support employees. The trainer plays the role, for example, imitating the customer.

2.4.1.1.2 Off-the-job training

According to Kingsland and Ward (2017:1), off-the-job training is a type of training which is undertaken outside of the normal day-to-day working environment. Said, Jahya, Nur, Siti and Yusof (2016:5) agree that off-the-job-training takes place in an environment other than actual workplace. Ameerq and Hanif (2013:1) are of the view that off-the-job training is a type of training when employees of the organisation are being called for training session to learn a task. Sree and Basariya (2019:211) argue that in off-the-job training, the trainees are away from the work environment, which eliminates stress, frustration, and bustle of day-to-day job. Agarwal (2012:1) asserts that while on-the-job training develops best practices for a particular job, off-the-job training aims to improve basic competences that are more general in nature. Boadu Yu Xie, Yi-Fei Du and Dwomo-Fokuo (2018:7) point out that such training practices could broaden employees learning with minimum ‘training transfer’ difficulties and make up for deficiencies in their workplace. Off-the-job training can be regarded as a formal training course taken in a form of lectures, talks, seminar, workshop, simulation, role play, vestibule and case study away from the place of work but attempts to kindle real working conditions. Different types of off-the-training are therefore, discussed below.

(a) Lectures

Raheja (2015:37) is of the view that lectures are the traditional and direct method of instruction. Every training programme starts with a lecture. It is a verbal presentation for a large audience. In other words, a lecture is an off-the-job training approach which involves the verbal presentation of training material. It normally takes place at learning institutions such as corporate universities. Martin, Kolomitro and Lam (2013:16) agree that lectures involves the dissemination of training material by a trainer to a group of trainees, by means of verbal instruction. Raheja (2015:37) further states that the lectures have to be motivating and creating interest among trainees. The speaker must have considerable depth in the subject. In the colleges and universities, lectures are the most common methods used for training. Lepak and Gowan (2010:235-236) indicate that some organisations reimburse study fees fully or pay a portion thereof to encourage employees to study or they may pay employees a bonus upon completion of a study course. Martin *et al.*, (2013:16) further point out that this training method allow students to watch and listen to the lecture presented by the course instructor, while automatically being shown the corresponding slides and/ or lecture notes on a single web interface.

Wachira (2010:20) asserts that in this kind of setting the trainer should provide less input and should afford the trainees with more opportunities to work in pairs or smaller groups on different activities. The advantages of lectures are that trainees learn much quicker as the learning that takes place is sensory-based, the time passes quicker and the trainees learn from each other and can have more fun. The effectiveness of training in lectures will increase when role-plays, discussions and other experimental activities are combined with lectures. However, Sarwar (2011:5) argues that in certain situation, trainees are inactive. Their only role is to absorb the information delivered by the trainer. This can be resolved by the trainer including interaction among learners or between learners and the trainer. Discussions and a question and answer session at the end of the lecture can make the session more interactive. Lepak and Gowan (2010:233) alluded that previously, lectures were regarded as the economical option to train large groups of employees, but this has changed with the advent of computer technology, which makes training more economical and efficient.

(b) Web-based learning or electronic-learning

Lepak and Gowan (2010:233) state that e-learning includes using the internet, computers, and other electronic tools, which means that training programmes can be accessed online anywhere and at any time. According to Shuler (2012:1), e-learning involves the delivery and administration of learning opportunities and support to learners through computer networks in order to enhance performance and development. Beardwell and Thompson (2014:244) point out that e-learning can take any of the following forms: web-based training, desktop training and podcast training. E-learning is regarded as being more accessible, more flexible, and adaptable to individual circumstances, and provides a broader and cheaper range of alternatives. Online training is becoming a common training strategy and its quality is improving.

Blackwell (2014:1) supports this viewpoint by stating that e-learning is a process of enhancing student's learning experience through taking advantage of today's various technological advances. This is one of the latest forms of learning in the current technological environment. Erasmus *et al.*, (2015:274-275) acknowledges this reality and concurs that in recent times, web-based learning is applied often to train employees. Younger employees are accustomed to web-based learning (on its own or combined with other training strategies), whereas some employees prefer the face-to-face training technique. The advantages of e-training are reduced travel time and costs, flexible participation times and access to the internet from any chosen location.

(c) Case studies

Case studies are another off-the-job training activity by which trainees are assigned hypothetical, simulated challenges that contain elements of real-life situation. Martin, Kolomitro and Lam (2013:16) point out that case studies provides the participants an opportunity to develop skills by presenting a problem, without a solution, for them to solve, or with a solution, as an exemplar of how to solve it. Shivakumar (2012:7) supports this viewpoint by stating that the case study is a method which provides descriptive situations which stimulates trainees to make decisions. The purpose of the case method is to make trainees apply what they know, develop new ideas to manage a situation or solve a problem. The focus is more on the approach the trainee uses rather than on the solution. Singh (2015:1) asserts that trainers often use case studies to build skills in analysis and problem solving. Case studies have to be given in a written format to the trainees since it includes lots of related and seemingly unrelated information, facts and figures about the organisation.

In view of the above statement, Shivakumar (2012:7) further emphasised that the trainee either individually or in a team is supposed to examine the case based on various factors like people, environment, financial and physical parameters. Bonney (2015:21) reveals that case studies as a training technique can be used for managers, executives, and students alike as long as it fits into the available time. Used in graveyard sessions (as post lunch sessions are called), they can enliven the training programme and can also be used as a take home assignment if the training programme is residential. The case study method emphasises on approach to see a particular problem rather than a solution. Lacerenza, Tannenbaum, Marlow and Salas (2018:1) are of the view that as a training tool the case study method can be used to developing decision making skills, enhancing team spirit, better communication and interpersonal skills as well as strengthening analytical skills of trainees.

(d) Conferences

According to Nekhavhambe (2017:113), workers can also be skilled through conference attendance. They could be encouraged to prepare and present papers in conferences or just attend to listen to scholars on the researches they conducted. Nassazi (2013:26) points out that this training method involves presentations by more than one person to a wide audience. It is more cost effective as a group of employees are trained on a particular topic all at the same time in large audiences. Dessler *et al.*, (2011:272) state that employers can also use tele-training and video-conferencing. This method of training provides a training where televised kind of communication is followed. People in different areas can be trained at the same time using technology. The same with video-conferencing, trainees in different geographical areas can be part of a conference coordinated in a different area at the same

time. Employers can save a lot of money in travelling, accommodation and meals as employees can attend conferences while they are in their offices.

Jenkins (2015:157) is of the view that it is significant for employees to attend conferences as a one way to meet areas of development in their skills gap. This is because attendees develop professional expertise through learning about current and best practice in the sessions, which explicitly or implicitly meets a skills gap. Kennedy (2018:1) asserts that conference participants discuss modern skills and organisational challenges to reach consensus on a solution for a particular topic or technique with the help of experts in the field. Janus (2016:1) articulate that the main advantage of a conference is that it encourages everyone's participation. Sharing ideas with people from different organisations encourages knowledge transfer and promotes a sense of renewed hope and inspiration among participants.

2.4.2 Skills development

Moore (2012:1) views skills development as the intended output training efforts and it should be an enabler for organisational growth. An organisation cannot expect to see growth if they do not invest in skills development. Investing in skills development is beneficial to the organisation as much as it is to the employees. Mishra (2017:1) argues that skills development is no longer a matter of choice. It is imperative for organisations to adapt, survive and succeed. Rozhkov, Cheung and Tsui (2017:1) affirm that skills development is a requirement of a job, which is best seen as a component of the task. Chandra (2019:22) articulate that skills development is an ability and capacity acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained effort to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex activities or job functions involving ideas (cognitive skills), things (technical skills), and/or people (interpersonal skills). Bala and Singhal (2019:24) indicate that skills development is the method of detecting skill gaps and improving these skills. The Skills Training Foundation (2019:1) reiterate that skills development is for determining the skill gaps and overcome them. Sousa and Rocha (2017:1) are of the view that, skills development comprises the competencies necessary to perform a task and the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are acquired as a result. Majama and Magang (2017:1) agree that skills development is aligned to a qualification, it involves performing a task at a certain level of competence.

Munzhedzi (2011:99) supports the above statement by emphasising that skills development is important for the public service to deliver goods and services to the public. Noe (2013:8) states that skills development tends to be more long term oriented as it helps prepare employees for future jobs or positions. Masadeh (2012:64) supports this viewpoint by stating that skills development may focus over a period of three years or more. This is because skills

development is an effort to provide employees with the requisite skills the organisation needs. According to Mopeli (2015:1), skills development is important in an organisation as it serves as a tool for management to improve sustainability. Nicks (2011:1) points out that the skills development plan boosts the level of capability and workers' performance in an organisation, mainly when the performance or work standard is considered to be low or when there is low morale or a generally poor attitude to work which hinders performance. Organisations improves the ability of employees to perform a job-related activity, which contributes to the effective performance of a task. It could be a form of intimacy where knowledge learned through detailed and repeated experience. As a result, employees are exposed to new knowledge and skills associated with their current job and proposed new jobs.

In view of the about statement, Osborn (2018:1) posits that without the right skills, the whole organisation can be frustrated, waste time, and spend a lot of time dealing with rudimentary issues caused by the lack of knowledge or lack of skills, as opposed to progressing in goals. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2012:3) urges organisations to develop the right skills to respond to the needs of the labour market. People need both hard and soft skills that help them to succeed in the labour market and a range of skills that help them to contribute to better social outcomes and build more cohesive and tolerant societies. Machika (2014:22) supports this view by pointing out that skills development therefore assists the organisation by providing its employees with the necessary skills. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2012:14) further note that investing in skills is just the first step; successful skills policies also need to ensure that available skills are used effectively so that no investment is wasted. This means that an employer must offer training as part of the skills development plan, which aims at ensuring that employees adapt to their workplace and maintain their ability to retain their jobs, particularly in light of technological developments. Arthur-Aidoo, Aigbavboa and Thwala (2016:1) assert that for skills development plan to be effective, the results must be evaluated in accordance with the organisation's training and skills development requirements.

2.4.2.1 Skills development within the South African public sector

The study conducted by Asha (2014:224) reveals that during the apartheid era, very little focus was placed on the training of employees. As local government transformed over the years, more decision-making powers were granted to local government and in time the focus was placed on increasing the effectiveness of the provision of basic services, which is an important role of local government. According to Buthelezi (2012:1), the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, expressed the view that the failure of employers to provide training opportunities to school leavers and graduates was part of the underlying cause of the skills gap experienced in South Africa. Cascio and Montealegre (2016:349)

observe that the workplace is constantly transforming as a result of technological changes, changes in the work environment and the shift towards the global market, and these changes require the adoption of a new skills development approach to meet the emerging needs of the South African public service. The shortage of required skills throughout the South African public service reflects adversely on the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery. Subban and VyasDoorgapersad (2014:511) acknowledges this reality and emphasised that the South African public service lacks sufficient capability, and that training is an important means to address the current paucity of skills.

Asha (2014:224) further indicated that many reasons are provided for poor service delivery, and that all of these have resulted in the dissatisfaction that citizens feel with the provision of basic municipal services. Mpofu and Hlatywayo (2015:133) argue that problems with the delivery of services by local municipalities in South Africa are ascribed to poor performance. A different argument is that the South African public service has been portrayed in a negative light due to the demands for improved service delivery. Koelble and LiPuma (2010:565) point out that the watershed experience of service delivery in South Africa is largely due to a lack of skills in various aspects, from customer care and relations skills to technical skills. An improvement in these skills will increase the level of service delivery provided. Haruna and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2015:159) suggest that training of employees in the public service should be regarded as integral to efficient and effective public service delivery. Veeran (2011:1096) recommends that training of officials in the South African public service is crucial for the workforce to be globally agile and internationally relevant. Top management should regard training as an investment and should measure it against the level of service delivery provided and the improvement in service delivery.

Subban and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2014:508) further posit that training programmes should be responsive to economic and social needs, should be educationally transformative, should be diverse and should prepare employees for continued learning in a world of technological and cultural change. Subban and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2014:503) furthermore suggest that for the public service to reach its goals and objectives, training is needed that will increase the capabilities of public servants. Veeran (2011:1088) further states that customer care training programmes are important for public officials as customer care skills are needed in the public service to provide effective and efficient service delivery to the public which needs to be customer-centred. According to Wachira (2010:5), training is budgeted for as it is recognised as significant to the success of organisations. Veeran (2011:1097) furthermore recommends that budgets for training should be incorporated as a critical activity within an organisation. The South African Government must be committed to training public officials if its Vision 2030 is to be realised. Haruna and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2015:75) further assert

that the Renewed Capacity Building for Public Service Framework is aimed at promoting innovation and learning so as to realise the objectives of effectiveness and excellence in the public sector.

2.4.2.2 The South African skills shortage situation

South Africa faces a critical challenge of skills shortages, which is a serious threat to economic growth and employment creation. Du Toit (2012:1) and Van der Westhuizen (2012:1) regard the situation as a paradox of skills shortages in the workplace and high levels of unemployment. The majority of unemployed people are poorly educated and do not hold the skills that employers need in a technologically advanced economy. Consequently, skills development has been highlighted as a priority for government strategy, and in view of the recent global economic turndown, it is even more imperative that the South African economy retains a qualified labour force in order to promote new economic activity and development (Van Rensburg, Visser, Wildschut, Roodt and Kruss, 2012:1). However, in order to address this paradox of skills shortages in the midst of high unemployment, the South African government has initiated policy interventions that focus on building a skills base that can provide the different industries with the level and kind of skills that they need to ensure economic growth (Du Toit, 2012:1). On the other hand, the researcher is of the view that the challenge of the skills shortage has become increasingly obvious, because of increased investment in public infrastructure over the past few years, laying bare the fact that although the funding for the infrastructure is there, there is lack of skilled people to construct this infrastructure.

Goga and Van der Westhuizen (2012:1) confirms that critical skills shortages exist in South Africa across the high and semi-skilled spectrum, ranging from managers and professionals, to artisans and technically trained workers. Management skills, for example, have been identified as a critical skills cluster in short supply in the economy and this requires immediate attention if South Africa is to realise its medium to long-term strategic objectives. Van der Walt and Du Toit (2014:21) assert that most public officials have a qualification obtained from a tertiary institution. Numerous public officials attend in-service training course on a regular basis. Most, if not all, of these interventions can be described as traditional in nature. The standard and demand for effective action continues to escalate and it requires that officials adapt. However, focus should not only be on the shortage of skills because that alone will not improve performance. Rasool and Botha (2011:1) argue that the challenge is not that South Africa is suffering from skills shortages only, but that it is also suffering from quality skills shortages. Takawira (2019:11) is of the view that some people who possess impressive skills in the public service are the worst performers. Silva (2018:1) recognised that skills that

are obtained from formal education only account for a small share whereas a bigger percentage of these are obtained in the work place, thus stressing the critical role of Human Resources Department, not only to the individual organisations but for the country as a whole.

Sipengane (2014:1) argues that skills gaps exist when organisations identify that their workforce has a lower level of skills than is necessary to meet the objectives of the organisation. Skills gaps therefore refer to a lack of proficiency of existing staff or ability to perform their jobs to the ideal level (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2015:1). Closing the skills gaps has numerous benefits for both the employer and the employees. Well skilled workforce work at a higher level of productivity; which can be translated into the work being completed faster with fewer mistakes leading to a more profitable efficient organisation (McIntyre, 2013:1). This is further acknowledged by Sipengane (2014:1) by stating that a skilled workforce plays a vital role in economic growth and development. The current debate about the challenges of performance in the South African public service identifies an interesting knowledge gap on the existing skills gaps within the public service. Bika (2017:1) indicates that there are two ways for organisations to fill skills gaps: training (up-skilling) and hiring. It is on the organisation to decide on which approach (or combination) works best for each skill gap. In this regard, a thorough skills gaps analysis will therefore assist the employers in deciding upon the more appropriate training action for their individual employees.

2.4.2.3 Types of skills

According to Nekhavhambe (2012:30), the lack of appropriate skills is encountered in almost every sector but more so in government. Nekhavhambe (2012:31) further argues that the public sector is significantly worse off than the private sector in the skills deficit. Therefore, the question is posed as to how to build skills capacity for municipal officials to learn new skills, improve existing skills and to perform better. This is because Elozieuwa (2012:13) is of the view that municipalities fail to recognise that the major problem with work performance lies in capacity development. For this reason, addressing the types of skills to be taken into consideration in the municipalities is of paramount importance in this study. The word skill, when applied to individuals, represents knowledge or ability or both which are acquired through education, training, and experience (Rozhkov, Cheung and Tsui, 2017:1). Additionally, when applied to professions, skills symbolise prestige or social status, which may be linked to some extent to the practitioner's capacity or the tasks that he or she performs. Kotey (2017:1) points out that skills are the abilities that individuals possess in order to perform a task with which they are entrusted.

Majama and Magang (2017:1) add that skills are the abilities individuals possess to perform a job at a certain level of competence, and that an individual who does not have such skills is unlikely to perform the task and will therefore be less effective than an individual who has the necessary skills. According to Molodchik and Jardon (2017:1), skills are normally linked to a qualification. Klosters (2014:5) states that skills are a critical asset for individuals, organisations and societies. The importance of skills is even more pronounced in a dynamic, globalised world. Building basic skills early on, by broadening and improving the quality of early childhood, is essential. But it is also crucial to ensure that skills taught at school are relevant for the working world; that they are maintained and further improved during working life; and that they are recognised and used by employers once people are in the labour market. In this regard, skills development stems from skills as the root. Types of skills which the employees are expected to acquire and possess are discussed below.

2.4.2.3.1 Technical skills

According to Doyle (2019:1), technical skills are the abilities and knowledge needed to perform specific tasks. They are practical, and often relate to mechanical, information technology, mathematical, or scientific tasks. On the other hand, Brewer (2013:1) is of the view that technical skills are specialised skills, knowledge, or know-how to perform specific duties or tasks, mainly in a professional environment. These include, but are not limited to, the traditional forms of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), skills acquired through the secondary level of the formal school system or through non-formal and/or informal learning processes. The South African skills portal (2019:1) revealed that ninety-three technical graduates have been deployed to provide much needed support to some of the country's most distressed municipalities. Among the graduates are 46 civil engineers, 16 town and regional planners, 13 electrical engineers, 10 environmental scientists, seven project and construction managers and one geographic information systems practitioner.

2.4.2.3.2 Professional skills

Brewer (2013:1) contends that professional skills include individual attributes relevant to work such as honesty, integrity, reliability, work ethic, and judgement. Nekhavhambe (2017:2) asserts that training equips one with skills for a particular profession. Mafunisa (2000:81) states that professionalism promotes the development of a positive work ethic as it ensures that people who meet the relevant educational and training requirements, and share similar work values, are appointed and promoted to specific positions. This, therefore, means that public officials should be professionals. They need to know and understand their responsibilities well, so that the communities they serve would receive services they deserve.

2.4.2.3.3 Core skills

According to Takawira (2019:23), the notion of core skills then refers to literacy, numeracy, communication skills, teamwork, basic problem-solving skills and learning abilities. These skills also involve an awareness of one's social, economic and political environment and related basic rights (e.g. citizenship rights; workers' rights), all of which are considered basic building blocks for becoming productively engaged in livelihoods, lifelong learning and the capability to adapt to change. Aggarwal and Gasskov (2013:1) state that the South African policy context reference to Foundational Learning Competence (FLC) contains elements that align with this notion of core skills.

2.4.2.3.4 Soft skills

According to Hendricks (2017:1), soft skills are regarded as intangible abilities that can improve relationships with others. Kagan (2020:1) supports this viewpoint by stating that soft skills are less tangible and harder to teach. Getting along with others, listening well, and engaging in small talk are soft skills. In other words, soft skills include creativity, complex problem solving, relationship building, communication, and critical thinking. Sebugwawo (2012:1) argues that communication breakdown between municipalities and the communities is one of the driving factors that lead to protests. If municipalities do not communicate with the communities regarding their plans and updates on all promises to the communities, they get frustrated and start creating unrest environment to be heard. This means that municipal officials should acquire soft skills such as communication.

Fakir (2014:1) observed that at municipal level, protesters have regularly complained about unresponsiveness of officials and councillors. This observation clearly outlines that it is not always the case that ordinary people complain recline on water, housing and water taps as many believe but even on the political engagements matters. This entails that municipal officials fail to interact with the communities concerning political matters, hence the researcher believes that municipal officials should develop relationship building skills. This is because municipal officials are the closest service providers to the communities, and this put them in a position to relate and engage well with the communities. Kagan (2020:1) further asserts that soft skills are not often found in the curriculum of a school or college. They are taught, however, in programs that help people develop communication skills, teamwork, or people management skills. These are most often offered through employer programs.

2.4.2.3.5 Hard skills

Kagan (2020:1) observes that hard skills focus on practical abilities and skills, whereas soft skills focus on behaviours and personalities, such as social and communication skills. Doyle (2020:1) states that hard skills are teachable abilities or skill sets that are easy to quantify and required in a candidate. Typically, employees learn hard skills in the classroom, through

books or other training materials, or on the job. On the other hand, Kagan (2020:1) further asserts that hard skills are learned abilities acquired and enhanced through practice, repetition, and education. According to Srinivasan (2019:1), these skills are those that are acquired through formal education, training programs, certification programs and coaching. Hendricks (2017:1) is of the view that hard skills are related to the activity that has to be performed in the work environment and that can be assessed, and these skills indicate employability. Doyle (2020:1) further indicates that hard skills includes a degree or certificate, typing speed, machine operation and computer programming.

For example, learnership programmes equip employees with hard skills in which the learner spends some time learning the theory and some time learning practical skills in the workplace directly related to an occupation or field of work; for example, electrical engineering, office management or project management (The South African skills portal, 2019:1). During the learnership, learners will be required to complete assignments, tasks and practical tests and projects. They will be formally assessed in the classroom and workplace. If all these assignments are completed successfully, they will be awarded a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)-registered qualification, which is recognised nationally. They will also receive a certificate stating the qualification and the area of skill development. Kagan (2020:1) furthermore emphasised that hard skills are important because they increase employee productivity and efficiency and subsequently improve employee satisfaction.

2.4.2.3.6 General skills

According to Niaz (2011:3), general skills would include time management, leadership, organising and planning. Therefore, delivery of quality public service remains central to municipalities across South Africa. Cakata (2011:1) asserts that failure of public service delivery is just a symptom of a deeper underlying problem and that the inability to build the desired culture is driven, amongst other things, by a lack of vision and leadership. The 1994 elections provided new hope to ordinary citizens of an improved life, but according to Naidoo (2013:1), the rise of lack of leadership has greatly compromised the quality and delivery of public services in the municipalities as initially expected in 1994. As reported by the South African Local Government Association (2016:12), municipal councillors must provide an effective leadership role for the municipality in order to strengthen service delivery and to economically guide the municipality in day-to-day activities. However, Mbandlwa (2018:5) contends that councillors often lack the attributes of leadership such as being ethical and knowledgeable because they have been appointed on the virtue of being a member of a political party and not qualifications.

Therefore, without specific leadership attributes, it is hard for councillors to attain the desired goals of providing services to the communities for the improvement of the general welfare of the communities (Thornhill and Dlamini, 2012:38). As a result of limited leadership skills, some protests are violent, destructive, and very protracted to the extent of reversing the gains on service delivery over the past two decades. The extent of the protests shows that the leadership skills of ward councillors are limited, and this compromises the communication between the community, municipality and broader government and its agencies (Mthethwa, 2015:1). A lack of communication skills and insufficient leadership characteristics of ward councillors to provide necessary leadership has resulted in community members leading themselves and destroying many facilities (Shields, 2014:11). The study conducted by Mbandlwa (2018:5) further argued that the problem of fulfilling promises could arise due to lack of experience, low literacy levels of ward councillors and their unwillingness to work for the communities that elected them.

Statistics South Africa (2011:13) reiterates that the biggest problem facing councillors is their literacy level, as some councillors cannot apply their minds to the documents written by municipal officials. Mbandlwa (2018:32) furthermore suggests that municipalities should pay close attention to the training and skills development of ward councillors in terms of leadership requirements and cascading information to the citizens as per the programme of the municipality. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) have authorised the Centre for Leadership and Governance (2016:2) to facilitate accredited training to ward councillors and have accredited a qualification that assists ward councillors to understand their fundamental roles and responsibilities within the council. The Education and Training Unit (2011:1) indicates that this particular training helps councillors to act as representatives of the communities they are serving; to provide effective leadership roles in the council; and also to act as a custodian of public finance.

The training consists of different levels and different qualifications or fields ranging from public administration to public finance and the material is designed to ensure that all councillors understand the study material and apply what has been documented. Local government experienced facilitators are assigned to provide training to the ward councillors. The training takes four weeks and ward councillors are awarded NQF level 3 and 5 National certificates after they have successfully completed the programme. The NQF Level Three Certificate is accredited as the National Certificate: Local Government Councillor Practices (SAQA ID 58578). The NQF Level Five Certificate is accredited as the National Certificate: Municipal Governance (SAQA ID 67467). The training takes place in areas that are identified by the council as the most suitable and economically affordable (Mbandlwa, 2018:33).

2.4.2.3.7 Emotional intelligence skills

Emotional intelligence skills originate from the writings of Wechsler (1940), who studied the non-cognitive intellectual aspects of general intelligence. He defined intelligence as the aggregate of global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his or her environment (Wechsler, as cited in Prins, Van Niekerk and Weyers, 2011:47). Wechsler's ideas were followed by Gardner (1983), who proposed a theory of multiple types of intelligence that included forms of cognitive intelligence, musical and personal intelligence (Prins *et al.*, 2011:47). Gardner (1983) conceptualised intelligence as an intra- psychic capacity and an interpersonal skill. Intrapersonal intelligence assists one to act in ways that are appropriate to one's needs, goals, and abilities, while interpersonal intelligence includes the ability to observe moods, desires and intentions of others and to act on these observations. It was after this period that researchers began to challenge the traditional Intelligence Quotient (IQ)-based view of intelligence. More recently, the concept of emotional intelligence has emerged, adding depth to the concept of human intelligence. Reddy, Haritha and Neerraja (2012:27) views emotional intelligence as the capacity to effectively perceive, express, understand and manage emotions in a professional and effective manner at work.

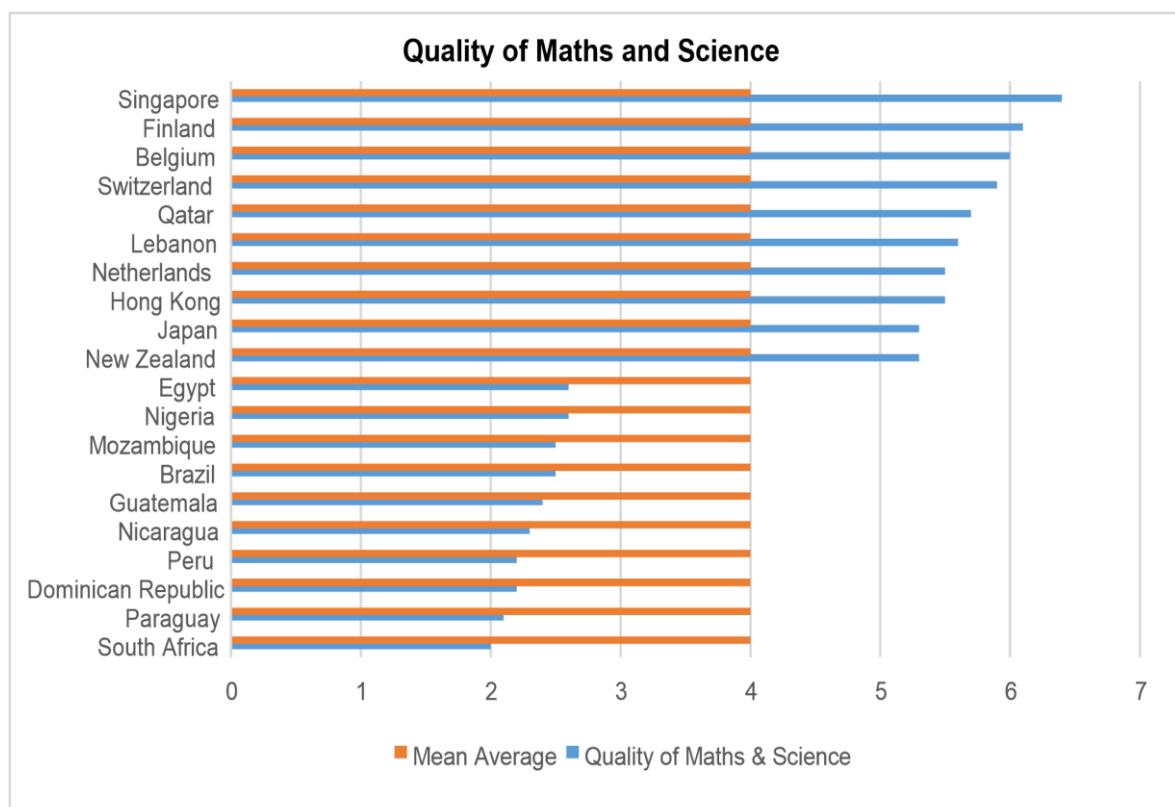
Bar-On (2010:57) is of the view that emotional intelligence is an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies, and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with an environmental demands and pressures. The researcher argues that working with the communities is not an easy task because of different characters which are good and bad. Municipal officials are given a mandate to improve the livelihood of people through providing services and infrastructure. However, when municipal officials such as councillors do not meet the communities' needs, communities tend to show emotions of anger and cause protest (Thornhill and Dlamini, 2012:38). In this regard, it is important for the municipal officials to develop emotional intelligence skills so that they can be able to manage communities and their emotions in the midst of disagreements.

2.4.2.3.8 Scarce skills

According to Merseta (2016:1), a special category of skills are scarce skills, which refers to skills demanded in occupations where there is a scarcity of qualified and experienced people, currently or anticipated in the future. This scarcity may be due to a lack of skilled people or skilled people are available but do not meet certain employment criteria. Klosters (2014:17) supports this viewpoint by stating that skills are a critical factor of success for job seekers. The global economic crisis has exacerbated the risk that a growing number of people, particularly youth and low educated individuals, are becoming disconnected from the labour market because the labour market can only afford scarce skills. The former is referred to as 'absolute scarcity': suitably skilled people are not available, for example, because they are

demand by a new or emerging occupation, where there are few, if any, people in the country with the requisite skills (qualification and experience) and where education and training providers have yet to develop learning programmes to meet the skills requirements. Merseta (2016:1) further asserts that the latter refers to ‘relative scarcity’. Here suitably skilled people are available but do not meet other employment criteria, such as geographical location (they are unwilling to work outside a certain area), or equity considerations (where there are few, if any, candidates with the requisite skills from a specific population group). ‘Replacement demand’ also reflects a relative scarcity and refers to the case where there are people in education and training (in formal institutions and the workplace) who are in the process of acquiring the necessary skills but they are not yet available to meet replacement demand. Goga and Van der Westhuizen (2012:31) point out that science, technology, and mathematics remain scarce skills in South Africa. In the manufacturing sector, manufacturing managers, carpenters and joiners, textile and leather goods production operators and machinists have been cited as trades with scarce skills.

Figure 2.1: Quality Maths and Science Subjects



(Source: World Economic Forum: Global Information Technology Report, 2016).

The poor quality of the South African (SA) education system contributes immensely to the poor performance in Maths and Science subjects. Figure 2.3 below shows the global quality of SA education system, where globally, the country was ranked third from last on the quality of its education, and it is clear that the country was ranked last when it comes to its performance on the Maths and Science subjects (Takawira, 2019:27). It is evident from the quality of education and that of maths and science in the country that there is still an acute shortage of engineering skills much needed for the development of sustainable infrastructure in the country. Skills shortage is also attributed to the increased demand for highly skilled personnel around the world (Edge, 2018:1).

2.5 PURPOSE OF TRAINING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

The purpose of training is to help people learn, and also develop the skills that are needed to do the work effectively and efficiently. Thus, training has to be directed towards achieving the organisational goals and objectives. Jehanzeb and Bashir (2012:59) state that internationally, organisations provide training and skills development programmes to their employees, in order to improve their skills and abilities, so as to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of an organisation (Masadeh, 2012:63). The purpose of training and skills development are clearly discussed below.

2.5.1 To improve the performance of employees that perform unsatisfactorily because of skill deficiencies

Grobler, Wörnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield (2011:343) are of the view that the purpose of training and skills development is to improve the performance of employees that perform unsatisfactorily because of skill deficiencies. Romiszowski (2016:98) argues that training cannot solve all the problems of poor performance. However, it can minimise those problems. Sometimes, when the selection of new employees is done, organisations are not able to detect that the candidate does not possess the needed skills; this can be established only when the new employee assumes his/her duties. Therefore, that gap between what the individual can do and what the individual is supposed to do, can be closed by training. Hunter (2012:253) supports this viewpoint by stating that training and skills development improves the organisational performance, as well as organisational effectiveness. It is therefore crucial for the municipalities to understand that training and skills development play an important role in the improvement of municipal services in the sense that if human resources working for municipalities are developed and trained then the municipal services will be improved.

2.5.2 To update the employee skills when a new system such as a new technology is introduced in an organisation

Dzansi and Dzansi (2010:996) emphasise that poor quality of service delivery raises questions about justice perceptions of human resources management practices in South African municipalities. Competing perspective of training and skills development is that it is primarily about helping individuals in organisations learn and grow. This perspective of training and skills development argues that learning is the mechanism for empowering individuals by equipping them with skills and knowledge required for technological and occupational change. In this regard, Grobler, *et al.*, (2011:343) point out that the purpose of training is to update the employee skills when a new system such as a new technology is introduced in an organisation. In the world of technology, there are always new updated programmes which employees need to know, so that they can be applied for efficiency purposes.

Pingle (2015:12) asserts that in the last two decades the software industry has grown at a very high rate and software upgrades have become a frequent practice. One of the main reasons for software upgrades is the innovation in hardware. For example, benefits from improvements in computer hardware have enabled faster speeds, larger storage, etc. Software development firms, as a strategy, are no longer supporting older versions of software. For example, in 2014 Microsoft announced the end of support for Windows XP, which was launched in 2001. Consequently, training and skills development would be needed, whenever a new software programme is introduced into the system. Karakayaa and Yilmaz (2013:326) indicated that Karabuk University strategically decided to offer electronic-training in specific fields. Rapid changes in information technology and national education policies focusing on workforce training, vocational and adult education forced universities to renew their traditional education policy. In last 20 years' competition between universities offering e-learning increased significantly. Electronic-learning is a radical change in formal education.

2.5.3 To avoid skills obsolescence

According to Pingle (2015:12), skills obsolescence is the degree to which professionals lack the up-to-date knowledge or skills necessary to maintain effective performance in their current or future work roles. Obisi (2011:82) affirms that obsolescence occurs when organisations cannot keep up with the new methods and processes that would enable them to do their work more effectively and more efficiently. Training and skills development foster the initiative and the creativity of employees, and help to prevent obsolescence. On the other hand, Pingle (2015:12) further points out that the management of skills and knowledge is very important to retain the people with specific skillsets for the sustainment of long life systems. The key to mitigate this form of obsolescence is to keep track of skillsets of

employees and provide training necessary as required. If skills obsolescence is not tackled, it can negatively affect service delivery in the municipalities.

The researcher noted that most municipal officials have hard skills which they have acquired through classroom training, however there are some municipal officials who lack soft skills such as problem-solving, communication, creativity, critical-thinking and relationship building. This kind of skill obsolescence has to be avoided, because in the real world one has to engage, interact and communicate with people. Moreover, municipal officials have to come up with innovative and creative ideas regardless of having certificates. The world is changing and community needs are changing. Hence, municipal officials do not have to react to change, rather they have to create change themselves (Thang, Quang and Buyens, 2010:28).

2.5.4 To deal with organisational problems

Ghazzawi and Cook (2015:2) point out that organisational problems are inevitable. As organisations continue to diversify, the opportunities for workplace problems intensify. Organisations typically face one or more of three potential levels of conflict, employee, team or organisation issues. Most of the time, the underlying causes of these problems are the lack of open communications. Karakayaa and Yilmaz (2013:325) assert that the most important stage at problem solving process is identifying the problem. Grobler, *et al.*, (2011:343) argue that job stress, conflict, absenteeism are organisational problems that influence performance. In South Africa, provincial government entities are experiencing numerous challenges in rendering efficient services. This sentiment is echoed by Gaffoor and Cloete (2010:1) who claim that the demand for efficient and effective delivery of services in South Africa has increased in recent years. Gouillart and Billings (2013:1) posit that organisations who have an interest in that problems will contribute to solution by engaging and interacting in jointly created platforms. Grobler, *et al.*, (2011:343) further suggest that training employees is one way of solving organisational problems. This is because learning from failures is a key to organisational transformation. It does involve skills, systems, and capabilities.

Therefore, the purpose of training and skills development is to solve organisational problems and increase productivity or quality of work. This was supported by Jehanzeb and Bashir (2012:63) and Thang, Quang and Buyens (2010:40) who indicated that organisations that are providing training and skills development programmes for their employees, achieve higher levels of employee satisfaction and lower levels of employee turnover and employee absenteeism. On the other hand, the researcher is of the view that to improve the capacity of municipalities to perform their functions, effective problem solving skills should be put in

place, and enable employees to analyse problems, identify problem severity and assess the impact of alternative solutions. Workplace training designed to develop problem solving skills helps employees to work more efficiently with co-workers, customers, partners, and suppliers. Vorenberg, Adcock, Harrington, Kane and Bliss (2015:273) indicates that trained participants learn to use available resources to resolve issues in a constructive manner. Additionally, they practice reaching consensus by seeing a problem from a professional, not personal, perspective. Training games, including brainstorming activities and online business simulations, prepare participants for workplace situations.

2.5.5 To orientate new employees (induction)

The purpose of induction is to enable an individual to acquire knowledge and skills for adequate performance of a given task/job. According to the study conducted by Chidambaram, Ramachandran and Thevar (2013:140), induction program is the first core step to form foundations for new starters or even the existing employees under functional transfer. Kebenei (2014:2) asserts that induction ensures new employees a good start. There is a cliché that first impressions last. Grobler, *et al.*, (2011:343) is of that when new employees are hired, they form their impressions about the organisation and its managers. The impression may be favourable or unfavourable; and this may influence their job satisfaction and productivity. Therefore, it is crucial for organisations to orientate new employees through training and skills development, so that they can render them comfortable in their jobs.

2.5.6 To prepare for promotion and managerial succession

Training and skills development enable employees to gather the skills that would be needed for promotional posts. If an organisation fails to provide such training and skills development, it may lose its most promising employees. According to Amin (2013:1275), some employees enter into training and skills development in order to get promotion. Obisi (2011:82) notes that training and skills development enables employees to grow in the organisation and rise to higher positions; and this increases the employee's earning power, as well as job security. Khan, Khan and Khan (2011:63) shares these sentiments in stating that the growth of employees in an organisation enhances employees' capabilities. Hence, Hunter (2012:253) is of the view that sometimes, employees with potential, or with an aptitude to learn, can be promoted to senior positions, and then trained and developed accordingly.

However, the researcher is of the view that it should be taken into consideration that an employee should be provided induction when he has been promoted to senior position so that his performance can also improve. Baddapuri (2020:1) states that this is because induction is an important part of the training activities which organisations should engage in

with the overall aims of increasing productivity and employee motivation while improving the organisation's culture and attracting a high calibre of workers. Thus, these workers are likely to be more committed if the quality of the organisation's training activities is high. To derive at the maximum benefit, all training should be linked to the strategic mission of the organisation for this will help the organisation to realise its goals (Byrne, 2010:20). Therefore, Grobler, *et al.*, (2011:343) argues that if organisations fails to provide such training, it may lose its most promising employees.

2.6 THE ROLE OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN ENHANCING PERFORMANCE

Ncube (2015:296) states that the performance gaps in the local sphere of government remain a cause for concern. Performance gaps manifest in the high incidence of poor audit reports, under-spending/overspending, poorly maintained infrastructure, poor service delivery, large and growing consumer debt problems, and billing challenges. The Local Government Turnaround Strategy (2009:11) concurs that the publication of reports by the Auditor-General on financial statements and the performance of municipalities show that municipalities in South Africa are still struggling to perform efficiently and effectively. There is a need for effective, efficient, and sound financial management, and achievable progress regarding proper and clean audit outcomes by the municipalities (Mazibuko and Fourie, 2013:132). Therefore, it is necessary for the public sector organisations to train and develop the skills of its personnel, to improve organisational, team and individual performance (Rodriguez and Walters, 2017:206). In this study, the role that skills development plan can play in enhancing performance will be discussed in detail below:

2.6.1 To improve productivity in the workplace

According to Antwerpen and Ferreira (2016:85), improving productivity in the workplace also means improving skills. Productivity is commonly defined as a ratio between the output volume and the volume of inputs. In other words, it measures how efficiently production inputs, such as labour and capital, are being used in an economy to produce a given level of output (Rycroft, 2013:149). In this context, labour refers to the municipal officials, and capital refers to municipal funds. Output refers to services and infrastructure provided to the communities. Mafini and Pooe (2013:1) point out that, questions relating to the performance of public organisations are based on the expectation that government should supply public goods and services more effectively and efficiently. This is necessitated by the approach of the New Public Management (NPM), which advocates for the public sector to operate like the private sector. NPM emphasises efficiency and effectiveness (Islam, 2015:141). Section 195 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) provides that efficient, economic, and effective use of resources must be promoted within the

public sector. This entails efficient and effective work performance and work being done in the shortest time and at the lowest cost by the municipal officials (Parkies, 2015:19).

Figure 2.2: New public management

Conceptualizing New Public Management



(Source: Vignieri, 2020:1).

NPM is still new in the public sector as for years it has been used in the private sector where efficiency is mainly focused on economic gain. In the public sector it focuses on social benefits as the government is mandated to ensure public welfare (Shayamano, 2017:29). The study conducted by Kuhlengisa (2018:25) revealed that the objective of any public institution plays a vital role in gauging the level of efficiency and effectiveness and it is of paramount importance to train and develop skills of employees as this has an impact to improved performance. Shiraev (2010:189) states that efficient and effective work performance has its roots on the late enthusiast of industrial efficiency Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856-1915), an American mechanical engineer who was always looking for efficiency improvements within the production industry. Turan (2015:1102) asserts that Taylor's notion led to a well-known scientific management theory, also called time and motion studies.

According to Taylor, organisations should hire the right workers for each job, and train them to work at maximum efficiency (Shiraev, 2010:189). Taylor's goal was to raise efficiency through training. Efficiency is demonstrated through low costs and timing of tasks, to avoid wasting time, in order to achieve the predetermined goals (Nassazi, 2013:11). In this regard, Taylor was avoiding the problems of delays in the attainment of predetermined goals. For this reason, Taylor's concern was to have increased productivity for improving performance (Motubatse, 2016:42). Taylor's perspective is applicable in the South African municipalities because there is a rising need for productive employees within the municipalities, as stipulated by the Auditor-General's reports on the performance of municipalities (Seitheisho,

2019:1). According to the Auditor-General's report (2017-18), there is a skills shortage of leadership (supervision), appropriate planning, finance (budgeting, prioritisation and supply chain management) and project management skills as one of the main reasons for delays on service delivery and infrastructure development by municipalities (Auditor-General of South Africa, 2018:3).

The skills shortage crisis in local government needs to be dealt with as a priority in the skills development plan, enabling the municipality to optimise skilled staff members in ensuring effective service delivery and infrastructure development (Mazibuko and Fourie, 2013:131). For example, improved financial planning will help the municipality to find the best possible ways to use the available funds efficiently (Mahlaku, 2013:2). The study conducted by Mathebula (2016:50) agrees that, in terms of Section 153 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), municipalities are required to manage and structure their budgeting and planning processes in order to give priority to the basic needs and also promote social and economic development of communities. Based on this statement, the importance of financial skills in the public sector cannot be over emphasised given that finance is a key to service delivery and infrastructure development (Sibanda, 2017:316). The severity of the financial skills shortage in the public sector is stressed by the South African Institute of Government Auditors (SAIGA, 2011:1) as although South Africa's public sector generally experiences skills shortages at many levels, the financial sector is particularly adversely affected.

2.6.2 To motivate employees

According to Shayamano (2017:2), skills development of municipal personnel plays a vital part as it enhances motivation and growth of employees. Jones, Miller, Pickernell and Packham (2011:643) concur that skills development does not only add to employee productivity, but it does motivate and inspire employees by letting them know how important their jobs are and provides them with the necessary information required for them to perform their duties. This is because the information which employees acquire through skills development programmes motivate them to improve their skills required to perform their duties at the desired standard (Kolzow, 2014:11). Therefore, Minks (2014:1) concurs that skills development can be a great opportunity for an employee whose manager has identified specific skills that can be enhanced. Hence, municipalities in South Africa should also play this exceptional role in equipping the skills of the employees. Ensor (2018:1) argues that less than half of the accounting officers and chief financial officers employed by the country's 257 municipalities meet the minimum competency levels required for them to perform their functions.

Ensor (2018:1) further points out that the former Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene indicated that steps are being taken to ensure that municipal officials acquire the requisite skills. A lack of skills at municipal level means that service delivery is compromised. Mpofu (2011:2) suggests that one way of improving the efficient and effective provision of services is through improved employee performance, which can be achieved through quality employee training and skills development programmes. Elnaga and Imran (2013:139) confirms that employees will become more efficient and productive if the skills development programme is conducted to their satisfaction. Minks (2014:1) asserts that an employee who is particularly good at written communication or with numbers might be given the opportunity to develop those skills further in skills development programmes. The fact that employees occupy positions without necessary skills does not mean that they are incapable (Dobre, 2013:5). Therefore, municipalities should motivate employees to develop their skills further by offering them with bursaries so that they can study part-time or correspondence learning at the tertiary institution closer to home. Consequently, before bursaries can be provided to the employees, the Human Resources Department in the municipality ensures that Skills Development Plan is prepared (White Paper for Post School Education and Training, 2013:8).

Mabope (2018:73) is of the view that the Skills Development Plan identify skills shortages; establish targets for the training and development of employees in specific occupational categories; include specific plans to meet the training and development needs of historically disadvantaged persons; and ensure that the skills development training, in terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) as contained in the Workplace Skills Plan is taken into account. The Head of Department ensure that sufficient funds for skills development programmes are accessible to employees at all levels of the workforce. Shayamano (2017:2) articulate that a skilled employee is generally a motivated person and a better performer as compared to a non-skilled employee so skills development programme result in guaranteed efficiency and improved services.

2.6.3 To provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills

Pillay, Subban and Qwabe (2008:310) argue that it must also be kept in mind that communities' needs change and that public sector officials should constantly learn new skills, to keep abreast of changes and meet the changing needs of communities. In this regard, the closeness of local government to the places where the needs are felt, means that it is strategically located to perform its constitutional mandate of providing services and infrastructure to communities (Nkhahle 2015:5). However, many municipalities in South Africa face challenges of prioritisation of community needs, whereby the lack of provision of essential services, such as water and sanitation, shows that the municipalities are failing to prioritise community needs in their budgets (Pretorius, 2017:7). This is where communities often lodge complaints to the councilors, requesting the provision of services. Unfortunately,

councillors do not respond to such complaints. Consequently, communities become impatient, resulting in violent protests (Masiya, Davids and Mazenda, 2019:30). According to Maila (2018:1), communities who reside in Kubjana, Mokwakwaila, Mmamphakati, Bodupe, Motupa, GaKgapane, and Mokwasele in Bolobedu were involved in service delivery protests, demanding clean running water, proper sanitation and raising concerns about the Greater Letaba-Local Municipality's failure to make land available for cemeteries.

Maila (2018:1) further argues that communities accused the municipality of billing the communities for services which were not rendered, failing to fix pot holes and re-gravel the dusty roads in the villages. The inhabitants of the Mokwasele village blamed the protest on the ward councillor, who was refusing to hear their complaints. Nekhavhambe (2017:Vii) suggests that councillors should be trained to become good ambassadors of the Municipality to their electorates. For this reason, councillors should receive training, which will give them an opportunity to learn soft skills that include creativity, complex problem-solving, relationshipbuilding, teamwork, communication, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking (Rahmat, Adnan and Mohtar, 2019:29). These are appropriate skills for the councillors because they are expected to interact with the communities. For example, better communication between the municipality and citizens will help council determine the needs of the community and find alternatives to meet such needs (Molaba, 2016:6).

2.6.4 To fill skills gaps within organisations

Lavoie (2017:1) observe that skills gap impact negatively on organisational performance. Skills gap is a significant gap between an organisation's current capabilities and the skills it needs to achieve its goals. Khambule (2013:29) states that organisations are unable to grow because the skills that they require to do work is little even from employees who are new from institutions of higher learning. Knowledge, skill, and experience are gradually becoming scarce in organisations around the world. Brusino, Bruen and Schaner (2010:3) asserts that organisations are experiencing gaps in leadership and executive, professional or industry specific, managerial and supervisory, communication and interpersonal, technical, Information Technology, and systems, customer service and process and project management skills. Knechel and Salterio (2016:17) posit that the gap between educational attainment and the need for skills is one of the causes of the skills gap. According to the study conducted by Oelofse (2016:7) in the municipalities, skills gaps are reported at most levels ranging from senior management to general workers and include technical, managerial, project management and other soft skills. Rao (2014:78) is of the view that staff in senior management positions mostly has the necessary skills, but in some municipalities, the lack of engineering and managerial skills stood out as well as the lack of experience that is required by a person in such a position.

Oelofse (2016:7) further affirms that an even greater need is identified in the middle management group, where the workforce might have obtained the necessary qualifications for a specific position, but their experience and practical training is not up to standard. The Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (2014:8) stipulates that the middle management group is challenged in the sense that not only do they need all the skills required to be a manager, but they also need the academic qualifications as well as the practical experience to be able to do their own job as well as to guide the staff that they supervise. Moreover, Van der Waldt, Fourie, Jordaan and Mabugu (2018:176) add that artisans with the necessary experience and specialised practical training as required for working on municipal infrastructure and networks and including maintenance are scarce. Thenmozhi (2014:12) articulate that it is important where young, qualified artisans obtain their experience, for example, where technical people do their trade. Using electricians as an example, some employers can only provide experience on networks and not on metering, or the other way round, and then such a trained electrician will lack the combination of skill that is needed in municipalities (Bukula, 2014:109).

Oelofse (2016:7) furthermore argues that similarly, municipalities need fitters, and plumbers trained in domestic plumbing who have the practical experience to build, operate and maintain municipal networks and infrastructure. A large proportion of the municipalities do not have the veteran engineer or artisan in service anymore to guide and help the new appointees and graduates to obtain the necessary practical experience that would enable these plumbers, fitters and electricians to operate independently in future (Kalina and Rogan, 2017:3). This means that municipalities should revise their skills development plans to address skills shortage and fill the skills gap for infrastructural development and maintenance. Therefore, the right learning solution will help close skills gaps within the municipalities, increase productivity and improve organisational outcomes (Office of the Presidency, 2014). This will result in people having the necessary technical skills, communication skills, human relations, and other softer skills to improve the general operations in municipalities. Khambule (2013:29) adds that management of people is also important because municipal workers bring their personal issues to work and managers need to be able to handle their human resources well. Consequently, project management and personnel management skills are an advantage in most positions.

2.6.5 To encourage workers to participate in learning programmes

The Municipal Institute of Learning (2010:1) encourages municipalities to enhance the capacity of municipal officials by becoming learning organisations. Dawood, Mammona, Fahmeeda and Ahmed (2015:94) contend that learning organisations are those organisations that create and support continuous learning opportunities for staff. Therefore,

according to learning organisations, employees will be required to undergo a series of tests and short courses throughout their tenure, to ensure that they continue to develop the necessary skills to remain at the forefront of knowledge and the cutting edge of their field (National Treasury, 2011:1). On the other hand, some organisations will have in-house training opportunities and grants, for further learning for employees. In-house training programs are presented to employees of the municipality by internal service providers, to enable employees to acquire skills, knowledge and other attributes and develop their potential to meet the municipality's future human resource needs (Peters and Van Nieuwenhuyzen, 2014:281). This is necessitated by the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) (2019:1), which provides an environment for the municipalities to facilitate the training and upskilling of various employees and people involved in local government structures.

This entails creating and implementing a variety of skills development interventions, such as the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) and learning programmes, aimed at local government employees and others working within the sphere, such as traditional leaders and ward councilors, to enable them to make the most of their potential to performance (Sector Skills Plan Framework and strategy document, 2016:1). For example, municipalities address the employees' skills gaps by implementing learnership programs, which takes twelve months or more (depending on the length of the program) which is comprising of 70% practical and 30% theory (Tshilongamulenzhe, 2012:142). Employees are encouraged to attend classes during working hours and will be expected to submit portfolios of evidence for assessment purposes, in order to obtain a qualification (Marais and Du Plessis, 2015: 321). Learnership programmes enable the learners to acquire the skills needed to address the requirements of the local government competency framework. Learning programmes lead to high employee morale, whereby employees develop positive attitude and confidence in how they perform their work (Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority, 2019:1).

2.7 CHALLENGES FACING THE MUNICIPALITIES AS A RESULT OF POOR SKILLS

Shava and Chamisa (2018:3) state that the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande, has argued that it is crucial to have a solid public sector that is goal-oriented and meets the required competence levels. In contrast, the South African Local Government Association (2014:1) argued that there are some challenges of skills deficit and poor performance that is acute in local government. In this study, the challenges facing the municipalities as a result of poor skills will be discussed in detail below:

2.7.1 Poor service delivery

According to Eigema (2007:1), service delivery is the government's key task of serving the communities. Therefore, the best standard to measure government performance is through service delivery to the people. Section 152 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South

Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) provide for municipalities to provide services to communities in a sustainable manner. However, there are some challenges that hinder the municipalities' goal of providing quality services, as set out by Portfolio Municipalities of South Africa (2008:59) which include the issue of untrained municipal officials, exacerbating into shortage of skills. This notion is verified by the deployment of managers without the relevant skills to review, co-ordinate, facilitate and implement the municipal Integrated Development Plan (IDP) processes, which contributes to poor service delivery (Ngqebe, 2017:4). Consequently, many local municipalities are still struggling to effect their developmental mandate, to plan for the provision of potable water, electricity, sanitation, and waste management through IDP. For this reason, there is a skills shortage of appropriate planning focused on the needs of communities. For example, if a municipal service delivery project is not well-planned; it will result in delays in project completion.

2.7.2 Poor co-ordination of municipal Infrastructure

The South African Local Government Conference (2013:14) observe that the state of South African local government in general is presently not in a good state, as most districts and local municipalities do not offer training and skills development which is tailor-made for their officials in areas such as internal controls, finance, human capital and engineering services. This led to the Public Service Trainers' Conference, held in 2014, revealing that there is a shortage of skills in infrastructure development and financial management at the local sphere of government, as a result of the deployment of employees who are without the requisite skills. This notion is correlated by Balkaran (2014:24), who argued that there were insufficient engineers, technical skills and effective management of artisan programmes, as well as an inability by management to deal with the breakdown in infrastructure.

In supporting of the above statement, Manyaka and Madzivhandila (2013:174) argue that municipalities are faced with the challenge of implementing road Infrastructure policy in their area of jurisdiction. This is manifested in haphazard road maintenance projects which are incomplete. The root cause of this challenge is confirmed by the South African Local Government Conference (2013:14), which reiterates that research findings on expenditure revealed that most municipalities received adverse budget reports, and it was found that almost R2 billion budgeted for infrastructure was not spent in most municipalities countrywide. According to the current researcher's perspective, insufficient money for implementing the infrastructural services is not the problem; rather, a shortage of financial management skills (budgeting and prioritisation) is the problem which hinders the successful implementation of infrastructural services by the management.

2.7.3 Poorly-capacitated officials

According to Koma (2010:115), capacity refers to the availability of and access to concrete or tangible resources (human, financial, material, and technological) and having the knowledge to execute the assigned duties. The National Treasury (2011:14) posits that poor capacity is the root cause of all municipal performance failures. This is evidenced by the significant number of municipalities which do not have the required individual, managerial, administrative, financial, and institutional capacity to meet the rising needs of the communities. Manyaka and Madzivhandila (2013:174) concur that, during the year 2007, 31% of municipal managers had qualifications other than those related to finance, law, public administration, planning and development, and 28% of chief financial officers did not hold finance-related qualifications. Furthermore, 35% of technical managers were without engineering qualifications.

An evaluation of the LGSETA mandatory grant process (2013:16) concurs that municipalities do not have the engineering capacity to manage their valuable infrastructure assets, and South Africa suffers from a chronic shortage of municipal engineers. This contributes negatively to the performance of municipalities, as these senior municipal executives and technical managers lacked expert views and opinions due to the positions which they occupy. The essence of this perspective is that the investment of capacity-building within the municipalities, as mandated by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), is insufficient and portrays an obstacle to skills development.

2.7.4 Cadre deployment

Tshishonga (2014:1) states that cadre deployment refers to the placement of cadres based on loyalty, rather than skills, knowledge, and competency, to do the job assigned. According to Gwala (2018:12), cadre deployment is crippling the institutions of government. South Africa's ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), introduced a policy on cadre deployment to place its trusted cadres in strategic positions, thus making officials accountable primarily to their political principals, rather than to the communities (Ncapayi and Ntsebeza, 2019:34). The greatest injustice is committed when incompetent and unqualified people are deployed into administration as municipal managers, chief financial officers, and heads of certain services, such as local economic development, and technical services. Butler (2010:45) argues that what is worse is that these cadres are continually failing to plan their work effectively, manage their projects skilfully, and plan their budgets wisely. Twala (2014:164) also asserts that when some of the cadres fail to perform their duties, they become arrogant, knowing that they will be shielded by those who deployed them.

Makoni (2013:2) concurs that people deployed as cadres of the ANC in the different local municipalities are without the relevant skills and qualifications because it is assumed that loyalty is more important than merit, and is therefore a serious obstacle on efficient public service. The result of this unfairness leads to a skills mismatch, which worsens municipalities' developmental failures. According to the Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (2009:1), various governance and service delivery challenges are a result of the cadre deployment policy and therefore negatively affect the performance of municipalities. These challenges include a lack of transparency and accountability, financial mismanagement, corruption, fraud and generally poor performance, as indicated by service delivery backlogs in the provision of water, housing and sanitation. What is worse is that cadre deployment policy compromises the recruitment and promotion of suitably, talented, and qualified people to do the job.

2.7.5 Community protests

Sibiya (2014:250) argues that improper implementation of skills development plans also fuels violent community protests. This is exacerbated by lack of expertise, which has led to severe service backlogs that impact on many poor communities that yearn for the provision of basic services for their survival. The Parliament of the Republic of South Africa in 2009 argued that, although some municipalities lack adequate funds to carry out their constitutional mandate of providing services; some municipalities underspend the allocated funds due to poor leadership. This is attributable mainly to skills shortages in project management and finance (budgeting and prioritisation) and has prevented certain projects from being started or completed. Managa (2012:16) acknowledges this reality and adds that protestors have claimed that some of the causes of community protests are misuse of government resources as well as lack of capacity to complete projects that assist communities. This lack of capacity is hampered by prevailing nepotism and incompetent staff, which play a part in the hiring of people without the necessary skills.

White (2014:207) asserts that when residents are protesting, they tend to cause tensions, destroying road infrastructure and public properties, such as clinics, hospitals, police cars and public transport; hence, this is a problem because people need these public properties, as they are essential for improving the quality of their lives. Consequently, violent, and disruptive community protests cost municipalities a significant amount of resources on rebuilding the destroyed infrastructure using money that could have been spent in providing other services. This notion shows the prevalence of insufficient skills development plans within the municipalities resulting in negative outcomes on the welfare of the communities.

2.8 LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK FOR THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Nduduzo (2013:1) states that municipalities face more legislative compliance issues than their private sector counterparts because they are strategically positioned to serve the needs of the communities. Hattingh (2000:169) asserts that the skills development legislations aim to promote an integrated approach to education and training; to overcome the past fragmentation between theoretical and practical work between brain work and hand work, technical and academic training and between formal, informal and non-formal training. An evaluation of the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) mandatory grant process (2013:29) points out that the key aim of the skills development legislations was to introduce a more strategic approach to skills planning in the workplace, in line with international trends. The intention was to move away from a supply-driven approach, simply offering a “shopping list” of training opportunities or not offering workplace training opportunities at all – to a demand-led approach, whereby employers are asked to analyse the skills required for economic and employment growth and then offer meaningful training opportunities to employees. This is the manifestation that the South African local government sector is built on strong skills development legislations. In this regard, the legislative framework supporting skills development plans is provided below:

2.8.1 The White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), 1994

Bhorat and Kimani (2018:2) assert that, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was introduced in 1994 by the African National Congress (ANC) as a framework to integrate growth, development, reconstruction, and redistribution. Havenga, Menaha and Visagie (2011:12271) assert that the RDP became an official legislation of the government with the aims and objectives of establishing integrated, coherent socio-economic policy frameworks that sought to mobilise all people and resources towards the final eradication of apartheid and to build a democratic, non-racial South Africa with the local government playing the major role in the transformation of historically disadvantaged people. The RDP had people centred at the heart of rebuilding the new South African economy. One of its major programmes was on infrastructure, intended to make services such as water, electricity, telecommunication, transport, health, education, and training, accessible to all South Africans.

KloppersI and PienaarII (2014:1) posit that the government wanted to improve living conditions through better access to basic physical and social services, health care, and education and training for urban and rural communities. On the other hand, Bhorat and Kimani (2018:2) further state that the infrastructure programme was meant to stimulate the then weak economy, through increased demand for materials and job creation. In its agenda

on building the economy, it considered a priority the extension of water and sanitation services to 12 million people who lacked access to water, and 21 million people who had inadequate sanitation. Hence the policy “water security for all”. Under this policy, the government recognised the right of citizens to access water, and consciously acknowledged the economic value of water, therefore initiating a drive to encourage sustainable management of water resources.

However, Van der Westhuizen and Swart (2015:1) argue that poor skills have a negative impact on the community development programmes. The effectiveness and efficiency of the community development programmes will be realised if the knowledge, skills and attitudes of government officials and communities have been enhanced. There are many proposals, strategies and policy programmes contained in the RDP. They are grouped into five major policy programmes that are linked one to the other. One of the five key programmes is developing human resources. The RDP White Paper: Discussion Document (1994:10) noted that people will be involved in the decision-making process, implementation, new job opportunities requiring new skills, gaining rewards for existing skills previously unrecognised, and in the managing and governing of society. This will empower them but can only succeed if there is also an appropriate education and skills development programmes. This deals with education from primary to tertiary level, from child care to advanced scientific and technological training. It focuses on young children, students, and adults. It deals with training in formal institutions and at the workplace. RDP paved the way for other skills development legislations in South Africa.

2.8.2 The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service, 1997

The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service (1997:20) stipulates that the South African municipalities should adopt the Human Resource Development (HRD) principles. These principles aim at assisting employees to acquire competencies that are required to perform their duties in an efficient manner, and to let the organisation reap the fruits of their know-how and talents. The Human Resource Development (HRD) principles should align with the vision adopted by the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service, 1997 of building a public service which produces diverse, competent and well-managed employees who are capable of, and committed to, delivering high quality services to the people of South Africa. Chapter 3 of the White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service, 1997 spells out the critical role that the organisational actors, specifically line managers, should play in the development of their staff, instead of having no role in the development of the employees entrusted to their care and leaving this to the behest of the Human Resource Department.

2.8.3 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996)

Nel, Werner, Poisat, Sono, Du Plessis, Ngalo, Van Hoek and Botha (2011:38) observe that the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) is the supreme law of the land. Therefore, everyone is ruled by it, including the municipalities. In this regard, the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), supports the skills development plans of the employees, so that employees can acquire particular knowledge and skills, in order to perform duties successfully. This is confirmed by Section 195 (1) (h) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), which stipulates that public administration must be governed by democratic principles and values such as good human-resource management and career-development practices in order to maximise human potential.

Section 195 (1) (c) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) further specifies that public administration must be development-oriented. This means that municipalities should create an environment where the Skills Development Plan is highly emphasised, promoted, and properly implemented, for the sake of achieving the organisational goals (Sheoraj, 2015:3). The 1996 constitutional perspective on the Skills Development Plan clearly stipulates the significance of municipalities in enhancing performance through acknowledging the employees as vehicles of organisational success and not instruments of complying with the legislation (Manyaka and Sebola, 2012:302).

2.8.4 The Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998)

The Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) is the main piece of legislation on which the Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy in South Africa is grounded. It presents public service with a solid strategy to cultivate skills. Section 2 (1) (a) of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) provides that municipalities should improve performance through giving employees prospects for acquiring new skills and knowledge by encouraging employers to use their workplaces as dynamic environment for learning. This is supported by Nel, Kirsten, Swanepoel, Erasmus and Poisant (2008:342) who state that the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) gives provision for municipalities to create workplace skills plans detailing the skills that are required in the workplace. According to Section 2 (1) of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998), the implementation of skills development plans will take place when municipalities promote investment in training and education and ensuring that the investment has good returns; providing municipal management with the opportunities for acquiring skills; encouraging management to participate in training programs including leadership; and redressing inequality in training and education in the workplace.

2.8.5 The Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999)

The South African Revenue Service (2017) views Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999) as a compulsory levy scheme whose purpose is to fund education and training in South Africa and is determined by an employer's salary bill. In this context the employer is the municipality. The funds are paid to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and are to be used to develop and improve skills of employees. Section 3 (1) of the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999) provides that employers should pay 1% of their payroll to the South African Revenue Service (SARS) every month. The levies paid to SARS are put in a special fund, whereby 80% is distributed to the different Sector Education and Training Authority (SETAs) and 20% is paid into the National Skills Fund (Malambe, 2016:1). The Ministers of Labour and Finance can, however, authorise an employer to pay such money directly to a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) under which it falls (Nel *et al.*, 2011:366). SETAs pay grants to employers in terms of the SETA Grant Regulations. These grants are called mandatory grants that employers get after structuring their Workplace Skills Plan (WSP). After getting these grants, employers use them to train their employees (Meyer, 2003:113). Therefore, employers are paid in cash, which gets transferred to their accounts and it depends on the amount that they have contributed as a skills levy.

2.8.6 The National Human Resource Management and Development Strategy (2013)

The National Human Resource Management and Development Strategy announced by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) in 2013 is another enabling legislation that aims to promote economic growth and skills development in the employment environment. The strategy attempts to set in place a framework for Human Resource Management (HRM) in municipalities in order to address the human resources challenges at the local government sphere (SALGA, 2013:30). The strategy can be considered as a blueprint for HRM for municipalities. The strategy proposes that municipalities should change their Human Resources Development (HRD) approach to be more strategic in order to facilitate performance improvement in municipalities through good HRM practices. Bos-Nehles, Van Riemsdijk and Looise (2013:1) agrees that the effectiveness of HRM depends on the presence of good HRM practices. Hence, the manner and context in which these practices are applied also plays a vital role. Bal, Bozkurt and Ertemsir (2014:1025) suggests that Human Resource Managers can increase the performance levels of their employees by designing HR functions and practices according to their expectations and by that way employees can feel that they are the most important assets of the organisations.

Zaitouni, Sawalha and ElSharif (2011:1) assert that in this perspective; HR functions and practices such as employee training, skills development, and performance evaluation have become very important. Monetary compensation, praise, appreciation and positive feedback

from managers and peers is important but not sufficient to keep employees productive. Skills development of employees is imperative to generate employee performance. Stewart and Brown (2011:1) asserts that effective HRM acquires quality employees, motivates them to maximize performance and helps meet their psychological and social needs. This leads to long term relationships with skilled and happy employees. HRM focuses on people in organisations. Thus, such people should be managed efficiently and effectively. The emphasis should be to identify their capabilities regardless of performance gaps through proper skills development programmes. This is because people are a major component of any organizations so organizations with more productive employees tend to be more successful.

The South African Local Government Association (2013:33) confirms that this would involve a greater involvement of the Human Resources (HR) Department in the strategic operations of municipalities through greater collaboration with management. More specifically, this strategy directs municipalities to work towards the achievement of the stated organisational objectives, which include, among others: ensuring the development of a sustainable human resource base; management development through ensuring that management adopt a facilitative management style; the development of an HRD culture conducive to development; engaging with key stakeholders to ensure continuous collaboration. The strategic document also recognises that the organisational actors such as HR department, line managers and employees have a specific role to play.

2.8.7 The Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (HRD-SA) 2010 – 2030

McGuire (2014:5) states that the Human Resource Development (HRD) strategy can be defined as the strategy that enables the process of a holistic learning encompassing a holistic approach to training and skills development to take place in society and organisation. The 2013 Human Development Report (HDR) of the United Nations Development Programme ranked South Africa 122 out of 181 countries in terms of effective human developmental criteria. It is recognised that South Africa requires an increase in human resource developmental capacity to ensure that future generations will have the requisite capacities, knowledge, and skills to generate income and reduce poverty in households and communities. Vermeulen (2011:5) posits that the HRD-SA emphasises that HRD demands an urgent response in addressing the significant developmental backlogs due to the legacy of apartheid and deep-rooted poverty. It demands a wide-ranging and determined response from government.

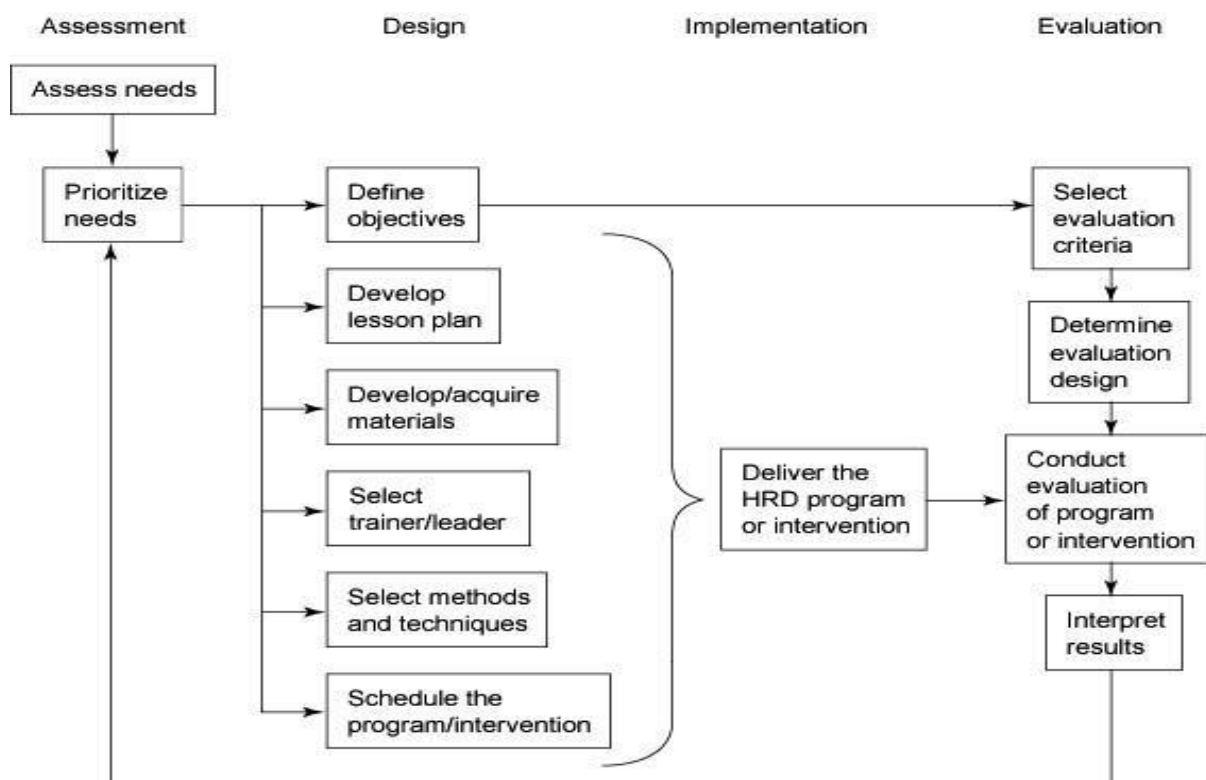
Ncube (2016:2) asserts that human resources are the most important resource in an organisation; they are the ones that provide talent, skills and effort that make organisations what they are. The same applies in local government, even more so because, without human resources the government cannot carry out its mandate. For this reason, the South African Local Government Association (2015:9) suggests that it is vital that Local Government organisations retain an efficient and effective human resource because it is the government at grassroots and they have a responsibility to account for the service delivery and well-being of the local communities. This places the municipalities under a lot of pressure to generate ways of developing strategies for HRD crucial to building a workforce with the ability to learn and develop their knowledge and skills (Nel, Du Plessis, Werner, Sono, Poisat, Van Hoek, Ngalo and Botha, 2014:199). Employees' skills are viewed as the basis for sustaining service delivery in the workplace. The skills acquired by the respective employees define the nature of a particular workforce since the Local Government sector renders a wide range of services to the community (Mzini, 2013:12).

It is the argument of this research that poor HRD strategies in municipalities manifest themselves in the poor performance of human resources and thence poor delivery of services. The Auditor General's report for 2012 reiterates that municipalities have been failing for many years to receive clean audits and this has raised questions about the competence of its public officials as far as service delivery to the communities is concerned. It has been acknowledged by some scholars such as Mpofu (2013:30) and Mzaca (2007:15) that there are some serious shortcomings in the local sphere of government, which include incompetence, corruption and mismanagement, all due to lack of capacity. Considering the level of poor performance and poor service delivery, other scholars Mzaca (2012) and Mpofu (2011) have raised the issue of poor HRD strategies as a challenge in Local Government which makes the development and training of employees uncoordinated and fragmented (LGSETA, 2013:47). Hence, Khan, Khan and Khan (2011:64) note that though there are many factors such as knowledge and job satisfaction, which leads to improved employee performance, the most important factor is proper training and skills development.

However, Ndlulue (2012:73) has raised some questions regarding whether HRD is investing in people or it is just a cost to organisations. This means that a comprehensive HRD strategy must have a link to both the organisational strategy and the human resource management strategy in organisations. The strategy should encompass the following; learning which is a process whereby behaviour and attitudes are changed, training which is very specific since it is concerned with mastering of a particular task, development, education which is the expansion of the individual's skills and knowledge, coaching also concerned with skills

whereby skills and knowledge are transferred from the older to the newer staff, and mentoring which is also a transfer of knowledge on abroad spectrum more like development. The targeted users of the strategy are not limited to policymakers, especially HR practitioners, at all three levels of government; that is, national, provincial, and local (municipal). Strategy will be a useful manual for training providers and managers in organisations who make decisions which affect their performance.

Figure 2.3: Framework for the HRD strategy



(Source: Werner and DeSimone, 2011:168).

This HRD strategy in Figure 2.4.8.1 above shows the importance of properly designing HRD interventions or programs. It is very important to carefully design the interventions because a bad design will result in objectives not being achieved which translates to a loss in terms valuable resources of time and capital. The design has to be according to the needs of the employees. Organisations that develop good designs for their programs according to the needs of their employees and the organisations always get the best results (Werner and DeSimone, 2011:168).

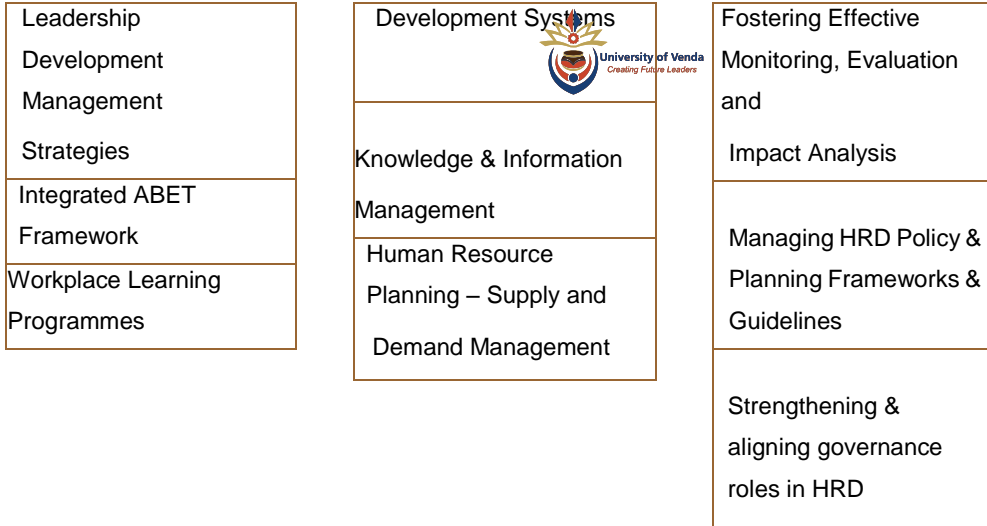
2.8.8 The Human Resources Development (HRD) Strategy for the Public Service (Vision 2015)

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) defines Human Resource Development in the Public Service as those efforts undertaken by organisations to ensure that employees are well prepared to undertake their responsibilities and grow into viable careers, thereby adding value to the productivity and service of their organisations, the motivation and performance of their peers and the attainment of the overall vision of the developmental state (Human Resource Development Strategic Framework (HRDSF) Vision, 2015:11). In this regard, the Human Resource Strategic Framework Vision 2015 was launched in 2008 and the revised edition of the strategy for the public service that was introduced in 2002. This is the strategy that coordinates Human Resources Development (HRD) activities for the entire Public Service. It is based on four core pillars of capacity development, organisational support structures, governance and institutional development needs as well as growth and economic developmental initiatives (The Strategic Framework for HRD in the Public Service, 2015:54).

Figure 2.4: A conceptual framework for Human Resource Development in the South African Public Service

BUILDING HUMAN CAPITAL FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE AND ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY

Fostering HEI & FETC Partnerships	Mobilisation of Management Support	Utilisation of the strategic role of SETAs
E-Learning Programmes for the Public Service	Career Planning and Talent Management	Values, Ethics & a Professional Code of Practice for HRD
A National / Provincial Public Service Academy with associated Provincial Academies	Managing Employee Health & Wellness	Promoting HR Learning Networks
Promoting Learnerships, Internships & Traineeships	Ensuring the Adequacy of Financial, Physical & Human Resources & Facilities	Managing the Effectiveness of Communication
Development Programmes of Professional Bodies	Promoting Appropriate Organisational Structures for HRD	
	Performance Management &	



Four Pillars for high performance in the South African Public Service through HRD

Legislative frameworks as foundation for HRD

(Source: The Strategic Framework for HRD in the Public Service, DPSA, 2015:56).

Figure 2.8.8.1 further illustrates that the legislative framework concerning HRD serves as a foundation for all HRD activities within the public service (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2015:54).

The vision for HRD in the South African Public Service, as illustrated in Figure 2.8.8.1, is to build human capital for high performance and enhanced service delivery. The four critical initiatives embody four pillars of strategic initiatives that consist of 29 areas of action required for the successful implementation of the HRD strategy in the public service. The capacity development initiative or pillar 1 focusses on the development of human capital to promote effective delivery of services (Department of Public Service and Administration, 2015:1). Pillar 1 emphasises the importance of the following strategic interventions to be implemented in the public service, namely: the promotion of workplace learning, learnerships, and internships; integration of adult basic education and training (ABET) initiatives; the development of leadership and management initiatives; the role of professional bodies; the establishment of effective e-learning; and promoting relationships with Institutions of Higher Learning (The Strategic Framework for HRD in the Public Service, 2015:54).

The second critical initiative or pillar 2, illustrated in Figure 2.1, known as the organisational or institutional support initiatives, focusses on those operational aspects upon which the HRD function is dependent. Pillar 2 focusses on specific strategic interventions such as effective HR planning, development of knowledge information systems, promotion of effective performance management, HRD, health, safety, and wellness programmes, strengthening of employees' career planning and the promotion of talent management. These strategic interventions are essential for effective and efficient institutional performance. Therefore, these areas should be strengthened to add value to promote human capital development and effective utilisation in the public service (The Strategic Framework for HRD in the Public Service, 2015:55).

The governance and institutional development initiatives as illustrated in pillar 3 in Figure 2.1, refer to the way HRD in the public service will be managed and promoted. Pillar 3 focusses on strengthening and aligning governance roles concerning HRD so that activities can be promoted. It emphasises the management of HRD policy and planning frameworks and guidelines to assist and support public officials in the implementing of HRD priorities as illustrate in Figure 2.1. The effective monitoring and evaluation of HRD systems, processes and impact analyses are further required as well as to monitor the impact of training interventions. Managing the effectiveness of communication should ensure that the HRD strategic framework is effectively communicated at all levels in national and provincial departments. Promoting values, ethics, and professional codes of practice in HRD are essential to promote and manage a code of ethical conduct among HRD professionals. Promoting human resource learning networks creates a culture of learning in the public service. The important role of sectoral education and training agencies (SETAs) is further required in strengthening capacity development of public officials (The Strategic Framework for HRD in the Public Service, 2015:59).

Figure 2.1 shows that pillar 4 or the economic growth and development initiative includes aspects such as the awareness and promotion of economic growth and development; capacity development of HRD professionals to enable them to promote successful implementation of HRD initiatives; promoting integrated and inter-sectoral approaches to the development of HRD priorities; to be responsive to the millennium development goals; and to promote capacity development interventions to integrate New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), African Union (AU) and global programmes and initiatives in public service delivery (The Strategic Framework for HRD in the Public Service, 2015:60).

2.8.9 The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS 3) 2011 – 2016

The National Skills Development Strategy III follows on the NSDS II and NSDS I respectively, developed by the National Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). NSDS III (2011-2016:4) states that the key driving force of this strategy is improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the skills development system. Nzimande (2011:1) asserts that this strategy represents an explicit commitment to encouraging the linking of skills development to career paths, career development and promoting sustainable employment and in-work progression. NSDS III seeks to encourage and actively support the integration of workplace training with theoretical learning, and to facilitate the journey individuals make from school, college or university, or even from periods of unemployment, to sustained employment and in-work progression. Emphasis is placed on training to enable trainees to enter the formal workforce and to fill the organisations' skills gaps for improving performance.

NSDS III (2011-2016:4) adds that the emphasis is particularly on those who do not have relevant technical skills or adequate reading, writing and numeracy skills to enable them to access employment and meeting the skills needs of South Africa both now and in the long term. Promotion of basic numeracy and literacy is a project led by the Department of Basic Education; DHET is primarily concerned with post-basic literacy and numeracy. Following is a research survey conducted to determine the level of education amongst South Africans, and Statistics South Africa has these results shown on the table below:

Table 2.1: Literacy levels in South Africa

	Number of people	Percentage
No schooling	4 066 187	19.3
Some primary	3 512 415	16.7
Complete primary	1 571 774	7.5
Some secondary	7 130 121	33.9
Total	16 280 497	77.4

(Source: Statistics South Africa 1998: The People of South Africa Population Census: 1996).

Nekhavhambe (2017:173) suggests that from the table above it is clear that there is still more work that needs to be done to open the educational doors for the majority of South Africans. Although the number of people who reach secondary education looks better compared to the lower level grades, it should be a serious concern to get more people through to the secondary level so that they would be able to can read and write well.

Educated people are easy to adapt to new changes in today's globalised world. Therefore, aspects that encompass Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) policy in South Africa are as follows: an integrated approach to education and training that is holistic in nature; education and Human Resource Development links that are strong enough in as far as the national development policies and projects are concerned; education is a basic human right and as such anyone who did not get it due to various reasons and is now an adult, can demand ABET (Coetzee, 2015:1). This is because NSDS III seeks to promote a skills development system and architecture that effectively responds to the needs of the labour market and social equity. The strategy seeks to establish and promote closer links between employers and training institutions and between both of these and the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

The National Skills Development Strategy III responds to the continuing skills shortages in the artisanal, technical, and professional fields that are fundamental to the development and growth of the South African economy. Nzimande (2011:1) further reiterates that municipalities in South Africa is no exception to these challenges. Morare (2010:1) agrees that, predictably the shocking lack of municipal service delivery has been blamed on a shortage of artisans in South Africa. John Botha, General Manager of the Production Management Institute claims the reason that municipalities cannot do their jobs is because they do not have qualified people. In this regard, the intention of NSDS III is to make sure that the energy and resources of education and training stakeholders are focused on ensuring that these challenges are addressed, and that measurable impact is achieved over the coming five-year period. The NSDS III will be guided by, and measured against, the following seven (7) key developmental and transformation imperatives:

2.8.9.1 Race

Racial inequality in the country is still a problem. This is because despite the many advances made by the democratic government since 1994 on the education and training front, the racial inequalities in the workplace, including the racialised nature of skills profile, have not changed in any significant way. Nekhavhambe (2017:173) further argues that the majority of Black and Africans in particular are still backwards regarding skills possession. It is, therefore, important to prioritise Blacks in the acquisition of skills. This means that NSDS III will have to prioritise, hence confronting these racial inequalities, with a particular focus on giving more opportunities to previously (and currently) disadvantaged South Africans. This requires focused attention on skills provision for blacks in general and Africans in particular (NSDS III, 2011-2016:4).

2.8.9.2 Class

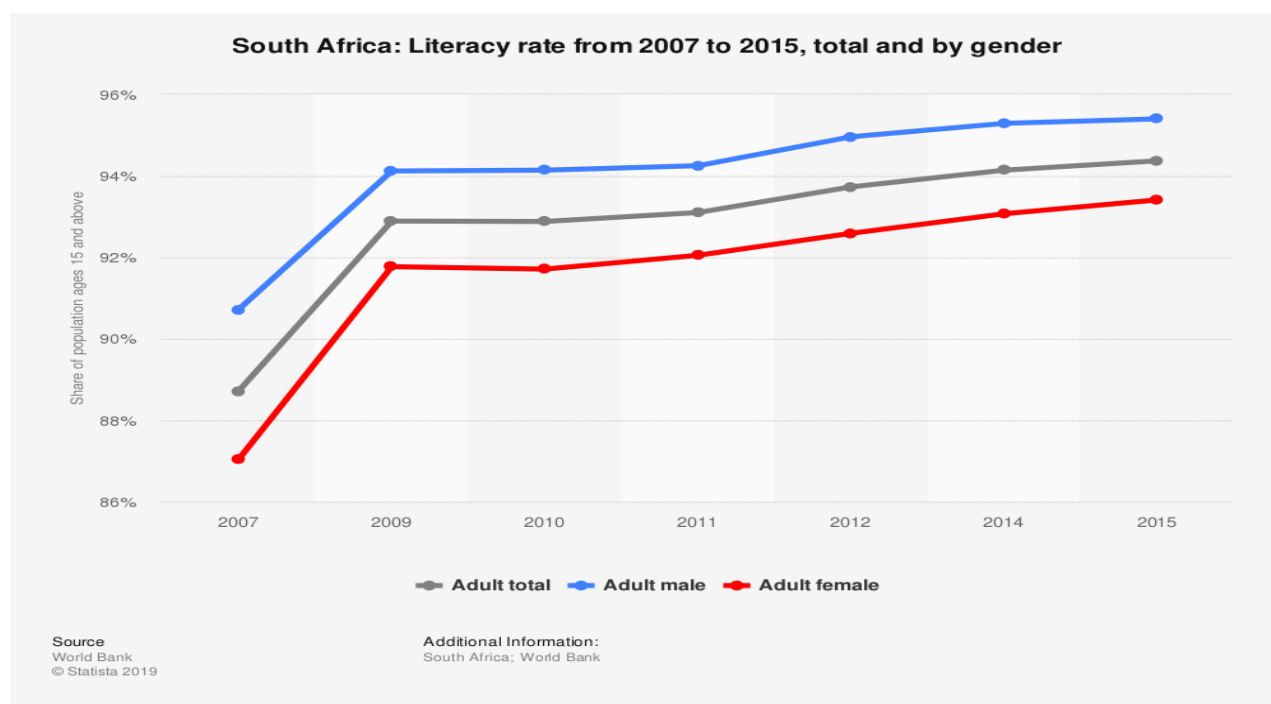
South Africa still remains one of the most unequal societies in the world today. These social inequalities are also being reinforced by a lack of access to skills by the overwhelming majority of the population, especially the workers and the poor. NSDS III will therefore pay particular attention to provision of skills in a manner that significantly reduces these yawning social inequalities in the workplace and society (NSDS III, 2011-2016:4-5).

2.8.9.3 Gender

Gender equality is an important aspect to be considered in skills development initiatives. This is because South Africa is still a society that reflects huge disparities between men and women, including access to skills for effective participation in the labour market and society.

This calls for particular attention to be paid to access to skills by women, especially black women, so that they can effectively participate in society as required by the 1996 Constitution. In addition, all skills development initiatives must contain within them specific programmes and strategies to promote gender equality in skills development, in employment and career development and in the economy as a whole (NSDS III, 2011-2016:5).

Figure 2.5: South Africa: Literacy rate from 2007 to 2015, total and by gender



(Source: Statistics South Africa 2019: Literacy rate: 2007-2015).

2.8.9.4 Geography

Olivierl, Van ZylII and WilliamsIII (2010:1) state that given the urban bias of the South African economic development, the country has not paid adequate attention to rural economic development and provision of skills for rural development. Given the fact that government has now prioritised rural development, skills development system must increase its focus and attention on the production of skills for rural development. However, the government must make a distinction between training of rural people and skills for rural development. The former has tended to train rural people only in order to migrate to the urban areas, whilst the latter will aim to train rural people for development of the rural areas themselves.

2.8.9.5 Age

Whilst all South Africans, youth, and adults, must be given access to skills development, young people are the most disadvantaged when it comes to access to education and training. For instance, the single largest category of the unemployed are those aged under 35. Therefore, NSDS III must pay particular attention to the training of youth for employment (NSDS III, 2011-2016:5).

2.8.9.6 Disability

Despite commitments from NSDS I and II to increase opportunities for training and skills development for persons with disabilities, South Africa is still far from achieving the goals in this regard. Therefore, NSDS III aims to significantly open up opportunities for skills training for people experiencing barriers to employment caused by various forms of physical and intellectual disability (NSDS III, 2011-2016:5).

2.8.9.7 The Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (HIV and AIDS) pandemic

Given the threat of the HIV and AIDS pandemic for the future growth and development of the country, and its particular impact on the youth, all skills development initiatives must incorporate the fight against this pandemic and management of HIV and AIDS in the workplace. The government need to ensure that they do not train the youth and adults for the grave but for the workplace and effective participation in society (NSDS III, 2011-2016:5). Therefore, the DHET's performance monitoring and evaluation of the role of all institutions in the skills development system will be guided by these key transformational priorities, and the government will require all these institutions to measure their progress also by the extent to which they make significant progress in dealing with these. In addition to the above, the DHET will seek to develop mechanisms to fight all forms of corruption in the education and training system, including in the skills development system (Ward, 2019:4).

2.8.10 The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995)

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) is an independent body proposed and establishment by the African National Congress (ANC) to oversee the effective implementation of a qualifications framework to integrate the educational and vocational interventions in South Africa. Duncan (2018:1) states that the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act provides for the development and implementation of South Africa's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) by creating one national framework of learning achievements. Forster and Bol (2018:1) suggest that this learning should add significant value to the learner, which in turn provides benefits for the community. The learning should comply with the objectives of the NQF, including the enhancement of learners' access to employment, mobility and progression and the provision of quality education and training that is costeffective and internationally comparable.

Therefore, SAQA describes a qualification as comprising three components, namely, fundamental, core and elective learning. Fundamental learning forms the grounding or the basis needed to undertake the education, training or further learning required in obtaining a qualification. Core learning is compulsory and is contextually relevant to a particular qualification on a theoretical and practical basis. Electives are specialised additional credits selected at the specified level of the NQF, to ensure that the qualification is competency and outcomes-based in both theory and practice. It will be through the combination of fundamental, core and elective learning that the detail and depth of learning programmes will be determined (South African Qualifications Authority, 2014:1).

The above statement is supported by Section 5 (1) of the Act which provides for the functions of the Authority as follows:“ Subject to the provisions of subsection (2), the Authority shall, (a)(i) oversee the development of the National Qualifications Framework; and (ii) formulate and publish policies and criteria for (aa) the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications; and (bb) the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards or qualifications; (b) oversee the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, including (i) the registration or accreditation of bodies referred to in paragraph (a) and the assignment of functions to them; (ii) the registration of national standards and qualifications; (iii) steps to ensure compliance with provisions for accreditation; and (iv) steps to ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable; (c) advise the Minister on matters affecting the registration of standards and qualifications; and (d) be responsible for the control of the finances of the Authority”.

Subsection (2) of the Act provides that, “the Authority shall pursue the objectives of the National Qualifications Framework as provided for in section 2 and execute the functions of

the Authority as provided for in subsection (1) (a) after consultation and in co-operation with the departments of state, statutory bodies, companies, bodies and institutions responsible for education, training and the certification of standards which will be affected by the National Qualifications Framework; (b) with due regard for the respective competence of Parliament and the provincial legislatures in terms of Section 126 of the Constitution, and the rights, powers and functions of the governing bodies of a university or universities and a technikon or technikons (currently called universities of technology) as provided in any Act of Parliament”.

2.8.11 The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008)

The NQF was established through the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act, 1995, which provided for the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework. The SAQA Act was replaced by the National Qualifications Framework Act in 2008. The NQF Act (2008) is a natural outcome of the SAQA Act. Duncan (2018:1) asserts that in the preamble to this Act it is stated that the progression of learning is a crucial trait of a free and democratic nation and that national training and education qualifications must be recognised and quality assured. According to Section 3 of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008), this Act has relevance for all qualifications offered by skills development providers and education institutions. The NQF is a framework or a set of principles and guidelines integrating training and education qualifications into one national structure of recognised qualifications. The NQF provides records of student achievements to ensure that these are recognised nationally, that the system is a combined one and that lifelong learning is encouraged.

The NQF is a comprehensive system that classifies, registers, publicises and articulates quality-assured national qualifications. The objective of the NQF is to contribute to the full personal development of each student and all citizens. The following specific objectives are outlined in Section 5 of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008): to construct a combined national framework for achievements in learning; to facilitate access and assist with mobility and progression within training, education and career paths and to improve the quality of training and education. In Section 5 (3) of the National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008) it is stated that SAQA must achieve the goals and objectives of the NQF by sustaining a combined and transparent national framework for recognising learning achievements to make sure that South African qualifications meet the determined standards, are internationally comparable and are of satisfactory quality. These objectives of the NQF directly address both global and national challenges that students in South Africa face.

The National Qualifications Framework Act, 2008 (Act No. 67 of 2008) plays an important role in the recognition of learning that takes place and of training qualifications that have been obtained and in ensuring that quality assurance takes place. The education and training landscape has changed in South Africa in the sense that the focus is now placed on accredited training providers, and standards and qualifications should be registered on the framework and should be internationally comparable (Duncan, 2018:1). It is evident from the legislation analysed in this section that training plays an important role in the various municipalities. By providing training opportunities the potential of staff should be nurtured, their knowledge should be increased, their skills and attitudes should be improved, and they should be equipped to perform their functions to the best of their abilities.

Figure 2.6: Proposed structure of the 10-level NQF with descriptors is suggested below. The 'old' 8-level NQF is also provided for reference purposes

Band	Level	Qualification	and Institutions		
Higher Education and Training (HET)	10	Doctorates	Tertiary / Research / Professional		
	9	Masters Degrees	Instructions		
	8	Post-graduate diplomas and Professional Qualifications	Universities / Technikons / Colleges / Private / Professional Institutions / Workplace / etc.		
	7	Bachelors Degrees and Advanced Diplomas			
	6	Diplomas and Advanced Certificates			
	5	Higher Certificates and Advanced National (vocational) Certificates			
Further Education and Training	4	Std 10 / Grade 12, N3 / NCS National Senior Certificate and National (vocational) Certificates	Formal High schools /	Technical / Community / Police	Industry Training Boards /

(FET)	3	Std 9 / Grade 11, NQF NIC (vocational) Certificates		Private State schools	Nursing / Private colleges	Unions / Workplace, etc
	2	Std 8 / Grade 10 Further Education and Training Certificates				
General Education and Training (GET)	1	Senior Phase, Std 7 / Grade 9	ABET Level 4	Formal schools (Urban / Rural / Farm Special)	Occupation / Work-based training /	NGOs / churches / Night schools/
		Intermediate Phase	ABET Level 3			
		Foundation Phase	ABET Level 2			
		Pre-School	ABET Level 1			
					Upliftment programmes / Community programmes	ABET programmes / Private providers/ Industry training boards / Unions/ Workplace, etc

(Rainbow South Africa, The National Skills Development Handbook, 2007).

Figure 2.7: Proposed structure of the 8-level NQF

Band	Level	Qualification and Certificates
Higher Education and Training (HET)	8	Post-doctoral research degrees Doctorates Masters degrees
	7	Professional qualifications Honours degrees
	6	National first degrees Higher diplomas

	 5 University of Venda Creating Future Leaders	National diplomas National certificates
Further Education and Training (FET)	4	National certificates
	3	
	2	
General Education and Training (GET)	1	ABET Level 4/ Grade 9 National certificates

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Each NQF level represents a step of the ladder used as an example earlier. It is clear from this structure that provision has been made for progression (moving from one level to the next). Provision has also been made for horizontal articulation (movement) between qualifications (Rainbow South Africa, The National Skills Development Handbook, 2007).

Following is the elaboration of the new 10-level NQF:

NQF Level 1 is the basic amount of compulsory education which everyone in the country should have. It fits into what is called the General Education and Training (GET) Band. This education would be obtained at service providers in the GET sector such as schools. This training is overseen by the Department of Basic Education. NQF Levels 2 to 4 represent additional education that takes place out of a university or tertiary education level. It is called the Further Education and Training (FET) Band. This education would be obtained at service providers in the FET sector such as formal high schools, private and state schools, technical colleges, community colleges, private colleges and may include police and nursing private colleges. This training is overseen by the Department of Basic Education. NQF Levels 5 to 10 fall within the Higher Education and Training (HET) sector. Education and training at these levels can be achieved through tertiary education (at universities, technikons, colleges, private institutions, professional bodies or in the workplace) or through workplace training providers and private training institutions. This training is overseen by the Department of Higher Education (DHET) (Lackay, 2015:1).

2.8.12 The National Development Plan (NDP) – Vision 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 is a vision and a plan focused on a much better quality of life for all people by 2030. This plan aims to ensure that all South Africans attain a decent standard of living through the elimination of poverty and reduction of inequality. Zarenda (2013:3) asserts that on achievement of this, it will have paved a way for all South Africans to lead a decent and globally acceptable standard of living in terms of the United

Nations (UN) standards. The core elements of a decent standard of living identified in the plan are housing, water, electricity and sanitation; safe and reliable public transport; quality education and skills development; safety and security; quality health care; social protection; employment; recreation and leisure; clean environment and adequate nutrition (National Planning Commission, 2011:24). This is because the commission's Diagnostic Report, released in June 2011, set out South Africa's achievements and shortcomings since 1994. It identified a failure to implement policies and an absence of broad partnerships as the main reasons for slow progress, and set out that infrastructure is poorly located, inadequate and under-maintained, and also public services are uneven and often of poor quality as primary challenges. In this regard, the NDP sees municipalities as playing a vital developmental role through adhering to Municipal Integrated Development Plans (IDPs).

The above statement is supported by Frankson (2015:1) who argued that the former President Jacob Zuma said that the country's provinces and municipalities must do much more to implement the National Development Plan (NDP). Van der Westhuizen 2016:4) points out that the ability of a municipality to deliver services effectively depends on the quality of the public servants who are appointed. Kanyane (2014:106) expresses the view that service delivery challenges are a direct consequence of the capacity constraints that municipalities experience; therefore, the development of skills is important so as to improve municipal service delivery. NDP's vision for 2030 is that South Africans should have access to skills development programmes of the highest quality, characterised by significantly improved learning outcomes. Consequently, the President of the Republic of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa stated out that the government is planning to speed up service delivery at the municipalities on his State of the Nation Address (SONA) 2019. Ramaphosa further emphasised that unless the government take extraordinary measures, they will not realise Vision 2030. This means that the government need to prioritise skills in this new administration (Van der Berg, Gustafsson and Malindi, 2020:15).

Furthermore, Ramaphosa raised a view that it is worth noting that the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) for the last five years had more than 1,100 indicators by which the government were to measure progress in the implementation of the NDP. This is because following the adoption of the NDP, Cabinet decided in 2013 that the 2014-2019 MTSF should form the first five-year implementation phase of the NDP and mandated work to begin on aligning the plans of national and provincial departments, municipalities and public entities with the NDP vision and goals. Since the May 2014 elections, the MTSF has been aligned to the national governing party's election manifesto (Van der Berg, *et al.*, 2020:15). The study conducted by Edigheji (2010:5) maintains that the MTSF is the result of an intensive planning process involving all three spheres of government. It provides a framework for

prioritising and sequencing government programmes and development initiatives for the next five years. For this reason, the President believes that it is the time to focus on implementation of the NDP.

The National Planning Commission (2011:437) further argues that people are the most important asset within an organisation and that skills development should become part of the organisation's culture in such a manner that employees would fervently pursue skills development so that they can add value to the organisation. Hence, a statement made in the NDP is that skills development programmes should make employees feel valued and empowered. A long-term approach to building capacity suggested in the NDP is to link skills development programmes to a municipality's Integrated Development Plan, which could ensure that training takes place, which is explored. According to the Auditor-General of South Africa's report for 2019, municipalities experience skills gap in technical, managerial, project management and other soft skills which negatively impact performance in service delivery and infrastructure development. Zarenda (2013:4) further concurs that the NDP plans to achieve objectives such as matching skills, technical, professional and managerial posts.

2.8.13 The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000)

Section 68 (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) provides that a municipality must develop its human resource capacity to a level that enables it to perform its functions and exercise its powers in an economical, effective, efficient and accountable way. According to Nekhavhambe (2017:180), what the municipality does should actually be in line with the provisions of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999). Subsection (2) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) further states that a municipality may in addition to any provision for a training levy in terms of the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999) make provision in its budget for the development and implementation of training programmes. Furthermore, Subsection (3) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) provides that, a municipality which does not have the financial means to provide funds for training programmes in addition to the levy payable in terms of the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999) may apply to the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) for local government established in terms of the Skills Development Act, for such funds.

2.8.14 The Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)

Section 34 (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides that, the National government together with the Provincial government,

have a responsibility through agreement, to assist municipalities in the country to build and develop capacity of such municipalities to have an efficient, effective and transparent financial management. Section 195 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) supports this viewpoint by stating that efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted. However, Dintwa (2019:1) argues that the appointment of incompetent and unsuitably qualified senior municipal officials is attributed as the reason for poor financial audit outcomes in some of the municipalities in South Africa. Some appointments are now yielding the desired results. Poor negative audit outcomes, lack of basic service delivery, poor management and administration in municipalities are as a result of the inability of the political leadership to appoint appropriately qualified and skilled people.

Therefore, Section 83 of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides further for opportunities of those who work with finances to be provided with the necessary trainings so that they can render their activities professionally. Subsection (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides that, “the accounting officer, senior managers, chief financial officer and other financial officials of a municipality must meet the prescribed financial management competency levels”. For the realisation of Subsection (1), Subsection (2) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides that “a municipality must provide resources or opportunities for the training of officials to enable them to meet the prescribed competency levels”. Furthermore, Subsection (3) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides that, “the National Treasury or a provincial treasury may assist municipalities in the training of officials referred to in subsection (1)”.

Section 119 (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) further makes provision regarding the competency levels of municipal officials responsible for municipal supply chain management. Subsection (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides in this instance that, “the accounting officer and all other officials of a municipality or municipal entity involved in the implementation of the supply chain management policy of the municipality or municipal entity must meet the prescribed competency levels”. In this instance Subsection (2) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) provides that, “a municipality and a municipal entity must for the purposes of Subsection (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) provide resources or opportunities for the training of officials referred to in that Subsection to meet the competency levels”. Subsection (3) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance

Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003) therefore, provides that, “the National Treasury or a provincial treasury may assist municipalities and municipal entities in the training of officials referred to in Subsection (1) of the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act, 2003 (Act No. 56 of 2003)”.

Legislation, as the backbone for good governance, prescribes and gives guidance on how activities should be run. South Africa like any country in the world has its laws and policies governing every institution and individual people to conduct training in a fair and acceptable manner. The aim of having legislation is to have uniformity and consistency in the training programmes that are designed. If legislation is properly followed, institutions would obviously have training programmes that will improve the knowledge and skills of the country’s personnel corps, thereby equipped to be productive and perform acceptably in providing services to communities (Nekhavhambe, 2017:182).

2.8.15 White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2013

Maringe and Osman (2016:121) state that the White Paper for Post School Education and Training was released in 2013 with a vision for the type of post-school education and training system that the government aims to achieve by 2030. The post-school system is understood as comprising all education and training provision for those who have completed school, those who did not complete their schooling, and those who never attended school (White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, 2013). The White Paper sets out strategies to improve the capacity of the post-school education and training system to meet South Africa’s needs. It outlines policy directions to guide the post school education and training institutions such as Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) to contribute to building a developmental state with a vibrant democracy and a flourishing economy. As part of its policy, directions the White Paper seeks to build a stronger and more cooperative relationship between education and training institutions and the workplace.

According to the White Paper, workplaces are good sources of information on current skills shortages, which is a crucial aspect of planning. Hence, the White Paper urges employers in developing their Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) or Annual Training Report (ATR) to include comprehensive information about all training that is taking place in the workplace, current levels of skills, experience and qualifications of employees, and skills priorities and gaps for the short as well as medium term. The White Paper further proposes that submission of comprehensive information will entitle the employer to receive the Mandatory Grant from the SETA. However, the grant will only require participating organisations to submit useful and accurate data. There will be no need for employers to report how the grant was spent. Once the SETAs are able to obtain accurate data from workplaces, they can supply valuable

information for the national skills planning process to plan and support educational provision. Organisations are also required to provide their information in a consistent manner, which will be beneficial to employers, as it will enable skills gaps to be addressed (Maringe and Osman, 2016:121).

2.8.16 Public Administration Management Act, 2014 (Act No. 11 of 2014)

Section 13 of the Public Administration Management Act, 2014 (Act No. 11 of 2014) gives effect to norms and values of Section 195 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) to provide for the transfer and secondment of employees; promote a high standard of professional ethics and the use of information and communication technologies; prevent unethical conduct; and introduce minimum norms and standards in public administration. Chapter 3 of the Public Administration Management Act, 2014 (Act No. 11 of 2014) emphasises employment in public administration, specifically the transfer of employees from one department to another. Chapter 4 of the Public Administration Management Act, 2014 (Act No. 11 of 2014) deals with the importance of capacity building through the development and training of public officials. Section 10 of the Public Administration Management Act, 2014 (Act No. 11 of 2014) explains the role of the National School of Government in promoting the capacity and development of human resources in institutions.

2.9 STRUCTURES RESPONSIBLE FOR MUNICIPAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN SOUTH AFRICA

According to Sebola (2014:633), the change in municipal administration of South Africa acknowledged the challenge of skills development in the administration of local government. This led to the establishment of structures responsible for the development of human resources in the South African local government. This is because local government is considered a significant sphere to carry out the government's mandate of service delivery, hence this means that the sphere should have more skilled and expert administrators and politicians in order to deliver services to local communities effectively and efficiently. In this regard, skills development plan is seen to be provided through the initiatives of structures which carries a mandate to see the skills and capacity development of municipalities in the country.

Govender (2019:56) asserts that many professional skills development structures exist in South Africa. The purpose of professional structures is to provide guidance and development to human resources. On the other hand, Mohlala (2011:47) points out that the government established structures that are responsible for developing and expanding the skills base. Even though these stakeholders may have different mandates, they have found that the

development of human resource capacity is a common interest which will lead to the socioeconomic growth of the communities they serve. This section of the study discusses the role of these different structures in the development of human resources within Local Government.

2.9.1 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

The Sectorial Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were re-established by the former Minister of Labour, Membathisi Mdladlana, on 3 March 2005. The SETAs are concerned with education and training and their job is to help implement the National Skills Development Strategy and to increase the skills of people in their sector. The SETAs have replaced the 33 Industry Training Boards but have greater powers and responsibilities. These SETAs cover every industry and occupation whereas the Industry Training Boards covered some sectors only and focused mainly on apprenticeships (Rugraff and Hansen, 2011:251). In supporting this view, Section 9 (1) of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) provides that, the Minister is authorised to, establish a sector education and training authority. Subsection 2 of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) provides that, the Minister can determine a discrete sector for the purposes of subsection 1 by reference to categories of employers and for the purposes of that determination take into account the education and training needs of employers and employees that use similar, processes and technologies; make similar products; or render similar services; the potential of the proposed sector for coherent occupational structures and career pathing; the scope of any national strategies for economic growth and development (Tshilongamulenzhe, 2012:89).

Kraak, Jewison, Pillay, Chidi, Bhagwan and Makgolane (2013:8) note that each South African economic sector has a SETA that facilitates training processes for that sector. All sectors of work in the country are covered including government sectors. They are constituted of trade unions, government, and Bargaining Councils from appropriate industries. Employers have to choose under which SETA their business fall. A SETA has a responsibility to develop and implement a skills development plan and a workplace skills development plan, and also acts as an Education and Quality Training Assurer. The SETA also pays out the skills development grants. Therefore, SETAs are established with an aim of developing and improving the knowledge and skills of the workforce of the South African nation. Vally and Motala (2014:1) are of the view that in executing their role, they need to focus on the following: working-out and implementing a sector skills plan by starting learnerships; the approval of WSPs for employers; allocation of funds to employers, trainers and workers; and monitoring over the education and training activities in their sectors.

Malambe (2016:31) states that the responsibility of SETAs is to disburse training levies that employers pay and therefore required to develop appropriate skills development plans for their sector. To implement such plans, employers get these monies and use them in a responsible manner. SETAs have therefore objectives to meet in order to realise such skills training plans. The objectives are the following: the prioritisation of skills that are deemed to be critical for the sake of attaining growth, development and equity; the stimulation of training of a quality nature for all in the workplace; making sure that people are employable and sustainable development attained through skills development; assisting those entering the labour market and the promotion of self-employment; and to make sure that the quality of training is improved and also relevant to the job market (Tshilongamulenzhe, 2012:91). Municipalities in South Africa are no exception to this view because they have the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) which is expected to play a significant role in facilitating the implementation of skills development interventions with the aim of developing a skilled and capable local government workforce (Taaibosch and Van Niekerk, 2017:15).

2.9.2 The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA)

Taaibosch and Van Niekerk (2017:15) state that since the implementation of the White Paper on Local Government, 1998 a municipal training system has been implemented that consists of a regulator, namely the Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority (LGSETA) that functions as a quality assurance body. The LGSETA was established in terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998. The LGSETA is geared towards the implementation of the National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III), which is primarily intended to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the skills development system within the local government sector (LG SETA, 2015:1). The study conducted by Cloete (2016:123) reveals that one of the reasons for the existence of the LGSETA is to guide and encourage Human Resource Development (HRD) in the local government sector, specifically focusing on establishing, registering, promoting and administering learnerships (a development programme that integrates theory and workplace development and upon successful completion of the process the employee is presented with a qualification), and skills programmes (credit-bearing programmes aimed at offering employees with credit-bearing transferable development projects that lead to a qualification). The LGSETA also performs a very important role of administering the workplace skills plan for municipalities (Mabope, 2018:64).

Taaibosch and Van Niekerk (2017:15) further points out that LGSETA is responsible for managing a local government education and training fund formed from the proceeds of the National Skills Fund as levied from local government. The LGSETA fulfils its role firstly by allocating these funds to provincial training structures, setting national training priorities, establishing standards, accrediting service providers, and providing trainee certification.

Secondly, a provincial training structure has been established for each province to undertake a systematic needs analysis and, together with municipalities, to procure the provision of training from a variety of agents. In terms of the White Paper on Local Government (1998:124), training will be designed by a variety of contracted agents in response to the needs defined by the LGSETA or provincial government training structures. In this regard, Kanyane (2017:8) asserts that since then the LGSETA has enabled training for thousands of employees of local government, traditional leaders, ward councillors, and unemployed persons to acquire skills through various intervention programmes. Every year thousands of people enrol in learning interventions such as learnerships, internships, Skills Programmes, Work-Integrated Learning, Apprenticeships, Bursaries, and Adult Education and Training, which are rolled out in municipalities across the country.

Kanyane (2017:8) further articulates that these learning interventions form part of the scope of LGSETA's Programme 4 called Learning Programmes, which aims to improve the skilled workforce available in the local government sector through facilitating the provision of quality training. The programme comprises of the following functions: Learning intervention facilitation; Learning intervention implementation and coordination; and Provincial operations. According to the LGSETA Annual Report (2016:31), under Programme Four which involves learning programmes, one of the key strategic objectives is to coordinate the implementation of relevant occupationally-directed learning programmes and projects in the local government sector to increase access to learnerships programmes. Some of the key milestones that the LGSETA has achieved in 2015/16 include the following: "With respect to learnerships, LGSETA funded 2 991 unemployed individuals on various learnerships in environmental management, horticulture, water and sanitation, fire and rescue, road construction, municipal finance, Occupationally Directed-Education, Training and Development Practitioner (ODETDP), Local Economic Development (LED), water process control, electricity, bricklaying and plumbing, amongst others.

Furthermore, LGSETA funded about 1 761 municipality employees on various learnerships in environmental management, horticulture, water and sanitation, fire and rescue, road construction municipal finance, OD-ETDP, LED, water process control, electricity, bricklaying and plumbing, amongst others. In addition, the LGSETA funded the placement of 447 graduates on internships within the sector and other spheres of government as well as funded workplace-integrated learning for 1752 Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) learners (LGSETA, 2016:1). As such, LGSETA aims to facilitate skills development at local government across the country (Human Resource Development Council of South Africa, 2013:5). Therefore, Mr Godfrey Hlaele during the LGSETA fruitful Research Seminar Series hosted at the University of Venda on 23 November 2017 suggested that when choosing a training course, municipality should ensure that the training

is specific to the skills the employee needs to develop. This is because Mafunisa, Ramabulana, Hlaele and Nekwakwani (2017:7) emphasised that skilled human resources contribute to effective service delivery hence the importance of having skilled and capable workers cannot be overemphasised.

2.9.3 South African Local Government Association (SALGA)

The White Paper on Local Government (1998:12) indicated that for developmental local government to be possible with regard to service delivery, the municipalities have to develop at least three sets of new capacities such as strategic capacity, integrating capacity and community orientation. It is therefore believed that if these three capacities can be taken care of municipalities will be able to sustain themselves and their service delivery objectives. The White Paper on Local Government (1998:12) further acknowledged that the current training system has been labelled inefficient and unresponsive to the training needs of local government. Sebola (2014:635) states that the role of SALGA in capacity building therefore becomes imperative and it is also believed that it will address the inefficiency and the irrelevance of the existing training system to the benefit of municipal officials. Hence, Van der Waldt, Khalo, Nealer, Phutiagae, Van der Walt, Van Niekerk and Venter (2013:194) are of the view that capacity building refers to specific skills and knowledge, and it also involves the transfer of information with the specific aim to ensure that the trainees are able to perform tasks that they were previously not able to perform.

SALGA was formed in terms of the Organised Local Government Act, No. 52 of 1997 to function as a national and provincial representative of the local sphere of government. On the other hand, Pillay (2014:1) points out that SALGA was established in 1996 and after being gazetted in January 1998 was officially recognised as the body representing local government. According to SALGA (2013:30), the role of the association as employer is central to Human Resources Development (HRD) in Local Government. It has to build and monitor the capacity needed by human resources in order to deliver effective municipal services and promote a developmental state. SALGA is tasked with the following activities that it has to deliver in municipalities: Local Government strategy development for their human resources; skills auditing; strategy development for human resource in Local Government; the development of a system for performance management for local municipalities; training on resolution of conflict; and creating partnerships with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to ensure that municipalities get involved in training and development programs like project management, leadership, financial management; and implementing capacity building programmes to make municipal councillors and officials.

Pillay (2014:1) further supports the above viewpoint by stating that SALGA develops leadership of municipalities; they support and advise their members and work to improve the

image of local government. Some of their flagship projects for 2014/15 included phased implementation of the SALGA Centre for Leadership and Governance in an effort to professionalise the sector. SALGA also initiated an executive coaching programme for municipal leaders, and a multi-disciplinary support and advisory programme for improved municipal audits. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SALGA Xolile George concurs that SALGA's primary role is providing advice and support and is focusing on the leadership development of managers and councillors thus building institutional capabilities of municipalities, building strong governance and delivering capacity and performance.

The White Paper on Local Government (1998:124) furthermore states that SALGA is the major role-player responsible for councillor training. The White Paper on Local Government (1998:124) also adds that an intensive councillor-training programme will be required to coincide with the election of new councillors. Kanyane (2008:514) asserts that the needs survey presented by SALGA in 1997 showed that the training needs of councillors required in terms of priorities are Integrated Development Planning (IDP), Budgeting and Financing, Strategic planning, service delivery, human resource development and change management.

2.9.4 The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC)

Musonda, Gumbo and Okoro (2019:85) point out that the Human Resource Development Council of South Africa (HRDC) is a national, multi-tiered and multi-stakeholder advisory body chaired by the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa. The Ministry of Higher Education and Training manages the HRDC. The HRDC was established in March 2010 to facilitate conditions that promote the optimal participation of all stakeholders in the planning, stewardship, monitoring, and evaluation of HRD activities in the country. Ncube (2016:52) reiterate that the HRD Council is an institution that was created by the government to advice on the best way of implementing the National HRD strategy of the country. One of the Council's key responsibilities is to build the human resource development base required to ensure a prosperous and inclusive South African society and economy, with the focus on the development of strategy.

The Public Service Commission (2014:54) is of the view that as a council the HRDC is aimed at creating an environment that is coordinated, integrated, and enabling for the improvement of HRD and skills development for the people of South Africa. In principle, the HRDC ensures that all HRD programs, interventions, projects, strategies, and policies are optimised and reorganised to ensure support to the overall objectives of government. This is because the Public Sector is a specific focus within the HRDC Plan. Dubois and Juwaheer (2012:23) state that the HRDC also has aims to increase the HRD needed for the successful transformation of the economy to a knowledge economy and developing institutional synergies in order to

encourage a culture of lifelong learning and training at the individual, organisational and national levels. The HRDC is mandated to identify the human resource blockages and recommend solutions.

According to Thakhathi (2013:18), the HRD council has an essential role to play in the HRD affairs and must ensure that as far as HRD is concerned, the country is safe. Its operations are driven by a 5-point work plan. First, it must strengthen and support Further Education and Training (FETs) to expand access; by 2015 they were supposed to have increased their enrolment by one million students. Second, it must ensure that there is adequate production of intermediate and professions in order to meet the vision 2030 target of 30000 artisans. Third, the Council must ensure that there is adequate production of academics, partnerships in research and development and stronger industry-educational institutions. Fourth, the Council must also enhance foundational learning. Last, the Council must promote worker education across the board. Musonda, *et al.*, (2019:85) further posits that the HRDC therefore can be considered as the custodian of developing the nation's most important resource, which is the people, from the early childhood development to the apex of educational endeavours.

2.9.5 The National School of Government (NSG)

The Public Service Commission (2016:17) states that the National School of Government (NSG), formerly known as Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) is an organisation that was established with the objective of contributing to the solutions to the issues of uneven performance within public service. It was launched officially in the year 2013 with the aim of addressing the need to have functional state machinery to deliver both theoretical and practical approaches to Public Administration and management. Van der Westhuizen (2016:189) points out that the main purpose is creating an effective and efficient public service through providing relevant training and development programmes to the members of the public service. The NSG is responsible for providing training programmes such as leadership, management, administration, and induction to public officials. According to Levan, Fashgba and MacMahon (2015:216), former Public and Administration Minister, Honourable Lindiwe Sisulu, at the launch of NSG, stated that “the responsibility to deliver the development and learning for public officials is something that cannot and should not be outsourced hence the establishment of the NSG”.

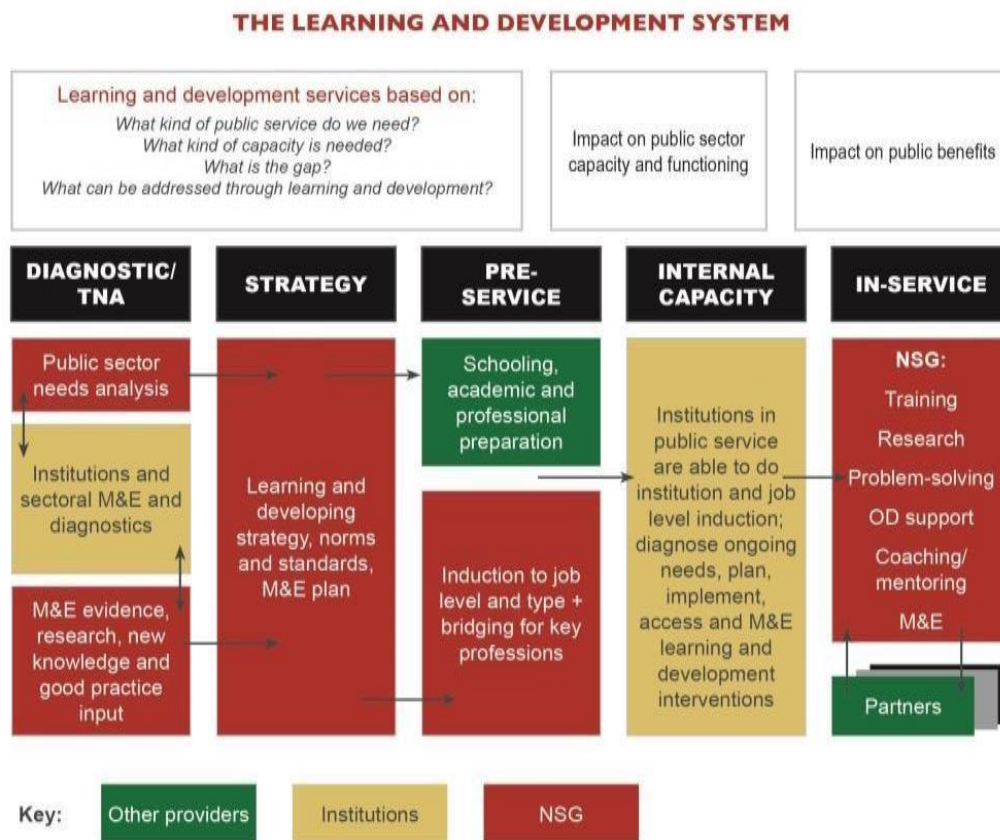
The Voluntary National Review Report (2019:25) posits that the National Development Plan (NDP) outlined the set of issues causing poor performance in the public service and they included instability in leadership, inappropriate staffing and skills deficits. The NSG aims to integrate experience and lessons learned from the past so as to address current public

service skills issues. It provides concrete, client oriented, organisational development interventions leading to optimum performance and delivery of services. In an effort to deliver value adding and more relevant HRD-related interventions, the NSG offers programmes in the following fields: public service induction, administration, service delivery and customer care leadership, provisioning administration, legislative issues, change management, as well as human resource management and development. The NSG is in essence a call to building a capable and development oriented public service (Ncube, 2016:53).

The Public Service Commission (2016:17) further states that the NSG is part of the Department of Public Service and Administration. The School has various branches that focus on various issues like, the Specialised Services Branch whose responsibility is curriculum design, quality assurance issues, accreditation and e-learning matters. The other branch is the Training Management and Delivery Branch that focusses on the following activities: induction; leadership; management; administration; technical support; and marketing. One more branch is the Training Policy Planning Branch that looks at research and innovation and also monitoring and evaluation. The National School of Government Strategic Plan (2019:12) asserts that the NSG partners with a number of institutions in trying to provide quality training to public officials. The partners are as follows: Public Sector Education and Training Authority; South African Board of People's Practices; Quality Council for Trade Occupations; Human Resource Development Council; and the South African Qualifications Authority. These partnerships will ensure that the NSG is able to meet the strategic learning and development needs of the public sector as well as continuously improve them based on evaluative feedback.

The Public Service Commission (2016:73) furthermore suggests that in forging collaborative initiatives with various stakeholders, the NSG should also work together with government departments in conducting training needs analysis and skills audit. This could help in the development of a curriculum that caters for every challenge being experienced. The NSG should again forge ties with SETAs and provide support to departments in developing and implementing occupation-specific training, (i.e. on-the-job training) for those currently occupying certain positions, for learnerships and internships for the youth; and the development of norms and standards for public service training. The NSG is expected to also work with Higher Education and Training Institution (HETIs) and TVETs colleges in order to have an influence on their pre-service training and development programmes. The NSG should come up with a strategy to engage qualified employees and former public officials with vast experiences and expertise to be trainers and mentors (Dorasamy, 2014:192).

Figure 2.8: The Learning and Development System as captured below signifies the approach of the NSG going forward



(Source: The National School of Government Strategic Plan, 2019:11)

2.9.6 The Local Government Leadership Academy

The Local Government Leadership Academy is an independent organisation that is aimed at establishing excellence within Local Government. This is done through the provision of education services to public officials and public employees (Nkwana, 2012:163). The Local Government Leadership Academy was a developmental Local Government initiative to address the leadership and management issues in Local Government. It was established by the Department of Provincial and Local Government, with the task to develop focused and relevant programmes to empower Local Government councillors and appointed senior management officials (Ncube, 2016:54).

Thakhathi (2012:1) points out that leadership is essential to the implementation of an organisation's vision, and goals and future aspirations. Yukl (2010:26) agrees that leadership influences and inspires others to understand and agree on set objectives and consequently how to achieve the objectives including facilitating individual and collective efforts. The White Paper on Local government, 1998 states that for Local Government leadership turns out to

be very important as their vision has to do with creating better life for all citizens. The paradigm of a development oriented Local Government needs municipalities to be influential, visionary and strategic in their operations. It requires that municipalities be strategic in making their policies and organise partners and resources to meet its developmental objectives and basic needs.

According to the Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA) Development Report (2000), councillors are ambassadors for their communities; they lobby other spheres of government or the private sector; they defend the interests of minorities and the marginalised and they serve as trustees or protectors of the natural environment or historical heritage. All these tasks cannot be effectively performed if they do not possess the adequate leadership skills. Competencies and skills like these need a combined effort of training and skills development. Therefore, the role of councillors in community development is widely recognised by James and Cox (2007:11) who stipulated that ward councillors must share their values with the community and that they should be skilled advocates for the community.

Councillors should also be able to speak freely about issues affecting their communities and be able to make informed decisions. As reported by the South African Local Government Association (2016:12), municipal councillors have to provide an effective leadership role for the municipality in order to strengthen service delivery and to economically guide the municipality in day-to-day activities. Paradza, Mokwena and Richards (2010:6) assert that local leadership is also important because the development of communities in a local government rely mostly on the ward councillors. Therefore, it is imperative for ward councillors to have good leadership skills and possess the required leadership characteristics.

2.9.7 Institute for Local Government Management of South Africa

The Institute for Local Government Management of South Africa (hereafter referred to as the ILGM) was established on 19 January 1997 in Port Elizabeth with the aim of being at the centre of excellence of local government management, not only in the country but also on the African continent. It superseded the erstwhile Institute of Town Clerks of Southern Africa and the more recent Institute of Municipal Managers (Parliamentary public hearings on coordinated service delivery, 2010:11). The ILGM was established after protracted negotiations between the National Executive Committee of the Institute of Municipal Managers and the National Working Group representing the interests of the then local government emerging managers. The negotiation process was inclusive and consultative in nature, as other role-players in local government also took part (Mafunisa, 2001:331).

Mafunisa (2001:331) further states that the mission of the ILGM includes excellent governance by pursuing the following goals, inter alia, training in, and development of, managerial skills and co-operative governance. According to the Institute for Local Government Management (2010), the objectives of the ILGM include promoting the quality of local governance by enhancing the managerial skills of persons in managerial positions; promoting the image of local governance; developing criteria which will guide the selection of candidates into the local government managerial posts; promoting or challenging proposed legislation pertaining to local governance in order to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, within the framework of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996) and promoting the professionalism of its members. One of the four strategic objectives of the ILGM for the period 2005 to 2010 was to promote a capacity-building initiative aimed at enhancing local government management. The constitution of the ILGM (as amended on 18 November 2009) stipulates that the ILGM is a voluntary, professional association of local government practitioners; therefore, this institute consists only of managers in local government.

Mafunisa (2001:331) furthermore points out that the institute runs a variety of programmes aimed at achieving its strategic objectives. These programmes range from Workshops, Seminars and Conferences to International Manager Exchange Programs. Some of the programs are run in collaboration and co-operation with companies from the Private Sector as well as with the national Department of Provincial and Local Government. Therefore, managerial training in municipalities is important for managers in general to adapt to changing dimensions of municipal government and administration. In this regard, a municipality's administration is governed by the principles of Section 195 (1) of the 1996 Constitution. The Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) stipulates that the municipal manager must see to the implementation of the above-mentioned principles in his or her administration. Section 55 (1) (c) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) asserts that as head of the administration, the municipal manager is responsible, subject to the policy directions of the council, for the formation and development of an economical, effective, efficient and accountable administration that is equipped to implement the IDP, operates within the municipality's performance management system and is responsive to the needs of the local community to participate in municipal affairs.

Section 51 (i) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) further states that the municipality must hold the municipal manager accountable for the overall performance of the administration. When the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) states that the municipality holds the municipal manager

accountable, the onus is firstly on the council to hold the municipal manager accountable. Section 55 (1) (i) of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000) makes the municipal manager's responsibility subject to the policy directions of the council; therefore the municipal manager is not responsible for the policy, but for its implementation. The ILGM has commenced with a coaching and mentoring programme that is aimed at providing a platform for developing up-and-coming leaders within local government management. It is asserted that numerous challenges facing local government are rooted in poor leadership, both administratively and politically. ILGM seeks to be in the centre stage of seeking and providing solutions within the sector (De Visser, 2001:4).

The Institute influences training content and trends pertaining to local governance. It has been instrumental in developing relevant and up to date curricula for local government management courses offered by some universities and technikons. The Institute also organises, for their members, periodic workshops on fundamental issues facing municipalities in general. It can be deduced that professional associations and associations promoting professionalism, for example, ILGM, further the development of professionalism by providing training courses to their members. Training equips municipal managers in general and employees with skills to enable them to utilise the limited resources effectively and efficiently (Mafunisa, 2001:332).

2.9.8 The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)

According to Lues (2016:246), the Department of Public Service and Administration is a central personnel agency for the South African public service. The department plays a very important role in the development of skills for the South African nation by focusing on mentoring. In doing this, the department developed some guidelines on how the mentorship programme could be run successfully. This initiative came about after the Department interacted with different interested stakeholders who contributed immensely with positive inputs. The DPSA (2006:5) therefore, defines mentoring as the development of a relationship that is forged by an experienced person (a mentor) by supporting an inexperienced individual (the protégé/mentee) in attaining personal growth so that at the end, the mentee can achieve greater efficiency, productivity and effectiveness within his/her institution. Mentoring assists greatly in one's career development and the promotion of values. The mentee's character gets developed through the instilling of acceptable work values by the mentor. Mentees are provided with an opportunity to think positively, be able to solve problems, strategise and develop any other skill relevant to their career.

Departments that are running mentorship programmes are therefore required to submit concise reports to the DPSA when such programmes are completed. The DPSA as a national body has a responsibility to establish and maintain a database of mentors for the whole public service. Information from provinces should be facilitated through offices of premiers as

coordinators (DPSA, 2006:30). DPSA is also responsible for training Community Development Workers (CDWs) nationally. CDWs work with communities to raise awareness of government programmes, manage the interface with local municipalities and provide broad-based government support services to community members where the municipality has been unable to do so (SALGA, 2008:27). Therefore, DPSA plays an important role in promoting training and skills development in municipal administration, as programmes to empower and educate community development workers are in place for effective management of the municipality based under skilled and competent officials (Franks, 2014:50).

The Department of Public Service and Administration produced a description of the broad elements of managerial performance at middle and senior management level that may be used by sub-Saharan Africa countries. These sets of competencies were divided into two subcategories: core criteria (the 'what' or tasks of management); and the standards (the 'how' or skills of management). From the Department of Public Service and Administration's prolonged observations and research, it was concluded that, as public managers move up in the organisational hierarchy, they must accumulate increasingly broader sets of skills. Hence, two different competency frameworks were introduced namely the middle management competency framework and senior management service competency framework (Engela and Ajam, 2010:13). According to the Department of Public Service and Administration research, the core criteria (tasks) for both competency frameworks include, among others, strategic capability and leadership, programme and project management, financial management, service delivery innovation, problem solving and analysis, people management and empowerment, client orientation and customer focus, communication, honesty and integrity, applying technology, information management, diversity management, planning and organising (Van der Westhuizen, 2005:46).

The Department of Public Service and Administration's researchers recognised that managerial excellence in the public service requires not merely doing the job but doing it well. For this reason, they developed additional standards (skills) that seem to distinguish the work of highly successful public managers. The Department of Public Service and Administration suggest, for example, that public managers must give specific direction to teams in realising objectives, defining roles and responsibilities for project team members, looking for new opportunities to save funds, encourage new ideas, use modern technology to stay abreast of global trends, consult clients to improve service delivery, demonstrate objectivity in problem solving, delegate to empower others, communicate sensitive information, report fraud, take active steps to eliminate discrimination and prioritise tasks (Van der Westhuizen, 2005:46).

2.9.9 Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA)

COGTA has primary responsibility at the national government level for the oversight of municipal performance and for providing support to this level of government. In other words, COGTA is responsible for developing a national policy for training, skills development, and capacity building in local government (Khambule, 2013:65). The COGTA is the champion of the five-year local government reform agenda. This agenda comprises three main priorities. The first is to mainstream hands on support for improving municipal governance, performance, and accountability in both cross-cutting issues and in five key performance areas: municipal transformation and organisational development; basic service delivery; local economic development; financial viability and management; and good governance and public participation. The second priority is to address the structural and governance arrangements of the state that are designed to strengthen, support, and monitor local government. The third priority focuses on strengthening the policy, regulatory, and fiscal environment, and enforcement measures (Engela and Ajam, 2010:12).

Starting in 2003, COGTA has been developing a system for monitoring local government performance, based on the five-year local government agenda. A series of 120 core performance measures focuses on the five key performance areas listed above (Engela and Ajam, 2010:12). COGTA and LGSETA members sit on the LGSETA Board and are also responsible for good governance at this level. COGTA has also set up the Local Government Leadership Academy (LOGOLA) in order to enhance leadership of both elected and appointed officials. LOGOLA focuses on leadership training with a particular focus on emotional intelligence, knowledge management, communication and interaction, and problem-solving (Khambule, 2013:65).

2.10 ROLE-PLAYERS IN THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Vinesh (2014:213) points out that training and skills development is the field which is concerned with organisational activity aimed at bettering the performance of individuals and groups in organisational setting. It is a combined role often conducted by different role players. Nekhavhambe (2017:121) is of the view that different role players have a very meaningful role that they play in the training of officials. According to Bisschoff and Govender (2004:70), South Africa's commitment to improving the country's skills levels depends on government, training providers, employers, and employees. In this instance Reddy (1996:125), articulate that training is not a responsibility of employers only, for example, municipalities, but also a responsibility of other participants. However, Bisschoff and Govender (2004:70) further argue that the challenge is for the role players to understand, implement and take ownership of workplace and skills legislation, and thus improve the country's skills levels. In this regard, within the context of utilising training and skills

development in order to improve performance at the Greater Letaba Local Municipality, the responsibility is to be shared among the different role-players discussed next:

2.10.1 The human resources office

According to Armstrong and Taylor (2015:1), the human resources office ensure that the organisation has the talented, skilled, and engaged people it needs. Marx (1986:150) states that this office is responsible for what could be called, organised group training. Training courses should be planned and organised in advance and offered to employees addressing different issues. In doing this, the human resources office should have conducted a needs analysis to establish what exactly such a course should focus on. This will enable them to come-up with the objectives for that training on what actually needs to be achieved. On the other hand, Hartoyo and Efendy (2017:145) suggest that before the training and development program is implemented it must begin with an assessment or analysis of training needs.

Menzel and Messina (2011:22) are of the view that a training needs analysis is only the first critical stage in any training program. Thus, a training needs analysis is quite simply a way of identifying the existing gaps in the knowledge and the strengths and weaknesses in the processes that enable or hinder effective training programs being delivered. Hartoyo and Efendy (2017:145) further asserts that this training needs analysis is a systematic effort to gather information on performance issues within the organisation and to correct performance deficiencies. Therefore, Marx (1986:150) further postulates that the actual training can now start and after its completion, it should be evaluated to determine whether the pre-set objectives have been achieved.

2.10.2 Management

McArdle (2007:9) asserts that management represents the employer, and their responsibility is to monitor and make sure that the objective of the institution is achieved. This therefore means that, it is responsible to make sure that what they are investing through training will increase performance and productivity by employees. This can only be achieved if the training programme has been designed in a way that supports the institution's strategy. The training in question should assist trainees to grow in as far as their professional ambitions are concerned. Van der Waldt and Du Toit (1998:394) suggest that managers should themselves be well-trained on their duties. Their trainings should strive to make sure that they (managers) get well-informed in as far as developments and new approaches are concerned in the provision of quality services to clients.

According to Marx (1986:151), the responsibility of management as per their different levels should be to make sure that training policies and procedures are implemented in the correct way. As an institution would be having a number of departments, divisions, sections and

units, it is the responsibility of the head at each level to determine and conduct needs analysis on what is really needed to focus on when to subject employees to training. One other responsibility of management would be to make sure that the work should not be interrupted and as such schedule employees to different training session accordingly. In terms of Section 55 of the Local Government: Municipal Systems Act, 2000 (Act No. 32 of 2000), the head of administration in the municipalities is the municipal manager. As such he/she is inter alia responsible and accountable for the appointment and training of new and old staff. The Municipal Manager is also responsible for the implementation of the training and skills development programmes such as in-service training and learnership.

2.10.3 Employer

Nasir (2017:217) points out that besides hiring the right person for right job at right time, the employer is also responsible for employee motivation, satisfaction, training, long term development and retention. Heathfield (2020:1) states that Human Resources Development (HRD) is one of the most significant opportunities that employees seek when they consider an individual as an employer. The ability, and encouragement, to continue to develop their skills help the employer to retain and motivate employees. The role of the employer in developing the skills of the South African workforce, as stipulated in the Skills Development Amendment Act 37 of 2008, is to use the workplace as an active learning environment; to provide employees with opportunities to acquire new skills; to provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market so as to gain work experience and to employ persons who find it difficult to be employed. The Department of Higher Education and Training (2019:5) supports this viewpoint by stating that this role, as per National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), has financial, administrative and human resource development implications and includes the currently employed and the unemployed. The NSDS requires the employer to pay a Skills Development Levy, have a registered Skills Development Facilitator, submit a Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) in consultation with employees, submit an Annual Training Report (ATR) and train employees.

In light of the above, Van Zyl (2018:91) asserts that to accomplish the task awarded to employers in developing the skills of the employed, employers need to train their employees. Employees could gain skills in a variety of ways which may include short-term, modular and competency-based programmes that enable the learner to acquire requisite skills in minimum time and possibly at minimum cost. These programmes allow skills development to continue as the employee continues working and they may be delivered in a workplace on-the-job or outside in a classroom or a combination of the two, by instructors and assessors who are hired on the basis of the qualification they bring (Surbhi, 2019:1). According to Bruce (2013:1), the training usually happens during the employer's time, implying that the employee is paid for the time that he has spent in training. This is usually a bone of contention for

employers as they are more concerned with productivity and reaching targets than they are with developing employees.

In light of the above, Oberholzer (2019:1) suggests that to do that, employers need to understand the various skills development legislation and regulations in place in order to align their training efforts with the government's priorities in order to optimise their training budgets – after all, these budgets are not finite, but a good skills development strategy will make use of the various tax rebates and allowances to maximise its use. Moyo and Modiba (2013:5) indicate that key legislation includes the Skills Development Act 37 of 2008, which provides the institutional framework to developing a skilled workforce by devising and implementing national, sector and workplace skills development strategies. The act aims to, among other things, encourage employers to promote skills development and encourage workers to participate in learnerships and other training programmes. Section 3 (1) of the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999) provides for the payment of a skills development levy, which amounts to 1% of an employer's salary bill. However, organisations with a wage bill of less than R500, 000 do not have to pay this levy. The levy is paid to South African Revenue Service (SARS) but is distributed via the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

Oberholzer (2019:1) further recommends that it is therefore important that employers that pay the levy are registered with the relevant SETA so that they can claim back a portion of the amount they spend on training. This is done through the mandatory grant system. Hence, pertaining to the organisations that qualify to receive the mandatory grant, an employer needs to be registered in terms of the Skills Development Levies Act, be up to date with levy payments and employ a skills development facilitator. A work skills plan and annual training report also needs to be submitted by the SETA-imposed deadline that is typically around the end of April. Thus, the work skills plan for the previous reporting period will need to have been implemented according to the prescriptions of the relevant Seta. Cosser, Mncwango, Twalo, Roodt and Ngazimbi (2012:14) stipulates that importantly, the work skills plan and annual training report, along with the Professional, Vocational, Technical and Academic Learning (PIVOTAL) training report are vital if the employer earn maximum points in terms of the skills development element of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) scorecard in the new codes.

In view of the above statement, Kanyane (2011:1) articulate that in terms of the Codes, organisations can achieve a maximum of 25 points towards the skills development element of on scorecard. The minimum they need to achieve for that element is eight points or 40% excluding the 5 bonus points. The BBBEE Codes only recognise the development of black staff and place emphasis on transferring hard skills to black employees and black non-

employees. Hard skills refer to accredited training that leads to a formal qualification. Mummenthey, Wildschut and Kruss (2012:1) are of the view that it is therefore vital that organisations take skills development seriously, especially where pivotal training is concerned. According to Seta regulations, pivotal training is funded through discretionary funding, which means that implemented correctly, organisations would not even have to fund that through their training budget.

Setas have ring-fenced 10% of their funds towards discretionary funding which organisations can apply for. Pivotal learning programmes are professional, vocational, technical, and academic learning programmes that result in occupational qualifications or part qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework. So, basically, Pivotal learning programmes ensure that when employers train their employees, they train them in a way that the training is not wasted when they move on to new employment. Employers give employees the building blocks to earn a full qualification, turning the workplace into a place of learning. They comprise the following: learnerships, work integrated learning, internships, bursaries, and skills programmes (Mummenthey *et al.*, 2012:1).

2.10.4 Trainers

McArdle (2007:9) points out that trainers should try and simplify the training process as far as possible. The training process must be made interesting so that trainees will not get bored in the process and start to lose interest as early as the starting of the training. The materials provided must be easy to read and implement and also provide extra referencing materials. Trainers must also show the relevance of what the training focusses on and how it links-up with trainees' jobs. In that way, the whole process will then make sense to trainees. DeSimone and Werner (2012:150) assert that when organisations select trainers, they must be very careful. This stage could come after a proper training programme has been designed. For a trainer to be rated as a good one, he/she must be having good communication skills such that he/she can impart the knowledge and skill they have with ease in a variety of ways. They must be good motivators, inspiring their candidate to develop a learning interest. Mpofo and Hlatywayo (2015:135) are of the belief that if a trainer is skilled and presents a quality training programme, the performance in the work environment can be improved.

Kiley and Coetzee (2013:364) state that to be effective, the trainer should have knowledge of and skills relating to group dynamics, should possess listening and questioning skills, should give timely and quality feedback, should be flexible and should practise time management. Potgieter and Greyling (2015:606) indicates that while presenting training, the trainer must determine the levels of knowledge and the capacity of the trainees and must take cognisance of their abilities throughout the training programme. In the same vein

McArdle (2007:12) maintains that, the trainer as the central figure in the training process, should be very competent in presentation and facilitation. A trainer should be well organised and be skilful at conveying accurate, credible, and reliable information as the audience is at liberty to go and verify information they are provided with. Trainers should also be experts on the subject, be good presenters, be innovators, be teachers, be good in mentoring and coaching.

Trainers, according to Zaccarelli (1988:37) should possess the following characteristics: must have interest in training; should have a sense of humour; should be good in communication; be patient; must be having time to do the training; must be respectful of his/her colleagues including trainees; and must be full of enthusiasm. Wachira (2010:16) articulate that the role of the trainer is to create a learning environment where trainees feel comfortable to learn from the trainer as well as from the peers in the class and to implement what has been learned in the workplace in order to achieve individual goals and objectives. When potential trainers have been identified, they should be subjected to programmes that would help them to improve their knowledge in implementing training programmes. Berman, Bowman, West and Van Wart (2010:277) postulates that training is sometimes outsourced to ensure that employees benefit from the specialised knowledge of experts, to provide programmes that differ from those that the organisation can offer and to ensure that the different needs of employees are met. However, the current researcher contends that outsourcing training providers is not better than using the inside training providers. This is because the inside training providers are familiar with the trainees within the organisation and hence it becomes easier for them to identify the performance gaps and skills needs of employees for providing relevant training programme.

2.10.5 The Skills Development Facilitators (SDF)

Chetty (2016:17) states that every employer must appoint/nominate an employee or any other person who is formally contracted to the employer as a Skills Development Facilitator. Employers with fewer than 50 employees or with a turnover less than that specified in Schedule 4 to the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998) may jointly appoint a Skills Development Facilitator. The employer must submit to the Sectoral Education Training Authority (SETA) the name and contact details of the person who is to serve as Skills Development Facilitator. Combe (2019:1) points out that, a Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) is responsible for the planning, implementations and reporting of training in an organisation, with SETA related duties. The function of SDF, be it an internal SDF, and external (outsourced) SDF or Secondary SDF (Union representative elected to assist with the submission of the grant) is to assist the organisation with developing and executing the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and submitting it to the SETA during the grant submission

reporting period. In conjunction the SDF must report on the Annual Training Report (ATR) for the past year which is also submitting during the reporting season.

Combe (2019:1) further contends that the SDF is a fundamental and integral part of the organisation's skills development and training process in that it is that person's role to ensure that not only the submissions are submitted but also to ensure that the training that is provided is done in such a way as to maximise the organisation's grant application, meets the criteria for the employee as well as the organisation's objectives, vision and mission and supports the growth of the organisation and its employees in a holistic way, within legislative requires. Cotter (2018:22) asserts that the role of the SDF is to offer expert advice to management about what training can and cannot achieve. Therefore, the functions of the SDF include facilitating the developments of the employee's skills and devising a strategy for the role out of that training, bearing budgetary constraints in mind. The SDF is the expert who communicates with all of the role players of the skills development process, being the Employees, management, Human Resources, the training committee and the SETA itself.

The SDF is required to engage on a deep level in order to understand the operational needs of the organisation, the requirements for the relevant SETA and to match this to the Employee's expectations. In this regard, the relevant SETA for municipal officials are Public Service Education and Training Authority (PSETA), Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Services SETA), and Local Government and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (LGWSETA). An SDF is therefore a mediator as well as an administrator with strong administrative and people skills. The SDF must understand the National Skills Plan III for training, the relevant Sector plan as well as how to classify the occupations within the organisation in order to link all occupations to the employees skills sets, in line with the Occupational Framework for Occupations (OFO codes) which form a fundamental part of the reporting process. Often this will require a skills audit to help to establish the fundamental skills sets which the employee has and match them to the job descriptions. All of which then forms the basis for succession planning in the long run (Combe, 2019:1).

The SDF must involve themselves in quarterly (minimum) training committee meetings which must be structured to include individuals from all levels within the organisation in much the same way as with Employment Equity, which ensures equal representation and inclusion. Cotter (2018:22) further emphasise that a very important function of the SDF is to establish a Training Committee for the enterprise or company. Combe (2019:1) furthermore adds that the SDF can also be called on to assist with the training and education of the training committee members as well as the Secondary SDF who is a member of trade union who is required to be represented on the committee. The SDF training should include advising the training committee of their functions, advising them as to their roles and responsibilities, the

purpose of Skills Development within the organisation and the role of consultation within the organisation.

2.10.6 The Training Committee

Cotter (2018:23) observes that the training committee is comprised of three constituent parties which include employee representatives from designated groups, non-designated groups, all occupational categories and levels, employer representatives for example, senior management and representatives of organised labour or representative trade unions. Chetty (2016:18) points out that the training committee must reflect the interest of employees from all occupational categories in the workplace. They must ensure close engagement and interaction with the Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) as it is a key issue in terms of creating an effective training committee. Employees must be consulted about the workplace skills plan (WSP); the report on implementation of the Annual Training Report (ATR); and monitoring and evaluation of training.

Chetty (2016:19) further implies that the Training Committee must be committed to the intent and spirit of the Skill Development legislative and National skills strategy requirements. The Training Committee should subscribe to the following commitments: support and enable the SDFs; communicate with each other in a collaborative manner (as opposed to adversarial relationships) and provide suitable feedback on implementation of training. Consultation must take place prior to taking final decisions in respect of key issues such as preparation and submission of the WSP/ATR; application for discretionary grants and finalising of the Training policies. All communication and discussions with employees or their representatives or the Skills Development Training Committee and any written documents pertaining to this process should avoid any implied suggestion that the employer has already reached its decision before the conclusion of the process.

2.10.7 Training course designers

According to Carliner (2015:10), through design, training course designers determine how to develop the skills identified in the objectives and prepare trainees to apply those skills in the ways that the tests assess. Specifically, design involves choosing the appropriate intervention for achieving the objectives. In this regard, although many organisations assume that training is the appropriate solution to the problem, in the real world, training on its own might not achieve the desired performance. Training only addresses a performance gap that results from a lack of skills and knowledge. Other types of programs called interventions address performance gaps from a lack of resources or motivation. Cuesta (2010:184) is of the view that training course design also includes choosing the appropriate communication medium. This means that course designers and developers can use different communication

media to deliver training to trainees, including the physical classroom, the live virtual classroom, workbooks, and computers. Frerejean, Van Merriënboer, Kirschner, Roex, Aertgeerts and Marcellis (2019:520) assert that the general design activities for these media are similar, though some adjustments might be necessary to take advantage of certain unique capabilities of a medium and avoid its pitfalls.

Carliner (2015:10) further states that designing a course encompasses structuring the instructional material for the training program. Hence, structuring the material involves first determining a sequence for presenting content- that is, what comes first and what comes second. In doing so, the trainer considers the general structure of each unit so that units have a similar rhythm, divide the content into manageable units, and determine the specific material to cover each. Trainers also determine whether variations of particular units are needed to address specific groups of trainees, such as trainees who follow an alternate process when applying the content. Seeletso (2016:8) is of the view that the training course design also involves presenting the instructional material. After determining the structure of the program, trainers next choose a strategy for teaching the instructional material. Trainers choose a general strategy for the entire program as well as specific strategies for individual units, such as the classical approach, mastery learning, and discovery learning.

Carliner (2015:11) furthermore points out that as part of choosing a teaching strategy, trainers also determine the sequence of events needed in each unit to develop the skills identified, such as starting a lesson with an activity or waiting until after an instructor demonstrates a skill before starting an activity. McArdle (2007:9) articulate that when a training programme is being designed, the designer must make sure that the objectives set are achievable. The flow of information in the course content should always be logical and have a correct flow on each sub-topic. Stewart and Lopes (2015:1) posit that therefore, to build the capacity of curriculum and learning materials designers within the public service use critical thinking and reflection to challenge existing training and development paradigms in order to design curriculum and develop learning materials that are outcomes based, contextualised for the public service and linked to the relevant Education, Training and Development Quality Management System (ETD QMS). Sibomama (2014:1) indicates that in addition, the design and development of curriculum and programmes will take into account the transformation agenda and strategic objectives of the public service.

2.10.8 Employees

Garaghty (2015:1) is of the view that the slogan “Nothing about us without us” becomes true in workplace skills development. It translates to “nothing can be done about employees without their involvement”. O’Brien (2014:1) posits that the involvement of employer and

employee is critical to the success of skills development in the workplace. Punia and Kant (2013:1) points out that a vast field of literature on skills development in South Africa exists, concentrating on policy documents and the effective functioning of the skills development institutions. A few, if at all, concentrate on the employee as the beneficiary of skills development. In the National Skills Development Strategy II (NSDS II) 2005 – 2010, targets were set of how many employers and employees need to have been reached to participate in skills development (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2010:41). According to Squire (2013:1), supervisor/line managers, Skills Development facilitator (SDF) or a union representative are better positioned in assisting employees in identifying what their needs are and channelling them to appropriate training programmes.

Smith (2015:1) states that the role of employee development lies within the employee; no one knows and understands the needs of the employee better than the employee him/herself. Employees should take an interest in knowing what programmes are available in their workplaces and, crucially, also get involved in them. The researcher is of the view that more often employees moan and groan about their position in life, about their manager not being fair and so on. Thus, when employers introduce programmes that will better the employee's prospects at work, he/she gets suspicious without even listening to what it is about. The suspicion is usually brought by the fear that workplace programmes are implemented to catch employees who are not performing and then dismiss them. Therefore, Radcliffe (2019:1) suggests that employees with a low level of education are usually the ones affected the most and need to be developed. However, Ikenaga and Kawaguchi (2010:7) argues that such employees are the ones with low level of training participation rate. It becomes essential that employees work closely with someone who understands what training opportunities are available and will best suit the job that the employee does.

Moran (2013:1) asserts that employees need to be motivated and motivation comes with dedication and enjoyment of doing the work they are employed for. Tingum (2019:1) indicates that employees use different approaches to develop their own employability skills, these include proactive communication, asking questions, active listening, developing working relationships with managers and seeking out helpful people (supervisor, manager, colleague) as mentors. Bihani (2018:1) stipulates that to fully enjoy the work they are doing, employees need to be competent in what they do and that carries a responsibility to seek knowledge, experience and skills which can be gained by workplace skills development. In most instances in the workplace, employees are told by management what to do, however when it comes to skills development, this is one area in which employees should not just receive orders, but rather take ownership. Employees need to take initiatives and accept ownership of their own development; they also need to develop their own developmental plans together

with line management. Vasanthi and Basariya (2019:672) add that employees should develop systems for organising their work and take advantage of off-the-job training opportunities. Employee training should be informed by the training needs of the employee, in line with the needs of the organisation.

2.10.9 Researchers

Sipengane (2014:1) states that South Africa has embarked on a skills development revolution in an attempt to address skills development as a skilled workforce is critical for economic growth and development. Of great importance to this endeavour is the role of research in continuously providing the solutions throughout the process and generate knowledge to enhance innovation and creativity in skills development delivery. Core to this research is the importance of planning, design of support interventions, measuring performance and impact assessment of various interventions and lastly assess and evaluate progress, successes, and failures in the skills development process. This task requires cooperation, partnerships and collaboration by both the public and private sector as key role players with agencies such as Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) facilitating linkages and acting as conduits between industry and government as well as beneficiaries of skills development broadly.

Furthermore, the SETAs are tasked to develop and annually update the Sector Skills Plan (SSP) according to Skills Development Act (1998). These SSPs require an investment by SETAs on research. The purposes of the SSP among others include but are not limited to the following: Inform supply and demand side for skills planning; enable skills forecasting to determine future needs per economic sector; determine funding priorities via the SETA levy grant system; analyse Workplace Skills Plans and Annual Training Reports for companies to determine priority focus areas; guide the SETA's strategy planning and execution and inform the curricula development processes on industry needs. It is against this background that this context seeks to highlight the role of research in skills planning and further on presents a 6step action plan adapted to the South African context in taking charge of the skills gap and expands this by indicating how research could facilitate the process at organisation; industry and government levels (Sipengane, 2014:1).

2.11 APPROACHES TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Weinstein (2019:1) points out that organisations today are struggling to figure out how to create a well-rounded, all-inclusive approach to training that appeals to multiple generations of trainees and make the training interesting. On the other hand, Andriotis (2018:1) states that effective implementation of skills development plan is never approached as a one-size-fits-all method. Nevertheless, with all of the options available, identifying and selecting the

best training approach for employees can be overwhelming. Hence, in the era of larger talent gaps and intelligent technologies, the need for training and skills development has never been so important before. There are a number of approaches to train employees. The study conducted by Mopeli (2015:37) specified various generalised approaches to training and skills development interventions. Each approach has its own unique advantages and plays a significant role in the improvement of personnel capability in an institution, therefore the following approaches discussed below can be undertaken by the municipalities to train and develop municipal officials.

2.11.1 Traditional approach

Andriotis (2018:1) asserts that traditional approaches to skills development offers a number of benefits and are commonly found in many organisations today. This is because in the traditional approach, the training of employees includes designing the objectives, contents, teaching techniques, assignments, lesson plans, motivation, tests, and evaluation. This is advantageous to the trainees because they have already familiarise themselves with the traditional techniques. In this regard, training methods from the traditional category that should be considered when choosing the best training techniques for trainees in the organisation include classroom-based training programs, and interactive training. According to Khan (2014:29), the advantage of classroom-based training is that a group of employees can attain large amounts of knowledge at the same time. On the other hand, interactive training is one of the most effective training methods in the workplace, which actively involves trainees in their own learning experience. This training can take the form of simulations, scenarios, roleplays, quizzes or games. By practicing their new skills and applying them in realistic work scenarios, trainees are not only more engaged but also more likely to retain what they have learned, too.

Lalima (2017:129) notes that the traditional mode of training in spite of its few shortcomings provides a much needed human touch to the learning process. Personality and behaviour of the trainers directly influences the blooming personality of the trainees. Only face to face interaction meets the affective objectives along with cognitive and psychomotor. Face to face traditional approach helps in developing a strong value system. Social skills like cooperation, sharing, expression and respecting other's views are more easily developed in traditional mode of training. Zhou and Brown (2015:8) articulate that students learn not only from books, or from trainers teaching inside classroom but also from the co-students, through their peer group interaction, they learn many skills in playground and their small social interactions in canteens, and lounge. All this is necessary for a proper personality development.

Cornett (2017:1) is of the view that traditional training methods have been used for decades and have been proven as constant and dependable. This is because these approaches are

more than familiar, and often affordable, for it is easy to gain buy-in from executives and participants. Once materials or curriculums have been developed, traditional training is relatively economical and painless to execute. In the same vein, Burley (2017:1) has echoed that the traditional training approach for human resources have proven successful for many years. This approach is useful and used by many organisations. Traditional training approach require experienced and dedicated human resource professionals to conduct them and make the tools useful for their trainees.

2.11.2 Modern approach

Pilnick, Trusson, Beeke, O'Brien, Goldberg and Harwood (2018:3) argue that the trainers used to rely on skills development approaches that are different from today and are less interactive. They used a boring method to convey the idea. This means that the training approach might have not been helpful to establish the idea in the minds of the trainees. Trainers also relied more on the coaching, role-playing, seminars, dialogue and discussion, but recently more effective and successful ways of communicating, explaining and clarifying information have been used. Raheja (2015:35) agrees that organisations have realised the importance of modern approach training. Because training is now considered as more of retention tool than a cost. The training system have been changed to create a smarter workforce and yield the best results.

Andriotis (2018:10) supports the above statement by pointing out that in the modern workplace that consists of remote employees and diverse cultures, training approaches for employees have changed. These include eLearning, or online training, which has become one of the most widely recognised solutions to the challenge of how to train employees effectively. Online workplace training programs can include eLearning courses, webinars, videos, and allow information to be presented and tested in many different ways. Raheja (2015:35) further states that a collection of recordings and educational presentations presented by television sets, displays, video, or computer enables the trainee to understand the idea, and purpose of the training. This is because eLearning is one of the important methods in the training process at the present time because of its applications and tools that serve the training process and to reach the information in an attractive manner and concept. The variety that online training offers means that employees can learn according to their style and immediate needs. It also means they can learn on the go.

2.11.3 Systematic approach

Lai and Lin (2017:3) asserts that systems approach to skills development views the organisation as complex set of subsystems and expects changes in one subsystem to yield potential needs in another. It is therefore 'organisational' but it can produce individual or

group plans aimed at long or short-term objectives. Therefore, in this context training is the systematic application of formal processes to impart knowledge and help people acquire the skills necessary for them to perform their jobs satisfactorily (Armstrong, 2012:1). As training is considered a process, adopting a systematic approach to design training programmes can be useful. According to Brierley, Price and Prior Learning Media (2013), a systematic approach to training encompasses four basic stages as follows: identifying and defining training needs; designing learning and development programme; implementing learning events and programmes; and systematically evaluating training. These four basic stages are discussed below:

2.11.3.1 Stage 1: Identifying and defining training needs

Rahman (2016:1) alludes that the first stage of a systematic approach to training is to identify and define the training needs of the employees. Hartoyo and Efendy (2017:141) state that a training need assessment is a strategic step to find out the right training program for the organisation and employees. Assessment of training needs is very important as it provides information about the skill level and knowledge of the organisation's human resources. Rahman (2016:1) further argues that for example, some employees may lack communication skills while some others lack leadership skills. Managers can identify the training needs of employees in a number of ways. For example, a conversation with an employee may sometimes be enough to identify his/her training needs.

2.11.3.2 Stage 2: Designing learning and development programme

Cowling and Mailer (2013:69) point out that when the need for training has been identified, the next stage in the systematic training process is to set training objectives, design training programmes and select training methods. An objective is a specific outcome that the training programme is intended to achieve. These are typically set for the trainee rather than the organisation, though the outcome of training should ultimately lead to the achievement of organisational goals. Training objectives define performance that the trainee should be able to exhibit after training. Rahman (2016:1) furthermore exemplify that a learnership programme may be designed for new employees in organisations. This stage also involves identifying required facilities, and funding. The question is now how to deliver this programme. The programme can be done through on-the-job or off-the-job training methods.

2.11.3.3 Stage 3: Implementing learning events and programmes

Rahman (2016:1) adds that the third stage is about implementing the training programme designed in the preceding stage. There are a number of issues to consider here. For example, starting the programme according to the published time, safety of the participants, making the event enjoyable and many more should be taken into account. On the other hand,

McNamara (2008:1) is of the view that the implementation stage tends to involve putting the training package designed into practice. It includes a variety of tasks ranging from delivering the training, clarifying training materials, administrative processes and conducting a final evaluation. This phase can include administrative activities, such as copying, and scheduling facilities.

2.11.3.4 Stage 4: Systematically evaluating training

The last stage of a systematic approach to training is evaluation. Beevers and Rea (2010:167) indicate that the primary purposes of training evaluations is to provide feedback to prove, improve, review and learn. This stage involves assessing training prior to, during and after its duration. Training programmes need to be evaluated to assess their effectiveness. Top management is often interested to see the results produced by training programmes as well. Rahman (2016:1) furtherly articulate that a training programme can be evaluated in a number of ways. McNamara (2008:1) emphasised that the training programme can involve a wide variety of tasks from testing attendees on what was taught during the training, to asking their opinions on the training. On the other hand, Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2012:124) state that training evaluation is implemented based on the inputs and expectations of the client. Beevers and Rea (2010:175) further stipulates that the learning intervention must address the identified gaps in Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes (SKA's), to provide appropriate solutions and then evaluate all contributing efforts. The inputs include the financial and non-financial investments, both tangible and non-tangibles, both hard and soft, both quantitative and qualitative.

2.11.4 The competence approach

Rothwell and Graber (2010:1) point out that the term competency refers to individual characteristics that contribute to acceptable or outstanding performance. Competencies can be anything from a set of knowledge, skills, behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics that lead to producing distinguished results. Competencies lie at the core of successful performers, so it is important for one to understand that the analysis of high-achieving talent is one way to identify competencies that allow success over others. There are different categories of competencies such as functional competencies, personal competencies, and business competencies. Functional competencies are applicable technical knowledge or skills that are needed for a particular field or profession. For example, accountants require different functional competencies than engineers or electricians. The second group of competencies is personal competencies, which are individual attitudes and skills required to maintain professional relationships and personally develop and learn. An example of a personal competency would be one's communication skills or the ability to prioritise commitments. The

final group of competencies is business competencies wherein individuals have the ability to view problems or situations through a business lens; for example, strategic or critical financial thinking.

According to the National Skills Center of Australia (2018:1), competency-based training is a structured approach to training and assessment that is directed toward achieving specific outcomes. It is about assisting individuals to acquire skills and knowledge so that they are able to perform a task to a specified standard under certain conditions. Thus, in competencybased training, a performer's expected outcomes must be clearly stated so that the learner knows exactly what is expected of them. Similarly, for competency-based trainers, once competencies are assigned to learners, the trainer will know the precise training and learning that is required to bring the learner to the desired level of competency. Gervais (2016:2) articulate that this learning method allows a student to learn those individual skills they find challenging at their own pace, practising and refining as much as they like. Then move rapidly to other skills to which they are more adept.

Exner (2019:1) supports the above viewpoint by stating that competency-based training measures the learning that occurs in a training program rather than the time it takes to learn. In other words, learners move through training based on their skills and competencies, regardless of the time needed to complete the course. In many cases, especially with experienced employees, traditional classroom training is less effective in terms of performance because of the time it takes to complete the training. In competency-based training, the learning outcome is the constant while the time needed to complete the training is allowed to vary to meet learner-specific requirements. The Natural Resource Stewardship Training (2017:1) is of the view that employees attain competencies in a multitude of ways- life experience; formal education; apprenticeship; on-the-job experience; self-help programs; mentoring; and training and development courses, programs, and activities. Distance-learning methods, including Internet-based courses, satellite broadcasts (TEL), and CD-ROM programs, provide competency training in a cost-efficient, effective, innovative, and environmentally friendly format. All of these together contribute to job competence in an employee.

2.11.5 The analytical approach

Gregory and Chapman (2012:99) assert that an analytical approach is a critical thinking strategy whereby trainees would evaluate, justify, and classify the information that the trainer impart to them. In other words, the intent of the trainer gathering this information to the trainees is not to measure what the trainees has learned, but whether they have understood what was taught to them or not in relation to their job descriptions. Phelan (2018:1) supports

this viewpoint by stating that where employees' performance can be measured against the analysis, a so-called learning gap is said to exist, and more specific plan can be drawn up. Heathfield (2019:1) states that job descriptions and job specifications are typically created and drawn on for the analytical approach training information.

Christodoulou (2013:1) supports the above statement by pointing out that this training kind of approach has traditionally been linked with a careful and specialist assessment of an organisations training needs, followed by a detailed analysis of its knowledge, skills and attitudes required for each role. On the other hand, Robin and Muriel (2018:28) posit that this training approach usually relies on job characteristics standing the test of time – the analysis is rarely completed quickly and is a costly investment. It requires the application of logic on the part of someone other than the learner – usually a trainer or a work-study specialist. It is particularly applicable in situations where the overall task requires that a number of people work consistently in accordance with laid-down rules. Therefore, Pappas (2014:1) points out that the analytical approach of training is beneficial because it helps to enhance creativity, and reinforces problem-solving ability.

2.11.6 Active learning approach

According to Eison (2010:1), active learning is generally defined as any instructional method that engages students in the learning process. In short, active learning requires students to do meaningful learning activities and think about what they are doing and has been widely accepted. Gifkins (2015:1) concurs that active learning is the process of learning via engaging with the content. It means students are interacting with the material in any way that can promote active thought, via 'activities' for learning or via re-framing the note-taking process to encouraging thinking about the material rather than transcribing the content. This means that students are doing more than simply listening; the aim is skills-development rather than just conveying information; students engage in activities, for example, discussion, debate, and application of principles aimed to promote higher-order thinking such as critical thinking, and analysis.

Vinesh (2014:216) is of the view that in this approach, trainees play a leading role in learning by exploring issues and situational problems under the guidance of their facilitator. The trainees learn by asking thought provoking questions, searching for answers, and interpreting various observations made during the process. The active learning approach has its lasting impact on learning since it helps in long-term retention and finding better solutions in the challenging situations. Gifkins (2015:1) further points out that promoting active learning in lectures has many benefits for student learning. The drop-off in concentration can be limited by using a different approach to learning each 15 minutes (which means changing the way students are engaged, rather than changing topics).

Gifkins (2015:1) furthermore asserts that active learning promotes recall and deeper understanding of material, as students are engaging with the content rather than simply listening to it. There are also equity benefits that flow from active learning, as lower-performing students have greater benefits from active learning than students who are already achieving high grades. Another equity outcome from active learning is that using different modes of delivery supports students who have different learning styles. There are clear ethical as well as pedagogical benefits to the use of active learning techniques. Gleason, Peeters, ResmanTargoff, Karr, McBane, Kelley, Tyan and Denetclaw (2011:1) states that active learning is an important component of training approach. By engaging students in the learning process, they are better able to apply the knowledge they gain. Interacting with content through active learning has some compelling advantages over ‘delivery mode’ lectures. It helps to maintain student concentration and deepens learning towards the higher-level skills like critical thinking. It also helps to engage students who might otherwise struggle. This does not mean doing away with spoken lectures, rather it means integrating different ways of engaging with the material at regular intervals throughout the lecture.

2.12 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN SELECTED COUNTRIES

According to Barthel, Witthöft, Baic and Strack (2016:1), organisations faces the challenge of being unable to locate the right candidate with the right skills at the right time, especially in developing countries. The “skills gap” constrains economic and social development, limiting the ability of individuals to improve their living standard; of organisations to improve productivity and growth; and of countries to reach their potential. Particularly in developing countries, the public sector needs to play an active role in closing the skills gap. The public sector, especially education systems is often too strained. Skills are the backbones on which every successful country rests. Leonardi (2015:1) supports this statement by pointing out that European countries dominates the global league for skills and education with seven of the top 10 places. There are two representatives from Asia, one from North America, and none from the Middle East and North Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean or Sub-Saharan Africa regions. Altenburg and Assmann (2017:4) point out that successful East Asian country such as Malaysia, India, China and Japan confirm this essential truth. In all these countries economic revival and turn around had the skills revolution at its core.

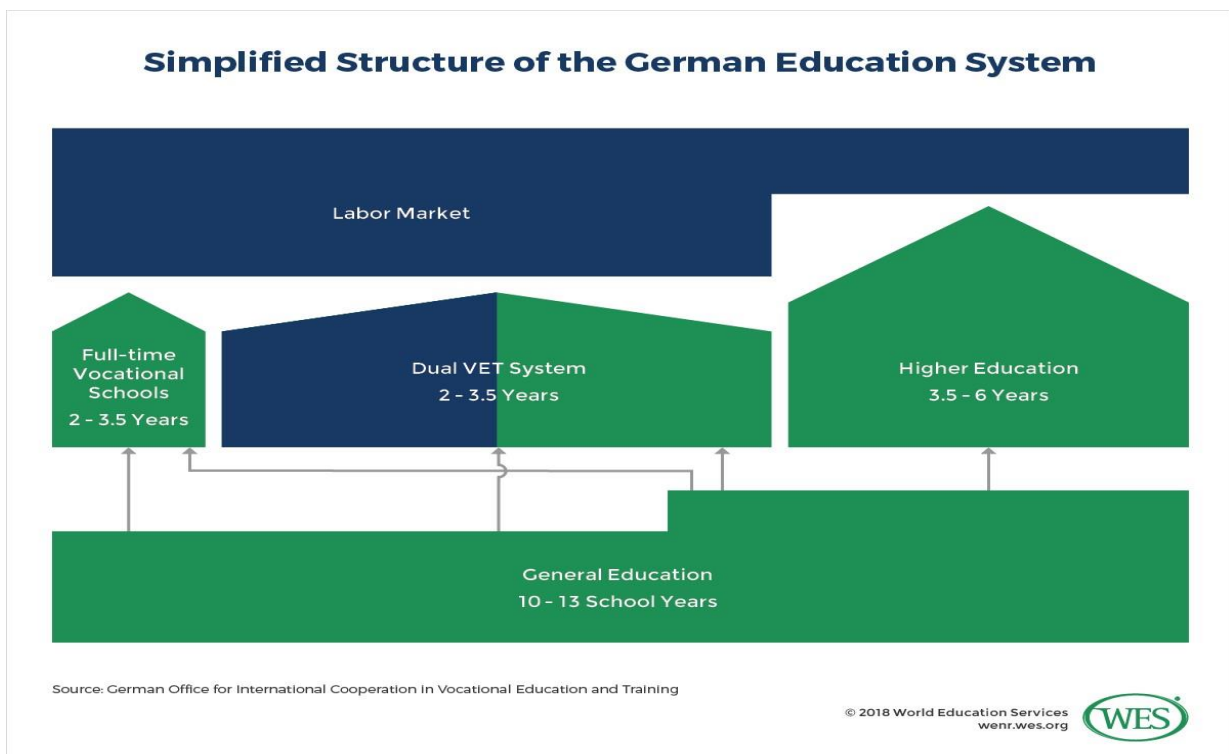
Barthel, Witthöft, Baic and Strack (2016:1) assert that as a country, South Africa has not yet taken the matter of skills to a skills revolution. This is because the public service as the largest employer is faced with immense challenges to deliver services to the public of South Africa while also undergoing transformation and reform. The challenges are immense. Central is the need to build a new cadre of public servant with the requisite competencies to drive the twin challenges of the public service, for example, reform and service delivery. This means that the quest to be a competitive economy and a winning nation depends on equipping the

nation with the appropriate skills. Countries such as Botswana, Mauritius and Kenya are leading the way in the local availability of high skilled jobs (Samans and Zahidi, 2017:4). Scholars such as Martinez-Fernandez and Choi (2012:26) indicate that there is a mix of approaches to skills development. Most countries are strengthening basic training (including general education). This approach is largely driven by public institutions; however, it needs greater investment. More workplace training is needed for high-skilled workers. The Public Service Commission (2016:51) is of the view that competent employees stimulate the South African economy and skills development plan is a tool to fulfil that role. For the purpose of this study, skills development plan in selected countries is discussed below.

2.12.1 Germany

Germany's skills development plan is exceptional. This statement is supported by Spees (2018:1), who stated that Germany has a highly effective work-based vocational training system that has won praise around the world. This is because Germany is standing as a country with one of the most productive workforces in the world strongly aided by its Vocational Education and Training (VET) system, which supplies Germany's companies with well-trained employees. Germany's dual training system, which combines practical training at a workplace with theoretical classroom instruction, also helps trainees' transition into work life. VET opens up a variety of promising career options for young people, thereby strengthening society and culture. Zimmermann (2017:1) agrees that Germany's system puts young people through three-year traineeships composed, fifty-fifty, of classroom instruction in trade-school courses and on-the-job training at participating companies under the supervision of skilled mentors. Sometimes students complete 70% of their training in a company or sector that relates to their coursework. This means that only 30% of training time is spent at a vocational school. In this system the companies and vocational institutions work together to ensure that the training is relevant to the industry. Young people emerge from their apprenticeships knowing their trade and knowing how to get a job done in a real work environment.

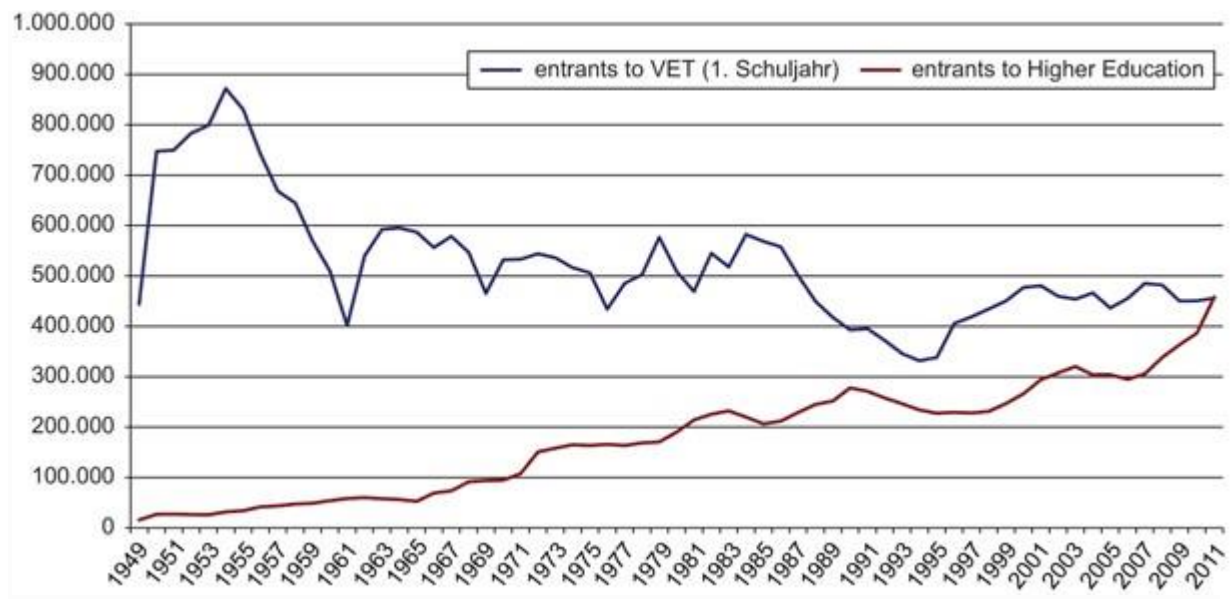
Figure 2.9: Simplified Structure of the German Education System



(Source: German Office for International Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training, 2018).

Zimmermann (2017:1) further asserts that some 52 percent of young Germans graduate from Dual VET apprenticeships and in a great many cases, once they graduate, they are offered long-term employment at the company where they did their apprenticeship. In this regard, dual-system trainees spend half their time in government-funded classrooms, learning the theory of their trade, and half in on-the-job training under the supervision of qualified mentors. Trainees normally spend the duration of their on-the-job training at a single company, which pays them - albeit modestly - a monthly stipend. Euler (2013:53) reiterates that the German vocational training system places specific skill requirements on training personnel in companies. More than 400 000 training companies participate in the system and around two thirds of them take on their trainees at the end. On the other hand, Hutfilter, Lehmann and Kim (2018:7) points out that students who complete their training are therefore more likely to find permanent employment because they have in fact been trained by their future employers. This is the reason why Germany is considered to be a leader in vocational education managing to maintain a balance between technical and academic training. Importantly, Gutta (2015:1) indicates that Germany has the lowest youth unemployment rate in Europe and among the lowest in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. One of the most important, if not the only, reasons is its Dual Vocational Training System (TVET).

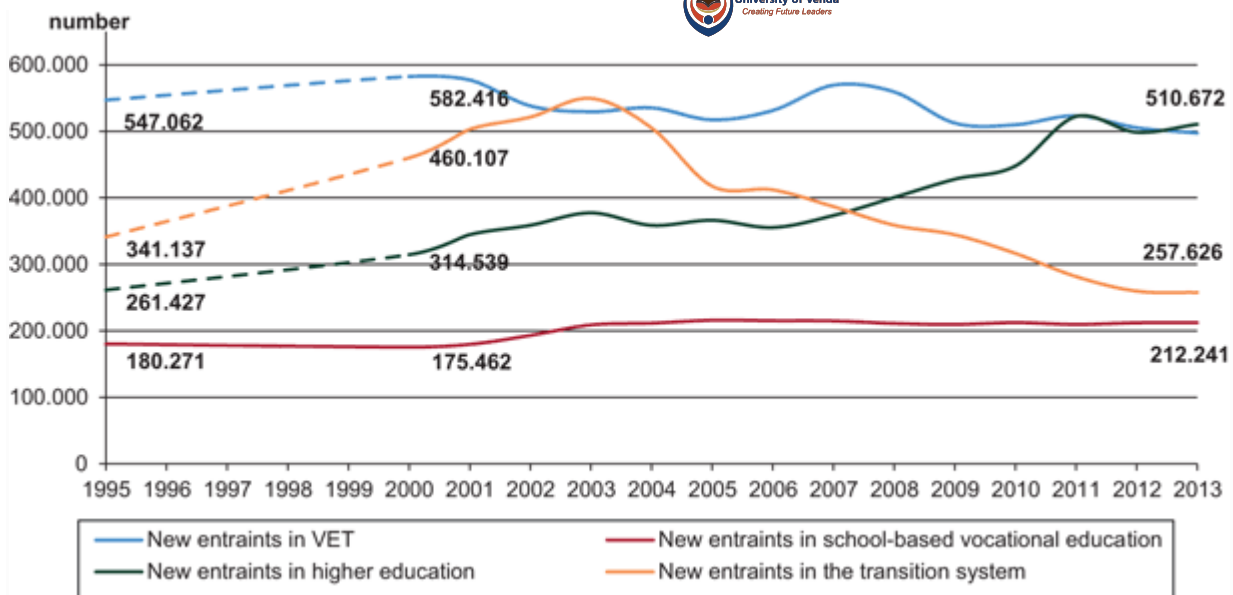
Figure 2.10: Entrants to VET (dual system) and higher education, 1950–2011



(Source: Baethge and Wolter, 2015:99).

Figure 2.11 indicates that for the first time in the German qualification system, the number of new entrants into university and the number of entrants into dual vocational education and training (VET) was just about the same in the past few years. Up to the beginning of this century the number of entrants into dual VET was nearly twice as high as the number of entrants into university studies. The quantitative relationship between both sectors is demonstrated by the development in new entrants. Until the mid-1960s higher education was reserved for a small group of students, in particular from the middle classes. By that time, vocational education was the main pathway into qualified employment for the majority of young people. Then, education reform and educational expansion created new dynamics: by the late 1960s entrants to university and later to colleges of applied sciences started to continuously increase, whereas entrants to VET, with some temporary upward and downward turns, continuously decreased. The preliminary end of this development was reached in 2011/2012 when there was an equal number of entrants in both sectors (Baethge and Wolter, 2015:98).

Figure 2.11: Entrants to the sectors of vocational education and training with qualifications and the transition system, 2000–2013



(Source: Bildungsberichterstattung, 2014:99)

Based on the statistical data in Figure 2.12.1.3, the differentiation of the VET system can only be reconstructed for the past 20 years. Based on the number of entrants, the dual system, with periodic upward and downward turns, has remained static since 1995 and has only recently declined. The school-based vocational system expanded slightly but did not succeed in increasing the proportion of all VET entrants by more than 20% within the reference period. The transition system represents the critical institution of VET. Comparing the shifts between the three sectors over time shows that the transition system is highly dynamic. Until 2005 the transition system absorbed the demographically increasing demand for vocational training and subsequently the demographically decreasing demand. However, the transition system currently still absorbs more than a quarter of applicants for vocational education every year (Baethge and Wolter, 2015:101).

2.12.2 Canada

Munro (2019:12) points out that Canada's education, skills and training ecosystem consists of 13 provincial and territorial education systems, federal labour market and skills programs, employer sponsored training initiatives, career colleges, and a federal system for indigenous education and training. Canada's education, skills and training systems include apprenticeships and trades training systems, which equip students and learners with the technical and general skills needed to master and become certified in a skilled trade. They combine on-the job and in-class instruction, which is usually provided by a college or polytechnic institute. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2014:26) reiterates that Canadian workers may opt to enrol in apprenticeship programmes, which combine workplace learning with classroom instruction. The Canadian Apprenticeship Forum (CAF) notes that the training combines alternating periods of on-the-job (80-90%) and

technical training (10-20%). After completing both the classroom and the on-the-job training, apprentices can receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship (for non-restricted trades) or a Certificate of Qualification (for restricted trades). Depending on the trade, it takes about two to five years as an apprentice to become a certified journeyman. Each province and territory has its own training and certification policies and its own list of designated apprenticeship programmes.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2014:26) further states that the federal government supports apprenticeship certifications through a Red Seal Programme, which promotes a set of common standards that allow the recognition of certifications across provincial jurisdictions. While professional certificates or licenses are recognised by all provincial jurisdictions under the Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), the Red Seal provides the assurance that workers are qualified according to common standards of knowledge and competency as defined by industry. Therefore, the Canadian Council of Directors of Apprenticeship (CCDA) is responsible for the management of the Red Seal Programme. The CCDA works with industry to facilitate the development of a skilled labour force, and labour mobility across Canada. Total registered apprenticeship numbers in Canada more than doubled between 1991 and 2009, rising from 192 945 to reach 409 038 registrations (Statistics Canada, 2010:1). About half the persons newly registered in an apprenticeship programme in 1995 (51%) had completed their training at the end of the 11-year period, in 2005. Slightly more than four apprentices out of ten (42%) never completed a programme (discontinuers) and some 8% were still registered at the end of the 11-year period, having neither completed nor discontinued a programme.

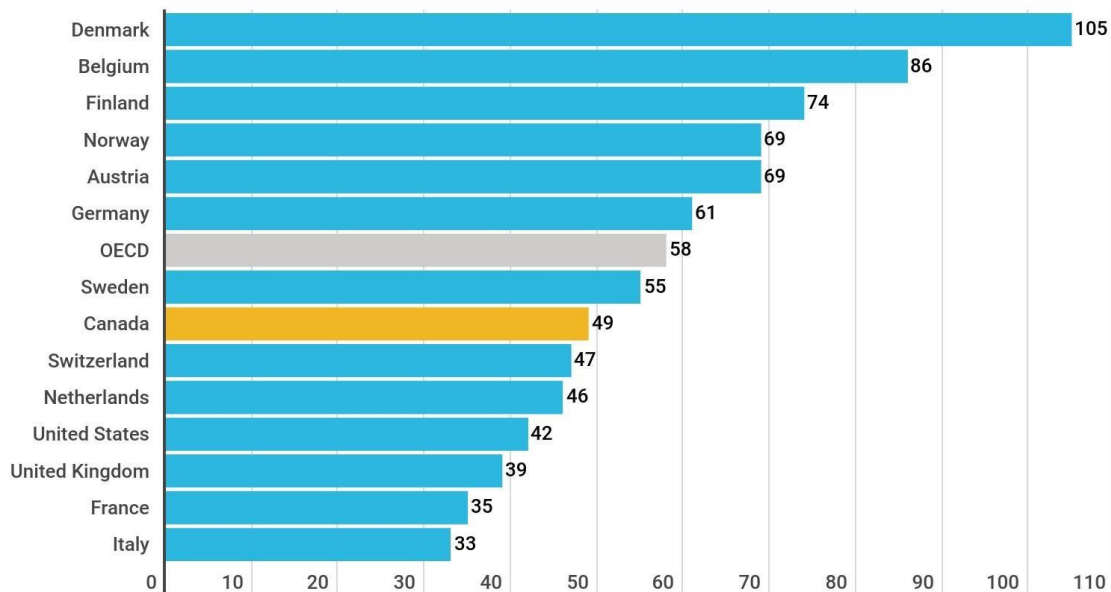
An important feature of Canada's labour market is its average performance on workplace training. For access to non-formal training, Canada ranks 12th among OECD members just above the OECD average but when looking at the number of hours of training, Canada is 20th six places from the bottom (OECD, 2012:1). Firm size matters with about 58% of smaller firms of fewer than 20 employees offering classroom training while 73% of firms of between 20 and 100 employees offer classroom training. Over 90% of firms with more than 100 workers offer employees the opportunity of classroom training (OECD, 2014:26). On the other hand, Munro (2019:12) further asserts that Canada's training and skills development system include adult learning and education systems, which are less formally structured collections of training and education programs. They are designed to reskill or upskill adults already in the labour market and adults who wish to prepare for entry into the labour market, but who need remedial or additional training and education. There are two kinds of adult learning and education programs which are discussed below.

The first one is called employer-sponsored training and development. Munro (2019:12) is of the view that according to this training system, workers can acquire new skills and knowledge through employer-provided training and education, which includes onboarding training for new employees, additional training for current employees, and opportunities for non-employees (such as co-op students and interns) who may become employees later. Such training can be delivered through on-site training sessions, workshops, and mentoring, as well as through offsite education and training institutions, such as colleges, universities, or private training providers. The second one is called training for unemployed and low-skilled employed workers. Halliwell (2013:4) stipulates that the unemployed, underemployed or precariously employed workers often lack the time, resources and skills to pursue education and training in the formal Process Systems Enterprise (PSE) system or to receive employer-sponsored training. Provincial and federal governments try to meet their needs with active labour market measures, including job search assistance, career counselling, wage subsidies and skills development.

However, regardless of the above views, training and skills development is less impressive than Canada's foundational skills and educational attainment. Mid-career workers in Canada receive limited training and development opportunities relative to global peers, and there are substantial and persistent inequities in who is offered, who uses, and who benefits from those opportunities. Though data on training and development are deficient and dated, they paint a concerning picture. Although the proportion of Canadians (31 percent) who receive some jobrelated, non-formal education and training is slightly above the OECD average (28 percent), European peers receive substantially more training (Figure 1). Moreover, while OECD residents who participate in training receive 58 hours of instruction annually, on average, Canadians receive only 49 hours of instruction (Figure 1). While employers, governments, unions and others have spent decades sounding the alarm about skills gaps, Canada remains a middling performer in offering workers opportunities to improve their skills (Munro, 2019:16).

Figure 2.12: Hours of Instruction Received by Training Participants

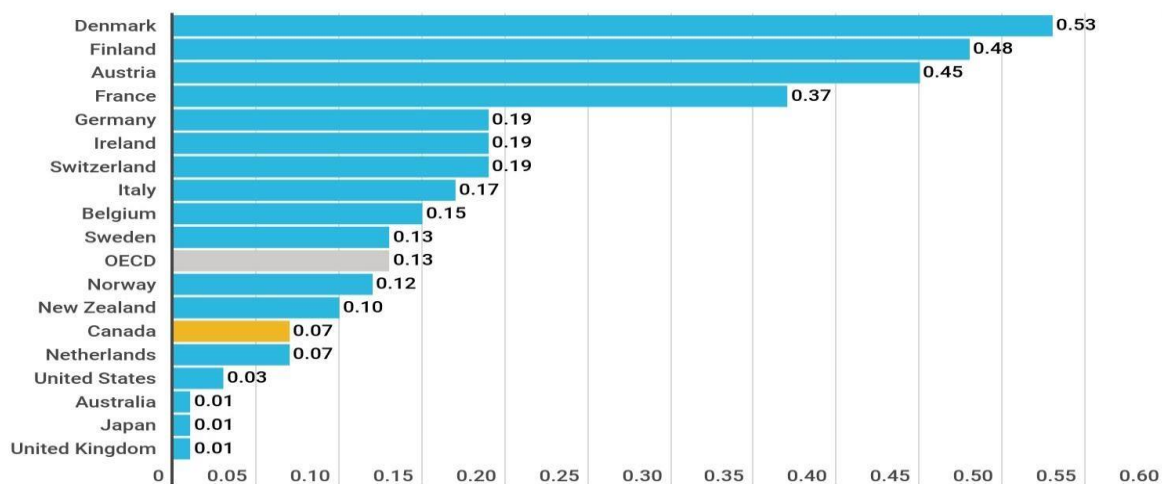
Hours per year



(Source: OECD, Education at A Glance, 2011).

Figure 2.13: Government Spending on Training, 2016

Share of GDP



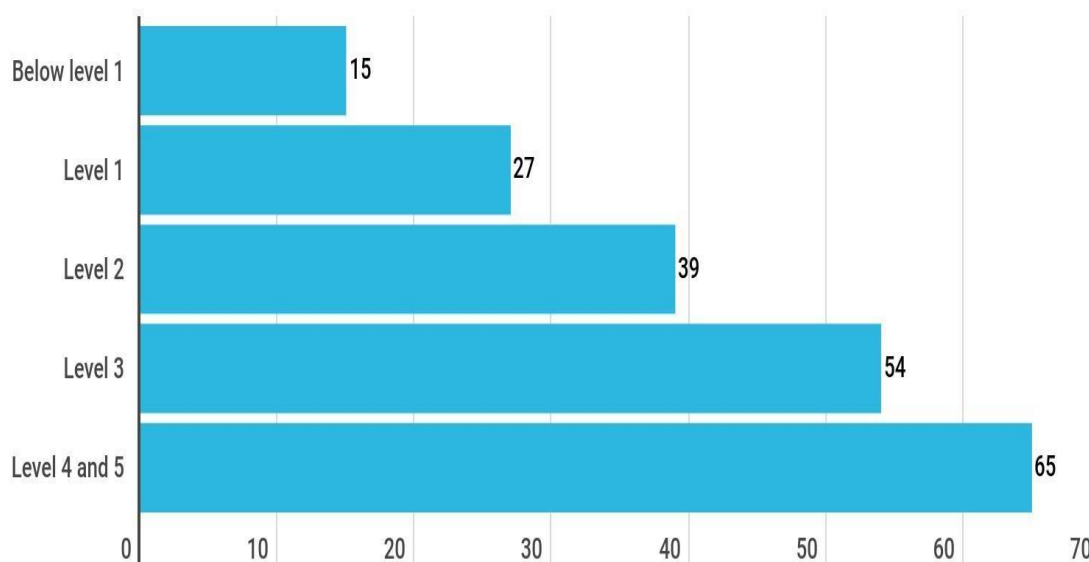
(Source: OECD, 2016)

According to the Conference Boards of Canada (2015:1), Canadian employers spend on average \$800 per employee on staff training and development. In this regard, Canadian Organisations' expenditure on training and development have been on the upward rise

yearly. However, the Bi-annual employer surveys by the Conference Board of Canada reveal that Canadian employers decreased spending on employee training and development for nearly two decades until they increased spending per employee by small amounts in 2014 (Figure 2). Canadian employers have spent less than employers in the United States (U.S) for at least a decade. Cotsman and Hall (2018:1) argues that in 2006, Canadian employers surveyed spent roughly \$1,000 per employee on training while U.S. employers spent approximately \$2,000 per employee. By 2016, Canadian employers were spending 81 cents for every dollar American firms spent, a substantial improvement from just over 50 cents a decade earlier. But the gap was closed primarily because U.S. employers reduced spending, not because Canadian employers increased it.

Figure 2.14: Workers with higher literacy get more training

Participation in job-related training and education by Survey of Adult Skills literacy level



(Source: OECD, Skills Outlook, 2013).

Older workers are also less likely to be offered and participate in training opportunities. Among Canadians aged 55 to 65, only 23 percent participated in on-the-job training, versus 34 percent of those aged 16 to 24, and between 38 and 40 percent of those aged 25 to 54 (Figure 3). The decline is often attributed to two factors: older workers' belief that additional training has less value for them given their imminent retirement; and employers' preference for investing in younger employees who are expected to have long careers and whom employers perceive, whether accurately or not, to be better learners (World Economic Forum, 2017:1).

2.12.3 France

According to Leigh (2018:1), organisations in France are attracting skilled workers by means, such as dangling long-term contracts, and training. This statement is supported by Labaye, Roxburgh, Magnin and Mischke (2012:2), who assert that France have set five priorities for action in its labour agenda for 2020. One of these priorities is to boost the overall skill level of students and workers and better adapt skills to market demands in the knowledge economy. This include increasing the supply of high-skilled labour in fields where there is a high risk of shortage, raising educational attainment, increasing transparency and guidance for students, creating institutions and incentives for targeted employment-oriented skill building, and closing the gap to international standards on lifelong training. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2017:1) states that France have set up multiple initiatives that make vocational education and training more attractive and incentives have been put in place for employers to make apprenticeship places available. To strengthen these, the OECD recommends bringing the content of vocational programmes more in line with employer needs and ensuring that the skills of vocational trainers remain up to date with current workplace practices.

In view of the above, Brandt (2015:7) suggests that strengthening the effectiveness of education and training and ensuring more equitable access to it will be important for France to improve the living standards of its population. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2017:1) further points out that France has also implemented interesting policy initiatives to encourage participation in lifelong learning. The personal training account- *Compte Personnel de Formation* (CPF), for example, has drawn international attention because of its portability between employers and employment statuses. The CPF is also designed to respond to skill needs through the involvement of regions and sectors in the selection of eligible training offers. To increase the take-up of the CPF, especially among lower-skilled adults, the OECD recommends making the policy more user-friendly. In addition, to improve quality of CPF training, the OECD suggests to restrict the CPF to quality assured programmes provided by quality assured training providers, and better align the eligible training options to real labour market needs.

Lewis and Bockius (2018:1) stipulate that the current vocational training comprises an annual training plan to be established by the employer and discussed with the employees' representatives. Its purpose is to train employees, internally or externally, so that they maintain or acquire the skills their jobs require. The training sessions are paid for by the employer and are mandatory for the employees. Employees are currently entitled to 24 hours of training per year until they have acquired 120 hours, and then 12 hours per year thereafter within a limit of 150 hours. For employees who have no qualification, the entitlement is 48 hours per year with a ceiling of 400 hours. Vocational training is financed by employer

contributions (1.23% of the total payroll for companies with fewer than 11 employees and 1.68% for companies with 11 employees or more) and the total amounts are collected by entities managed by employer and employee trade unions at the level of each professional branch of activity (Organismes Paritaires Collecteurs Agréés or OPCA). The OPCA also select the training companies.

Kawar (2011:10) supports the above view by stating that in France, national and particularly regional government provided generous funding to help enterprises train or retrain workers, often in combination with reduced working hours, but without loss of salary, as an alternative to lay-offs. A Social Investment Fund financed by the State, the European Social Fund (€5 billion) and social partners (€500 million) was set up to finance measures which promote the employment of young people, enable workers made redundant to re-enter the labour market and facilitate access to vocational training. Brandt (2015:11) further alluded that vocational education in France has become a major lever in improving the level of training for young people. The reform aims to improve both the employment rate of young people and the rate of students continuing in higher education. In secondary education, the vocational stream is characterised by developing the relationship between schools and enterprises together with innovative educational methods. In the vocational pathway, diplomas can be obtained either through schooling or apprenticeships.

2.12.4 China

Parilla, Trujillo and Berube (2015:3) point out that China is known for having successful and efficient training systems. According to the Public Service Commission (2016:68), this is because China takes the training and development of its human capital very seriously. The country has a civil service law with its regulations that provide for the legal and administrative basis for their training. Specialised training institutions are responsible for conducting training, for example, party schools, administrative colleges, the cadre college and civil service centers. China established its first Academy of Governance in 1994. Since that period, a number of other training networks have expanded from national down to the local levels where they divide training into four levels, viz: training focusing at newly appointed officials that is provided during probation; training provided for promoted officials to leadership and supervisory levels; and an in-service training arrangement for all officials so that they are kept up to date with new trends and developments that are key for government operations.

Konrad, Adenauer and Stiftung (2015:35) support the above views by stating that China is another example of countries with dual education system which consists of education in vocational schools with emphasis on theory based training and vocational training which “focuses on post-school, pre-employment and on-the-job practical training and re-training for those out-of-schools or out of work”. This is motivated by China’s 12th Five-Year Plan for

National Economic and Social Development of increasing upskilling and on-the-job training of skilled workers and accelerating the development of tertiary industry skilled workers such as service sector. However, Mehrotra (2014:1) argues that the Chinese Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system is complicated but a comprehensive one which is systematically planned to meet the needs of vocational education and training at different levels. The TVET system can broadly be divided into two institutional settings consisting of education in schools and vocation training, which corresponds with the administrative responsibilities of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS).

Mehrotra (2014:1) further asserts that the formal school based vocational education, which is typically under the MOE, has a slight emphasis on theory based training; while the other component, which is under MOHRSS, focuses on post-school, pre-employment, and on-the-job practical training, and training and re-training for those out-of-school or out of work. However, both offer a very significant amount of practical training to the students or trainees. Thus, even senior secondary vocational school students spend the last of their three years in the vocational stream education in practical training. Hence, industry participation is a built-in characteristic of the entire TVET system. Therefore, Mehrotra (2013:19) stated that in their thrust for lifelong learning, Chinese education policy gives due recognition to adult literacy and training, the same is also provided for in the 1996 Vocational Education Law. In this regard, the China Vocational Education Law of 1996 stresses that this also has implications for rural to urban migration. At every level of education, from primary level, there are institutes/schools/colleges for adults. This process is done with the guidance of the Federal Institute for the VET, trade unions, industrial chambers and experts from various companies who also fund the training in developing the training regulation for apprenticeship programme.

Tian, Wang and Liu (2019:1) are of the view that during 2014, the State Council promulgated a 'Decision on Accelerating the Development of Modern Vocational Education'. On the other hand, the Public Service Commission (2016:69) stipulates that two training institutions however, provide different trainings in the country focusing on their focus-areas. The first one is the China Executive Leadership Academy of Pudong that focusses on executive development and leadership training. The other one is the China Academy of Governance, and this one looks at vocational training in public administration, the employee wellbeing and also general management. The Academy also offers training programmes that result in the attainment of qualifications in Public Administration. Martinez-Fernandez and Choi (2012:26) agrees that China invests in human capital on a large scale. As of 2008, its investment in human capital amounted to 11% of total Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Central government departments have carried out an array of action plans since November 2012, offering

government-subsidised training sessions to 114 million workers, which contributed significantly to employment and entrepreneurship.

Klorer and Stepan (2015:5) suggest that in order for China to become a technology-driven industrial power it is necessary that the country increases investment in apprenticeships and the further training of skilled workers. According to the action plan published in 2014, China's government wanted to create a modern, demand orientated VET system by 2020. In the drafting of the reforms, China has essentially followed international models. The German vocational training model is highly respected. But other countries like Australia and the United Kingdom are also regarded as reference models. However, China does not aim to wholly adopt a specific model. Instead the government is picking out certain elements in order to modernise the Chinese system. On the 18th of April 2018 at the State Council executive meeting, the Premier Li Keqiang stated that China will push forward a lifelong professional skills training system as part of the efforts to improve the competence of the workforce and boost high-quality development. Lifelong professional skills training is a pressing task in the process of achieving economic transformation and upgrading and high-quality development.

2.12.5 Singapore

Morgan (2016:3) states that Singapore, a high-income country, faces a tight labour market characterised by a largely skilled, educated, and English-speaking workforce. Ramos and Gopinathan (2016:1) agrees that Singapore is well-known in international education circles for its success in developing a high performing education system as measured through a benchmarking exercise called Programme for International Student Assessment as well as for its dynamic, future-oriented and industry-linked human capital development initiatives.

Jagannathan (2013:3) points out that Singapore's industrialisation program started in the 1960s. A number of initiatives were undertaken, and an important landmark was the establishment of the Industrial Training Board as a statutory board. Greater autonomy and flexibility were given to technical education, allowing a more coordinated and strengthened system of specialized education focusing on technical skills rather than on general vocational education. The government offered incentives through the Economic Development Board for the establishment of government training centers in collaboration with multinational companies in the 1970s.

Jagannathan (2013:3) further asserts that the government also received technical assistance from France, Germany, and Japan to establish institutes of technology in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This gave rise to Singapore's current Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) model. Another crucial policy change was the decision by the Ministry of Education to upgrade and reposition VTE as a post-secondary educational institution, which led to the

establishment of the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) in 1992 and its transformation as a world-class educational institution. Singapore continues to invest heavily in education and training, including VTE. Chong (2014:638) reiterates that vocational education in Singapore is consolidated under the Institute of Technical Education (ITE). ITE was established as a postsecondary education institution in 1992 and comes under the Ministry of Education. As the principal institution for vocational training and education, ITE confers national certificates of occupational and industrial skills. According to its literature, ITE plays an important role in catering to technically inclined students and seeks to complement the broader education system.

Jagannathan (2013:3) furthermore articulate that the ITE model added choices, diversity, and robustness to the Singapore education system. Various industry-based training schemes (i.e., traineeship, approved training centers, and certified on-the-job training centers) were established to ensure relevance and cost-effectiveness. The government helped to improve the image of TVET through campaigns on “using the hand,” “Top of the Trade” television competitions, and “Apprenticeship of the Year” awards. The government helped ITE to transform through organisational excellence and modern campuses. Similar to the Republic of Korea, Singapore put in place policies to align education systems with economic development. The economic development board identified key “winner” industries for which targeted efforts were made to develop the requisite skilled labor force. Although Singapore had its share of challenges, there were many successful areas, such as electronics, chemicals, precision engineering, and biomedical technology.

In addition to the ITE, the government also set up a vibrant and responsive polytechnic sector to offer industry-relevant and demand-driven programs to train technologists to meet the changing workforce needs of industry as it moved up the value chain. The joint establishment of centers of excellence in various technologies facilitated exchange of technology, expertise, and training resources. The government funds and supports employment training for school graduates and school dropouts to continue their education and training. The Workforce Development Agency formed in 2003 was mandated to assist people in finding productive employment by providing new opportunities for training to augment skills. The government provides subsidies to cover 80%–90% of the training cost and the employee pays the rest. Singapore provides several government incentives for companies to send people for training (Jagannathan, 2013:4).

Ramos and Gopinathan (2016:1) further indicates that with a strong reform culture and wellfunded Pre-employment Education and Training (PET) and Continuing Education and Training (CET), Singapore has succeeded well in addressing skills demand in every phase of its development. Gopinathan’s various accounts of Singapore education have noted that

even at the very beginning of independence from Malaysia in 1965, education has been central to building the economy of the nation (Gopinathan, 2013:159). The key imperative was to build an economy on human capital, not natural resources. An Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2011:159) report noted that one of the major source of

Singapore's competitive advantage lies in "the ability of the government to successfully match supply with demand of education and skills".

Ramos and Gopinathan (2016:1) furthermore emphasise that it also praised a culture of continuous improvement, leadership, vision and alignment between policy and practice as among the key attributes of successful educational development in Singapore. Singapore success is not only reflected in its education system but in the overall economy—in 1965, the per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was about US\$500 and it had risen to approximately US\$55,000 today. More recently, in early 2015, the Singapore government launched the Skills Future initiative, a national movement to emphasize the need for skills relevance and deepening as a way of ensuring high quality lifelong learning and employment as Singapore continues its transition to an innovation economy. Globalisation, technologydriven disruption, and youth unemployment worldwide has energised policy makers in Singapore. Skills Future's three main aims include integration of education, training and career progression; promotion of industry support for individuals to advance based on skills; and the further efforts to foster a culture of lifelong learning.

2.12.6 United Kingdom

According to Kraak, Jewison, Pillay, Chidi, Bhagwan and Makgolane (2013:170), the United Kingdom (UK) has a long history of skills development by employers, with apprenticeships going back over 800 years and over 150 years of technical college education. Government has taken a strong lead in developing a skills system to equip people for sustainable work, encourage social mobility and support business growth and productivity. Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2017:34) reported that the United Kingdom (UK) employs the UK Commission for employment to look at their workplace skills. The Commission does this through the Employer skills survey and the Employer perspective survey. The Employer Skills Survey made use of telephonic interviews with organisations across the sectors, which provided information on occupations, and jobs that had vacancies and those that were not easy to close because of lack or shortage of skills.

The Local Government Sector Education and Training Authority Final Report for Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) conducted by Thakhathi (2016:43) revealed that in the United Kingdom, there are three core principles, which guide skills development and WSP. Firstly, the employers are at the heart of the UK skills system. They develop apprenticeships across all

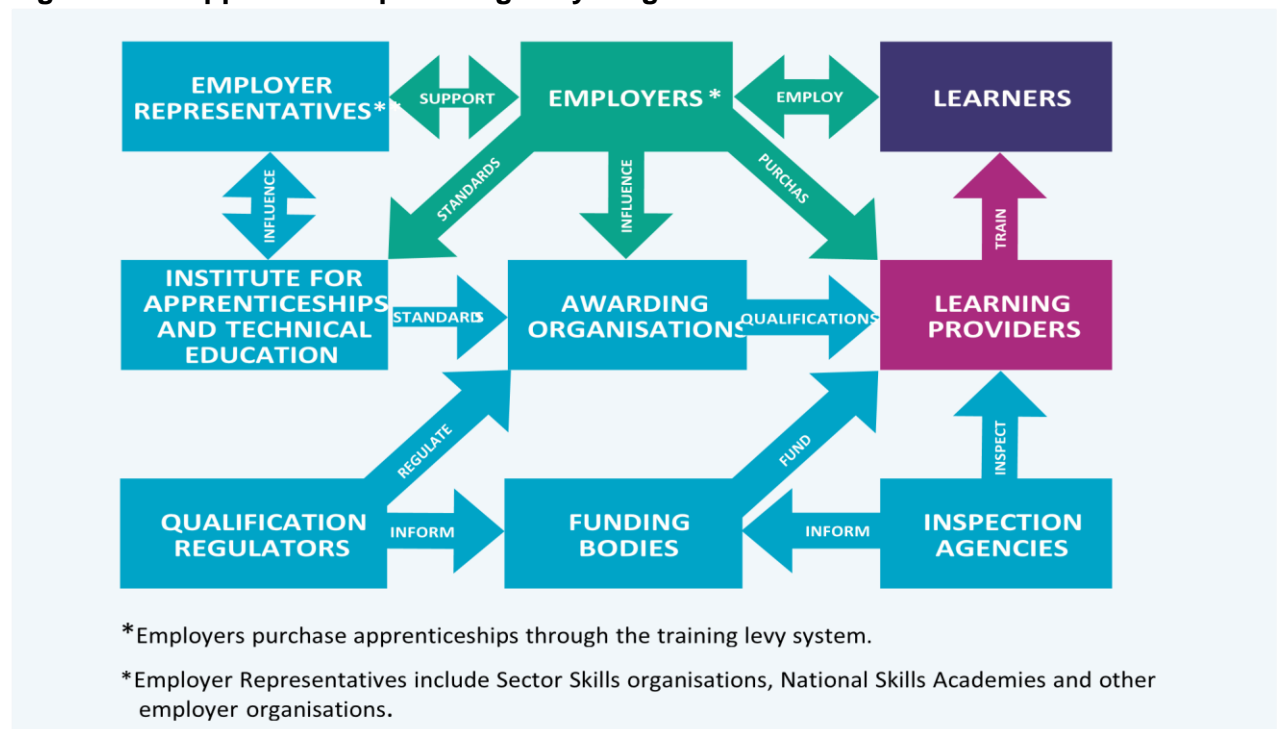
economic sectors. Secondly, the UK's skills system is very flexible in that, there is a broad agreement with all stakeholders on the importance of skills development. So their investment on training is based on the WSP and the Annual Training Reports (ATRs) submitted to them by organisations. Thirdly, the whole system of skills development has high level of quality assurance. The colleges and training providers are open to external inspection with harsh sanctions if the quality standards are not met. On the other hand, Shury, Vivian, Spreadbury, Skone and Tweddle (2014:1) assert that a key source of evidence on employer investment in training in the UK is the Employer Perspectives Survey (EPS). The most recent EPS results at the time of writing relate to 2014. The 2014 EPS provides information on decisions about training volumes and engagement with training providers for just over 18,000 establishments across the UK.

Green and Hogarth (2016:13) support the above views by stating that according to the 2014 EPS around seven in ten employers (69 per cent) had provided internal or external training for their staff in the previous 12 months. The EPS distinguishes between internal and external training. In this regard, internal training emphasise that employers deliver themselves via their own staff. Therefore, external training is sourced from external organisations, such as commercial training providers, colleges, universities, and not-for-profit providers. It is the latter (i.e. external training) which is of greatest relevance. Thus far of the establishments that engaged in training 58 per cent had provided internal training to their staff compared to 45 per cent that had provided external training. When employers offered external training, it was more frequently through private providers (defined as suppliers, customers, and commercial organisations such as private training providers, regulatory bodies and employer associations) than through public provision (Further Education (FE) colleges and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)). Around two-fifths (41 per cent) of all employers (60 per cent of all who provided training) had used private (i.e. commercial) providers to deliver some or all of their training, compared to 11 per cent (15 per cent of all who provided training) who had used any public provision.

The Confederation of British Industry, 'People and Partnership' Report (2016:4) states that in the UK, several organisations work alongside learning providers in delivering skills provision. All these are delivered through the range of learning providers who make up the UK's Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector. Van Der Westhuizen (2016:342) is of the view that in the UK, vocational education and training is part of further education whilst in other countries that are in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) it is part of secondary education. Van Der Westhuizen, (2016:342) further propound that the state should make sure that education and training in the employment relationship should be sufficient.

Therefore, Wolf (2015:1) stipulates that the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy suggests that government recognises the need to ensure that employers do not underinvest in skills. Shoosmiths (2019:1) points out that the Apprenticeship Levy was introduced with effect from April 2017 with the aim of improving the skills, efficiency and therefore the productivity of the UK workforce by attracting millions of new apprentices into workplace learning. The government target in 2017 was to achieve an additional 3 million apprenticeship starts by 2020. On the other side, the number of apprenticeships now available has increased and there are more providers in the market; including many higher education providers. The government also points to the increasing standard of the apprenticeships that are on offer.

Figure 2.15: Apprenticeship training Levy Diagram



(Source: Confederation of British Industry, 'People and Partnership', 2016:4).

2.12.7 Nigeria

O. Jiboku and Akpan (2019:132) state that skills are important or a necessary ingredient for socio-economic development for both individuals and countries, especially Nigeria. Skills transform lives and are an important driver of economies and development in the current technological age. Ejere (2011:1) posits that skills affect people's lives and the well-being of nations in ways that go far beyond monetary value. Martinez-Fernandez and Sharpe (2010:1) are of the view that skills development contribute to economic growth both directly, through increased productivity, and indirectly, by creating greater capacity of workers and firms to adopt new technologies and ways of working and to spur innovation. Alao (2010:1) indicates that in Nigeria, the genesis for manpower training and development can be traced to the Ashby commission set up in 1959 to conduct an investigation into Nigeria's need in the field

of past secondary certificate and higher education over the next twenty years. Adelere (2017:12) points out that following this development, the federal government has since established a number of training institutions such as the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in 1971, the Nigerian Council for Management Education and Training, the Association Institution known as Center for Management Development (CMD) in 1972.

Adelere (2017:12) further asserts that the federal government established the Administration Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institution (ARMTI) as well as the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) and Institute for Labour Studies. Apart from the afore-mentioned, there are various federal and state training centers all over the country. Therefore, in the private sectors, there are a lot of organisation that have established their own training centers and schools while many others depend on university sponsored programmes and seminar as well as executive development and general management courses run by the Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM) and that of Institute of Personnel Management (IPM). Hence, for an organisation to achieve its objectives there must be a continuous review of manpower training to ensure their effectiveness throughout the organisation.

According to Arfo (2015:34), technical and vocational education and training in Nigeria is recognised as a system with the capacity to provide skills necessary for employment and for agricultural, commercial, and economic development. In recognition of the role of technical and vocational education and training for economic growth and in providing skills for selfsufficiency, Nigerian government established notable Boards and Agencies to oversee and support the development of technical and vocational education and training in the country. Notable Boards, practices and agencies that impact on the development and improvement of technical and vocational education and training include National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), National Vocational Qualifications Framework and Industrial Training Fund, among others. Industrial Trust Fund was established by Decree No. 47 of 1971 with a view to promoting and encouraging the acquisition of skills necessary for industrial, commercial, and national economic development.

Arfo (2015:33) further emphasises that the Industrial Training Fund (Amendment) Act of 2011) indicates that the fund shall be utilised to provide, promote and encourage the acquisition of skills in industry and commerce with a view to generating a pool of indigenous trained manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the private and public sectors of the economy; provide training for skills in management for technical and entrepreneurial development in the public and private sectors of the economy; set training standards in all sectors of the economy and monitor adherence; and evaluate and certify vocational skills

acquired by apprentices, craftsmen and technicians in collaboration with relevant organisations. As part of its statutory responsibilities, the industrial training fund offers research and consultancy services and administers the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). The agency partners with industry and other employers to facilitate students' placement for practical experiences. The Decree establishing the industrial training fund indicates that Sources of revenue include subvention from government, levy, and contributions from employers. Talabi (2012:1) notes that employers were initially made to contribute 3% of their turnover, which was reduced to 2% by Amendment Decree No. 37 of 1973, which was further reduced to 1% in 1975.

Arfo (2015:33) furthermore articulate that TVET in Nigeria is offered in different types of institutions and at different levels. These institutions include technical colleges, polytechnics, colleges of education (technical) universities and other post-secondary institutions. Based on this viewpoint, Enojo, Ojonemi and Williams (2016:9) stipulate that Nigeria on the other hand seems to recognise the essence of training and development, especially in the public sector. Ocheni, Atakpa and Nwankwo (2014:52) support this view by stating that the Local Government Service Commission in Nigeria is an organ of the state that manages the affairs of the local government employees. Its main responsibility is the recruitment and training of the staff of the unified local government system. The commission understands that training and development is crucial if the local government is to respond effectively to demands of development. The Local Government Service Commission is the one with the monopoly of powers for implementing skills development and training for the local government staff. The Commission make use of a 1% training fund that is allocated to it in terms of the Nigerian Federation statute. This skills development funds allocation is aimed at ensuring that local government becomes more proactive and efficient in their basic responsibilities.

Bukar and Mwajim (2012:1) maintain that the Nigerian government has made series of efforts to improve the skills, knowledge, and capacity of the nation's labour force for the benefit of organisations and to promote economic development. This is because most employers in Nigeria identify the training needs of employees from observation with intentions of filling the skills gap in the organisation. There is evidence of a substantial number of employers providing on-the-job training and off-the-job training (United Nations Industrial Development Organisation, 2017:10). This statement is supported by Nwokeiwu, Nicholas and Fields (2019:1) who alluded that the type of training methods commonly used in Nigerian skill development programmes include inductions, under-study assignment, job rotation, mentoring, coaching, workshops, in-house, and at local training institutions. Isiwu (2012:1) concurs that, public servants are sent for training with proper consideration for the relevance to the present job or future posting by their employers. For this matter, training is supposed

to build upon the critical analysis of organisational objectives and evolutionary trend of the organisation.

2.12.8 Uganda

According to Wanjau (2018:1), skills development is crucial for Uganda's economic growth. The Second National Development Plan (NDPII) (2019:1) revealed that some progress has been made towards skilling the Ugandan labour force. Jjuuko, Alhallak and Concetta (2017:1) supports this viewpoint by stating that a developing country like Uganda has the educated and skilled human resources. Over the last five years, progress has been made mainly in formal areas of Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTVET), registering a 73 per cent increase in enrolment, from 24,598 in 2009 to 42,674 in 2013, of which 28,024 (66 percent) are males and 14,650 (34 percent) are females. At the higher education level, total enrolment increased by 18 percent from 169,476 in 2009 to 201,376 in 2013, with a significant increase in female enrolment. The Uganda Skills Development Project (2015:3) reported that the Business, Technical and Vocational Educational Training (BTVET) system is a sectorspecific approach to developing skills across a continuum from the informal sector to medium and large formal sector enterprises and targeting both new entrants to the labour force and existing employees, is appropriate. Mateeke (2016:1) is of the view that like other nations, Uganda recognises the importance of adapting TVET in producing proficient workers and making such education more responsive to socio-economic requirements.

The Uganda Skills Development Project (2015:3) further points out that enterprise-based training is an important component in the supply of skills. In the formal wage sector, many firms in Uganda provide training for its workers including initial training and upgrading training. Most medium and large size companies (above 20 employees) interviewed during preparation of this project, provide artisan and craftsmen level workers through initial training with the duration, rigor and formality dependent largely on the nature of the task to be learned and the size of the enterprise. Several companies also invest in continuous training of experienced employees to maintain and improve skills or to impart new skills. Therefore, Turyasingura (2011:1) conducted a study in Uganda and presented the findings at the 28th International Congress of Administrative Sciences in Bali, Indonesia. The purpose of the study was to establish from public sector officials attending programmes at the Uganda Management Institute which competencies were required to deliver effective public services and assess the effectiveness of the training methods used. The top two responses to a question on the critical competencies for effective public service delivery in the new era indicated that emotional intelligence was very critical to a job, followed by customer care.

The report conducted by Turyasingura (2011:1) further revealed that in this study, the respondents were also asked to specify which training methods were perceived to be most effective for developing public sector competencies, and the respondents indicated in descending order of preference the following: attachments, internships, field visits, mentoring, role plays, demonstrations, case studies, group discussions, lectures, and workshops. Thus, the most common training method employed at the Uganda Management Institute is lectures, followed by group discussions, case studies and role plays. The findings of this study suggest that effective public service delivery necessitates a suitable combination of competencies and that these should be developed by effective training methods. The Three Year Capacity Building Plan for Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016:11) contends that it is the role of each Public Service Organisation to plan for implementation of performance enhancement training of its staff as part of its annual training plan. Continuous learning and development is a prerequisite to performance improvement in the Uganda Public Service.

The Three-Year Capacity Building Plan for Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2016:11) further stipulates that it is stated in the Public Service Training Policy that every public officer should undergo at least one performance improvement training programme every three years. Performance improvement training programmes shall enable public officers to acquire competencies that will help them to adapt to changes in the Uganda Public Service policy and work environment and embrace transformation; narrow performance gaps and reduce disparities in competencies of public servants; re-shape public servants attitudes and inculcate values of professionalism, integrity, time management and teamwork among others that will improve service delivery and foster economic growth, and improve and enhance public officers' performance. Mpanga (2009:73) asserts that as a foundation to improving staff performance through training, the Ministry of public service in Uganda suggests that training of public servants should cover the entire life cycle of a staff member's service with the public service. In order to improve staff performance in the public service training is grouped into four categories, namely induction training for new staff, performance improvement, professional development and pre-retirement training.

Mpanga (2009:73) further emphasise that the different categories of training are elaborated in the discussion that follows. Induction training is intended for all public servants to be inducted into their new jobs in order to orientate them to the culture of the public service as well as the challenges of their new responsibilities. Performance Improvement Training is mandatory for every public servant. Every public servant is required to undergo at least one performance improvement training programme once in every three years. This training includes courses of short duration targeted towards improving general or specific aspects of a given job. Professional Development Training is offered through short or long term training

programmes at different levels within an employee's career. This training can be of a full or part time nature. Lastly, Pre-retirement training is the responsibility of the Ministry of public service. It is geared towards preparing the staff member for life after active public service.

2.12.9 Kenya

Momanyi and Riechi (2017:1) point out that the government of Kenya recognises the importance of education and training in national development. It is for this reason that since the country became politically independent in 1963, the government has developed relevant legal and policy frameworks for the provision of quality and equitable education. Skills development in Kenya is important for economic development. Egessa (2014:3) supports this viewpoint by stating that the government of Kenya engages the employers in the training and development of their staff in line with the ministry of planning and Vision 2030. The government of Kenya has put in place various training Institutions which include: Government Training Institute Namely Matuga Kenya School Of Government (KSG), Mombasa KSG, Baringo KSG, and Embu KSGs, Institute of Human Resource Management, Federation of Kenya Employers, Tom Mboya Labour College, Kenya Teachers Technical College, Public Universities among others which have programs running throughout the year that address work specific issues. As a result of the above institutions, the government of Kenya is able to employ and retain people with the right skills, knowledge, attitude and competence which is important to the economic development of the country.

Egessa (2015:37268) asserts that by around 21st century in public sector in Kenya, the commitment of employees in management of public services had declined drastically. One of the contributing factors was lack of proper training and capacity building among the public servants. The Kenya government responded by formulating Human Resource Development Training Policy that aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness among the employees. The policy gives the government to continuously upgrade public servants on core competences, knowledge, skills and attitude including their ability to assimilate technology, to enable them create and set opportunities for social advancement, economic development, growth and individual fulfilment. Anindo, Mugambi and Matula (2016:103) indicate that Kenya has a vast network of Technical and Vocational Educational Training (TVET) institutions providing a wide range of programs ranging from craft, artisan certificate and diploma levels.

According to Kenya Education Sector Support Programme 2005-2010, the aims and purpose of TVET in Kenya are to involve all relevant stakeholders in the development of a comprehensive national skills training strategy; establish mechanisms and appropriate incentives to promote private sector investments in the development of TVET for increased access; provide scholarships and other merit awards for staff and students to promote

excellence, creativity and innovation in the field of science and technology; provide loans and bursaries to learners to enhance access to TVET; encourage secondary schools that have infrastructure, equipment and staff to offer industrial and technical training curriculum. On the other hand, Jutta (2011:43) is of the view that Kenya through the Ministry of Labour and the Federation of Kenya Employers and Central Organisation of Trade Unions has established the Apprenticeship, Industrial Attachment and Internships for workplace skills development. This is because the Public Service Commission of Kenya has declared that a professional, efficient and effective public service is the aspiration of many modern states (Public Service Commission of Kenya, 2015:ix). Therefore, many public organisations in Kenya have now adopted employee capacity building as a means of improving the quality, efficiency, and speed of public service delivery.

In view of the above statement, Ondieki, Kimani and Tanui (2018:66) indicate that to facilitate implementation of internship policy, the Government of Kenya has introduced a monetary incentive to employers. In the 2015/2016 National Budget, a tax rebate was introduced for companies which hired at least ten interns (Republic of Kenya, 2015). An employer was to deduct a tax rebate equal to 50 percent of the amount of salaries and wages paid to at least ten apprentices. The inducement was ushered because corporations were reluctant to recruit interns because of the cost of training. Ngari (2015:1) articulates that the role of in-service training on employee performance in Kenya is to allow employees to develop and enhance their skills. Masese (2010:80) alluded that Kenya utilizes a wide variety of training methods which include lecture method, group discussion, role playing and case study.

2.12.10 Botswana

According to Mogapi (2019:1), the government of Botswana has prioritised skills development in the national development agenda in order to improve the country's human capital. This was said by Minister of Employment, Labour Productivity and Skills Development Mr Tshenolo Mabeo at the launch of the Thamaga Satellite Rapid Training Development Centre on the 8th of October 2019. Mabeo emphasised that government had long committed to ensuring access to education and skills development under Vision 2036's human resource development pillar. Mabeo further stated that his ministry was mandated to improve performance of employees through skills development. The Minister cited the establishment of rapid skills development centres as one of the greatest achievements. The aim of this skills development centres is to increase access to vocational training opportunities and accommodate as many trainees as possible. Motsamai (2018:1) agrees that government continues to strengthen vocational training to produce market-ready personnel and quality skills tailored to industry needs.

Narayana (2015:4) supports the above statement by pointing out that vocational training transforms the lives of individuals, especially employees as it offers many benefits including access to qualifications without going to university full time. Therefore, in a study they conducted on Botswana, Tshukudu and Lucas (in Haruna and VyasDoorgapersad, 2015:45-49) indicate that various key organisations have played a role over the years in the training of public servants, from the highest to the lowest echelons within the public service. These key organisations are the University of Botswana, the Institute of Development Management, the Botswana National Productivity Centre, the Botswana Institute of Administration and Commerce, the Botswana Public Service College and the Development Partners (that rendered technical assistance). One of the centres of the Botswana Public Service College consists of the Centre for Public Administration and Management, which focuses on training for the lower ranks of the public service and offers work-based training programmes and customised training programmes to improve productivity and efficiency.

The Public Service Commission in Botswana (2016:51) is of the view that in Botswana, for one to qualify for a senior management position, he/she is required to undergo what is called a competency assessment before appointment or promotion. The Botswana Public Service College and the leadership competency framework, emphasises the following competencies for potential candidates for executive and senior government level positions: leadership; mastering complexity; drive for results; and stakeholder engagement. Botswana has a School of Public Administration which is truly dedicated at providing quality training. The objectives of the School are as follows: to provide executives at senior management levels with the relevant and proper skills and competencies to provide the public with the requisite administrative skills that are relevant coupled with their competencies; properly capacitate the public service so that it can effectively drive and implement the reform agenda of the government; and to conduct research to enable informed decision-making by the public service and provide professional advice to all government departments.

The Public Service Commission in Botswana (2016:69) further asserts that the specialised areas that the School focusses on are, short-term development programmes and certificate courses in the following areas: public service induction; public administration and management; leadership development and enrichment. As of now, none of the programmes are compulsory, however, processes are underway to determine which programmes can be declared compulsory. On the other hand, Bafaneli and Setibi (2015:240) point out that organisations in Botswana offer on-the-job training programmes which takes various forms, including apprenticeship and self-directed learning programmes. On-the-job training is an extremely prominent feature on employee performance and service quality provision.

Apprenticeship refers to learning from a more experienced employee or employees for a specified duration of time. Apprenticeship is a partnership of Madirelo Training and Testing Centre, employers, workers and public as a whole. Apprenticeship trains workers to meet industry standards for a given occupation. Employers and skilled workers design training programs that meet the individual and changing needs of industries and technology. Apprenticeship is a proven way to train people for areas that demand a wide range of skills, knowledge, and independent judgment. Programs combine challenging tasks, learned and practiced on-the-job, with Institutional Training (Bafaneli and Setibi, 2015:240).

2.12.11 Sweden

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2016:13) points out that Sweden has become the leading country in developing exercises and tools to assess current skills and anticipate future skills needs. Lindberg (2015:14) is of the view that the intention is to give the country the tools to become well-trained workforce that can raise the rate of growth and productivity for boosting economic development. The OECD (2016:13) further states that the skills needs are assessed and anticipated using surveys and other forecast methods. There are two public entities that are responsible for skills assessment and anticipation that is Sweden Statistics and Public Employment Services. Orlik, Casasbuenas and Helkkula (2017:22) indicate that these two entities carry out skills assessment exercises simultaneously to maximise on the advantages of each other. On top of that, these assessment exercises are done using multiple sources of data in order to serve different purposes and avoid potential biases. The Public Employment Services uses surveys that are designed to gather information on organisations' human capital utilisation and the demand of goods and services among other things. This information is collected with the objective of approximating the amount of labour that is and would be required to satisfy the demands.

The OECD (2016:13) furthermore asserts that to expect future skills needs, the anticipation method looks at the supply and demand of graduates by analysing how student qualifications will integrate into the labour market. One of the strengths of this Swedish system lies in the sound statistical information and the constructive dialogue among involved stakeholders. Even though Stats Sweden and Public Employment services are the main players in the development of the skills assessment and anticipation exercises in the country, employer organisations and trade unions are actively involved in the dialogue on the skills needs and skills development. Bridgford (2017:162) supports this viewpoint by stating that the Swedish labour market is highly organised with high membership levels in trade unions and employer organisations. Moreover, the OECD (2017:14) reported that the results across the different

exercises are consistent and provide coherent information for policy making at organisation, sectorial and national levels. To counter the challenges such as financial strain and potential subjectivity of certain approaches in the exercises such as the surveys by building strong systems to double check the robustness of the information. The development and running of these exercises can also be taxing on financial resources hence the Swedish have put in measures to reduce strain on resources.

The OECD (2016:10) adds that the vast majority of Swedish firms provide training both to new hires and existing employees and many updates their training content (at least) yearly to align them with changing skill requirements. Gessler and Herrera (2015:157) highlighted that already, the Swedish Vocational Education Training (VET) system has had a strong schoolbased design since the 1970s. This, to a great extent, explains the existence of an interest in the development of a didactics able to cope with the complexities of a learning process that takes place both in what is termed “traditional classroom settings” and in workshops. Dobbins and Busemeyer (2015:1) agree that in recent years, different initiatives to reintroduce apprentice-oriented programmes in the VET sector have been taken; for example, an alternative scheme for alternating school-based and workplace-based training. Olofsson and Panican (2012:1) alluded that apprenticeships are now being implemented in larger scales than before. Blended learning and distance studies become more and more popular for the employees. The OECD (2016:10) emphasises that at the local level, Swedish municipalities have extensive powers to decide on the allocation of financial resources to specific activities and play a crucial role in the delivery and implementation of national skills policies.

Hessel (2018:1) maintains that higher vocational education offers opportunities for adults to specialise in different vocational areas where the demand for qualified labour is high. This is because technical Colleges (Teknikcollege) in Sweden have been able to encourage education providers from various municipalities to form local networks with firms in their geographical area to provide technology-oriented courses at different levels. Their strength lies in the establishment of co-operation, through explicit agreements, with the objective of increasing resource efficiency and improving the quality of the educational offer to meet the needs of regional labour markets more effectively. This model should be expanded and reinforced as it proved to be effective in bridging students, education providers and firms into a coherent platform which has the potential to reduce skills imbalances (OECD, 2016:16). According to Kuczera and Jeon (2019:1), municipalities are the main provider of adult education in Sweden, adults who have not completed upper-secondary education have a right to free education and training leading to upper-secondary qualifications and municipalities are obliged to provide it. Education and training in the adult sector may lead to

the same qualifications as programmes for youth but is organised in courses rather than as National Programmes. Of all 61 118 students in municipal adult education who completed their studies in 2013, nearly 16% studied more than one year of VET courses, and nearly 10% studied between six months and one year.

2.12.12 Australia

Australia's national training system is helping individuals develop the skills they need to secure and maintain rewarding and sustainable employment. Megarity (2011:2) states that Australia is a first world country, however same as in South Africa, local government is perceived as a vital player in service delivery. Local government performs regulatory tasks that would be difficult for a government to administer because of their localised and varying nature. For example, the upkeep of local roads and the preparation of local strategic and land use plans. Without an effective local government, local economies and communities would struggle to operate (Woods, Artist and O'Connor, 2015:1). From the foregoing, it can thus be deduced that local government plays a crucial role and to effectively succeed in its diverse range of roles, responsibilities, and activities it requires local government to have efficient, effective and innovative workforce.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2017:71), Australia uses a wide range of stakeholder's consultation and academic research to support and expand their workforce skills planning. The government provides a framework for organisations to conduct their skills analysis, which is supplemented by expert reports when needed. Each local government organisation is required to prepare a Workforce Management Plan (WMP), which is a tool that accurately reflects the workforce needs to meet organisation commitments. One of the aims of the WMP is to guide the local government councils on how to identify, gain and retain critical skills in demand through mechanisms such as skills audits, knowledge management and succession planning. The Local Government Association of South Australia has designed a skills audit tool, which can help to get important information in an organisation about its current and future skills needs following three steps such as determining skills requirements, auditing actual skills and compiling the results and analysing the data.

Joyce (2019:26) points out that the vocational education sector in Australia is best known as the sector which trains people for jobs. While it encompasses a wide range of responsibilities, including foundation and second chance learning, and a wide range of qualifications and courses, it is the concept of work-based vocational learning that is most readily understood, valued, and articulated by industry and sectoral representatives. Parilla, Trujillo and Berube (2015:3) are of the view that the Australian VET have salient features, which keeps their skills

development afloat. The Australian systems is flexible on choice of courses and career options as it ensures that the curriculum and training keep abreast with changes in technology and other changes in the industry, hence this strong link between companies and the VET helps in continuously upgrading and streamlining the curricula to suit future skills requirements. On the other hand, the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG) (2012:1) further asserts that training providers, councils and learners use e-learning and distance learning. Almost half of the employees had utilised e-learning, with 62% of these rating the experience as 'very good' or 'good'.

In view of the above, the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG) (2012:1) furthermore conducted a study on employees pertaining to e-learning and distance learning. In this regard, distance learning is particularly favoured by respondents based in isolated, rural and regional locations, living with physical disabilities or having full-time work, as well as those who needed to balance work and family responsibilities, and those in mobile rather than office-based positions. E-learning programmes for local government in Australia are found to include web-based modules, units and courses distributed over an intranet or the internet; distance education that leads to formal qualifications; webinars (web-based seminars), i.e. live lectures, workshops or presentations transmitted over the internet; e-mentoring, in which web-based tools, such as emails and chat applications, serve as the primary means of communication between a mentor and mentee; online inductions for employees, contractors or visitors; and blended learning, in which components of a course are offered partly online and partly face-to-face. There is an e-Learning Portal to support councils in the local government. The portal is a web-based platform hosted by ACELG that aims to bring together a range of resources on e-learning for local government training providers and practitioners.

The Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG) (2012:1) furthermore emphasised that it also serves as an online space for the exchange and sharing of ideas, experiences and opinions of e-learning in local government. Findings from the study also suggested that local government training providers and councils across Australia are at various phases of implementing e-learning programmes as part of their education and professional development programmes. At the same time, respondents recognised that e-learning requires learners to have appropriate equipment, a level of competence with the technology, and access to technical support.

2.13 LESSONS FOR SOUTH AFRICA' SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES' SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Nekhavhambe (2017:138) points out that various countries regard and treat staff training as a very important component of human resource development. This is necessitated by the fact that the skills challenges are generally common for countries, be they developed or developing. According to Van Zyl (2018:1), South Africa can learn from other countries when it comes to improving its skills development plan. Martinez-Fernandez and Choi (2012:26) are of the view that there is a mix of approaches to skills development. Most countries are strengthening basic training (including general education). Thus, countries not only need advanced technical and vocational skills, but also a flexible workforce that can adjust to rapid shifts in demand. That is why investing in skills is so vital to a country's economic growth and competitiveness.

Wachira (2010:2) indicates that during the 1980s, public service reforms were introduced in Africa and in-service and other types of training were made mandatory as it was recognised that training improved employee performance and the level of service delivery in the public service. Consequently, South Africa's policies and strategies on skills development are super. Hence, the South African work environment is experiencing rapid transformation owing to various aspects, such as increased local and international competition, new technologies and the changing socio-economic environment (Levin, 2018:5). People are the most important resource within a country and South Africa needs skilled and knowledgeable employees to be able to reach the goals and objectives of rapid socio-economic development. Therefore, South Africa would do well to learn from the experiences of other countries.

Wachira (2010:2) further asserts that as part of the lesson learned in a declaration issued by the World Bank, it is said that the future of Africa lies in the skills of the people. Therefore, the researcher believes that today's economy of South Africa requires advanced, flexible, and fungible skills. Workers must be able to adjust to not only domestic shifts in demand for skills but also to what is happening in the global skills demand and labour market. For example, according to the study conducted by Beardwell and Thompson (2014:219), the United Kingdom acknowledged that a learning culture should be instilled and that lifelong learning opportunities should be provided to equip employees with the skills needed in a competitive global economy. In this regard, South Africa should follow the example of the United Kingdom by doing the following: public officials who execute the decisions of government on a daily basis must be trained to ensure that knowledge of the public service is obtained to deliver effective service. Vyas-Doorgapersad (2015:35) also suggests that the South African government should collaborate with tertiary institutions that specialise in the

fields of public administration and management so that they can provide the specific training needs required.

A Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) in Australia helped to come up with three categories of workforce which can possess cognitive skills (logical, intuitive and creative thinking, problem solving, verbal and mental abilities), behavioural skills (social and soft skills, decision making, interpersonal skills) and technical skills (manual dexterity for using complex tools, occupationspecific knowledge) (Australian Government, 2014:9). Even in South African local government context, identifying these categories in the workplaces will help in making use of a demanddriven approach when designing its WSPs. The researcher is also of the view that the South African government should consider utilising the Apprenticeship programme that is similar to Canada, which places an emphasis on the training that combines alternating periods of onthe-job (80-90%) and technical training (10-20%) (Employer Apprenticeship Supports in Canada: An Overview, 2010:7). This is because after completing both the classroom and the on-the-job training, apprentices can receive a Certificate of Apprenticeship (for non-restricted trades) or a Certificate of Qualification (for restricted trades).

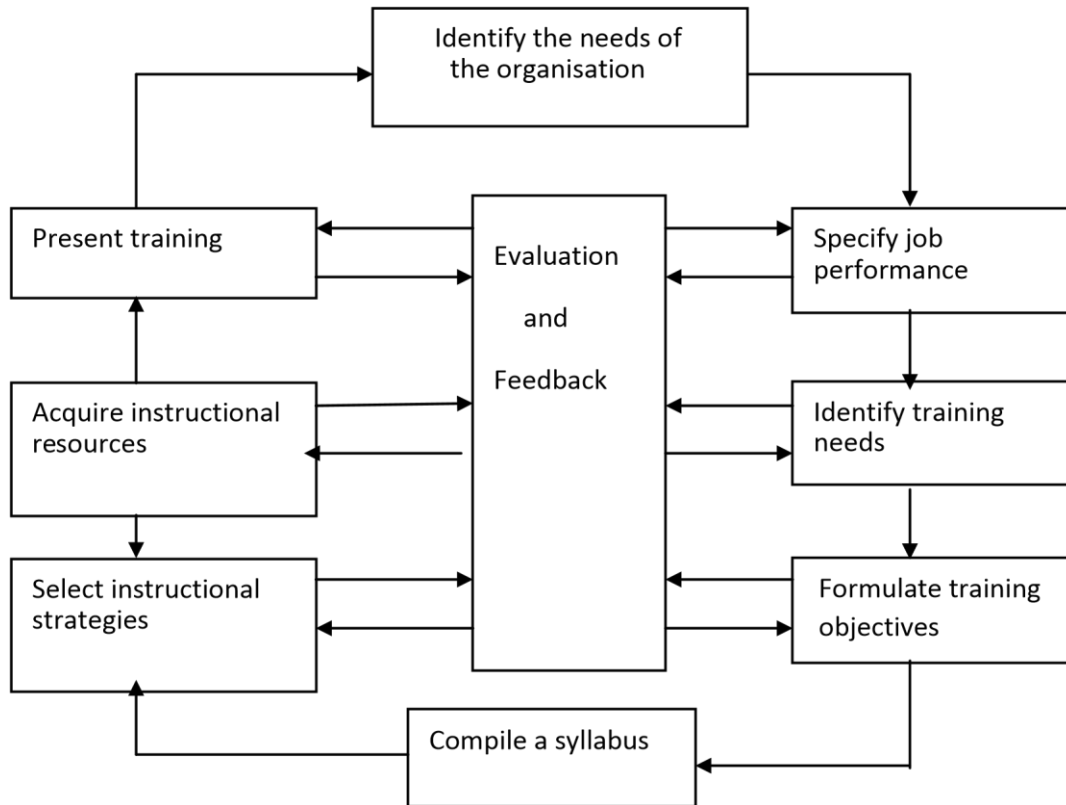
In this regard, it becomes easier for the trainees to attend this training programme because it would be compulsory hence enabling the trainees to impart both theoretical and practical skills at the same time. Therefore, employees would not be negatively affected by the skills gap that cause poor performance because they have theoretical skills that enables them to be analytical and solve organisational problems. The above information on the training perspectives held and the training programmes offered in various countries, affirms the view that the training of employees plays an important role in an ever-changing globalised environment. The information provided does not despise the South African skills development plan, thus it aims to improve the plan. Nekhavhambe (2017:139) contends that the South African training system and approaches are as good as in other countries. The state should better understand the importance of investing on human resource development.

2.14 Nadler's Critical Events Model

Nadler's model is presented in nine different steps or stages that quality training and development have to go through, whereby each step or stage has to be evaluated, so that feedback can be obtained. The feedback obtained helps in taking corrective measures, so that the intended training and development objectives can be realised. Rajaram (2017:26) points out that this model mentions that identifying the steps in the training process is pointless if external issues in the form of social, technological, economical, ecological, political, legal and ethical factors are not considered, as these factors influence the

organisation's functioning. The view of Nadler is that it would make sense to identify critical events so that training can be structured meaningfully.

Figure 2.16: illustrates the Nadler's Critical Events Model, followed by a discussion of each step in the model



(Source: Adapted from Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda and Nel, 2013:30).

2.14.1 Step 1: Identifying the needs of the organisation

Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda and Nel (2015:13) state that, this stage constitutes the core of the training process. This is the case as if needs are correctly identified, an effective intervention strategy can be formulated and applied successfully. When this step has been attended to, honestly and accurately, a training programme that can help to equip an employee with the required skills for the job can be designed. This is because Mafunisa and Tsanwani (2011:82) articulate that apart from formal education, employees still require skills training in order to fit well into the job market. The success of a training programme depends on the proper handling of this step. Blanchard and Thacker (2013:25) agrees that this step is very important when designing a training programme. Erasmus *et al.*, (2013:30) point out that in this step, the organisational needs are established and the internal factors (the organisation itself and the vision and mission) and external factors are considered. Since there is a relationship between the organisation and its environments, the need for training arises from both environments.

Arias, Betancur and Rodriguez (2016:1) support the above view by stating that these organisations proactively consider both environments when engaging in training. This is because the organisation continuously interacts with the environment within which it is operating. The needs for training and development are generated by factors, such as change in the service that is provided, change in the rules or policies or machinery, together with the new service that is provided in this step. This means that both the individual and the organisation should be taken care of in terms of finding out what employees need to learn. This is done by analysing the knowledge, skills and attitudes/behaviours that each job requires; and assessing the degree of competence of job-holders to meet those requirements. Blanchard and Thacker (2013:24) are of the view that by suggesting that needs analysis phase should be able to identify even future gaps that are anticipated due to new things that an organisation wants. To can plan well for an effective intervention, the cause of the gap should be identified. This would enable the planners to come up with a proper training approach that would be appropriate to address the gap. When the training needs analysis phase has been completed, prioritisation should be done on which aspects need urgent attention and each aspect will have to be dealt with in their order of priority.

Jannetti (2017:1) asserts that needs assessment is a process for determining an organisation's needs. A needs assessment is the "what" (what the organisation needs) that precedes the gap analysis, which is the "how" (how to close the gap between where the organisation is currently and where they want or need to be). Needs assessment is important because it helps an organisation determine the gaps that are preventing it from reaching its desired goals. These gaps can exist in either knowledge, practices, or skills. Knowing what is working well and what needs to be changed is crucial to progressing effectively towards those goals and making an organisation successful. Needs assessment addresses these concerns from all levels, to arrive at a plan with specific actions for improvement. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) indicated that for developmental local government to be possible with regard to service delivery, there is a need for municipalities to develop at least three sets of new capacities such as strategic capacity, integrating capacity and community orientation. Sebola (2014:633) points out that it is therefore believed that if these three capacities can be taken care of municipalities will be able to sustain themselves and their service delivery objectives.

2.14.2 Step 2: Evaluation and feedback

This step places emphasis on the feedback and evaluation of the training process (Erasmus *et al.*, 2013:30). According to Frese, Hass and Friedrich (2016:1), training evaluation and feedback are constantly provided by organisations to their employees. Evaluation is the systematic application of social research procedures for assessing the conceptualisation,

design, implementation and utility of social intervention programmes. The Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (2011:7) understands evaluation as the systematic collection and objective analysis of evidence on public policies, programmes, projects, functions and organisations to assess issues such as relevance, performance (efficiency and effectiveness), value for money, impact and sustainability and recommend the way forward. Govender (2011:75) asserts that in this sense, evaluation is a time-bound activity conducted over predetermined periods that compare planned and actual performance. On the other hand, trainee's feedback matters. This means that communication should be open in getting trainees' feedback about the training sessions. Creating a list of questions pertaining to the trainees' strengths and weaknesses in the course and exercises which the trainees hate the most.

Morrison (2015:1) is of the view that information gathered will help the training team reflect and do self-evaluation on what needs to be improved to be effective trainers. Ask employees about what they feel about the instructor, topic, materials and resources, training venue, presentation, and the overall training experience. Trainee feedback can help discover the gaps in the training and the changes needed in the methodology. Verma (2020:1) stipulates that post-training quizzes, one-to-one discussions, employee surveys, participant case studies, and official certification exams are some ways to measure training effectiveness. The more information the organisation collects on measurable outcomes, the easier it will be to quantify the organisation's return on investment. Kariuki and Reddy (2017:1) state that evaluation is critical for ensuring that local government is responsive to citizens' needs. Admittedly, there is no one-size-fits-all approach for tackling the challenges facing local government. However, to create conditions for improvement and sustained good performance of the sector, both political and administrative leadership in municipalities must work with each other in delivering their services to the public sustainably.

Kariuki and Reddy (2017:1) further points out that employees must also possess requisite technical skills and competencies in order to execute municipal monitoring and evaluation responsibilities with discretion and sensitivity. This is because Mello (2017:1) revealed that the Auditor-General of South Africa reports for the financial years 2012–2013, 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 paint a gloomy picture of local government performance in some provinces. Many municipalities in South Africa were not performing as expected because of a host of problems that include weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation systems. However, Kariuki (2018:1) articulate that municipalities that use evaluation results to achieve better service provision and good governance are showing better financial and performance management results. Internal controls are tight and both political and administrative leadership are vigilant

that budgets are appropriately spent, performance targets are achieved, and shortfalls are addressed promptly.

2.14.3 Step 3: Specify performance

Erasmus *et al.*, (2013:30) point out that during this step, performance is specified in accordance with an employee's tasks that need to be appraised, so that the manager can determine the performance criteria for each employee. Organisations inform their employees of the performance required for each task, and this enables employees to learn and apply new knowledge to the workplace (Ruiz, Gutierrez, MartinnezCaro and Cegarra-Navarro, 2017:1). This means that organisations should be adequately knowledgeable on how to set performance criteria (Pucci, Nosi and Zanni, 2017:1). According to DeSimone and Werner (2012:26), this stage aims at addressing the gap created through various things within the organisation. A number of things can be identified such as poor performance that results into poor service provision. This view is shared by Singh and Twalo (2015:81) who argue that performance has a normative element which reflects whether the workers performance is appropriate or not in relation to the organisation's objectives. The Department of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA) (2017:1) reiterate that municipalities in South Africa are not performing exceedingly well. Therefore, Ncube (2015:296) points out that since 1994, the South African government has instituted a number of public sector reforms to enhance the performance of municipalities.

Ncube (2015:296) further states that the list includes policy and legislative reforms (e.g. Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) of 2003), benchmarking exercises, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, capacity-building initiatives, annual municipal audits, performance-based budgeting, performance appraisal schemes and performance-based contracts. However, despite all these initiatives, the performance gaps in the local government sphere remain a cause for concern. Performance gaps manifest in the high incidence of poor audit reports, under-spending/overspending, poorly maintained infrastructure, large and growing consumer debt problems, and billing challenges. Therefore, a serious rethink is needed about ways and means of achieving maximum benefits from the transfer system. Mello (2018:1) asserts that the main recommendations were directed at improving civic education in the nomination and election of councillors, pairing underperforming municipalities with best performing municipalities, improving continuing education for councillors and improving the monitoring of interventions and the transitions after interventions.

2.14.4 Step 4: Identifying training needs

In this step, individual training needs are identified, and since training depends on identified needs, the success of training depends on the accuracy of this step (Erasmus *et al.*, 2013:30). This means that organisations should have a well-structured Human Resource Development (HRD) framework that enables training needs to be determined (Irungu and Arasa, 2017:1). According to Erasmus *et al.*, (2015:15), training needs vary from institution to institution and from person to person. In this sense, for training to be successful it must first be properly established what employees lack on, for them to perform well. This will make the training designed to serve its purpose, which is of properly equipping employees with requisite knowledge and skills to do their work. Van Aswegen (2013:132) reiterates that if training needs are determined through performance evaluation, the information gathered from such an exercise should show which employees need training and development as well as the specific skills they need to work on. Trutkowski, Loizou and Del Bianco (2018:9) is of the view that training needs arise from deficiencies related to constraints or imperfections in human activity, primarily deficiencies in knowledge or skills.

Trutkowski *et al.*, (2018:9) further point out that it is important to realise that specific training needs always correspond with specific institutional challenges. With a minimalist definition of expectations, the required skills will be different versus a situation where goals are defined comprehensively and broadly. Therefore, the assessment of training needs helps to identify the discrepancies between the knowledge held by potential targets of educational efforts and the knowledge, which, for some reason, is required or desirable. In this regard, the researcher believes that municipal officials do not lack skills, however because of unforeseen circumstances that occurs from the external environment (macro-environment) such as change in the needs of the people, for example, some communities are demanding residential pavements. This means that municipal officials should acquire skills such as planning and project management to meet those needs. This raises a need for training of municipal officials. Sheoraj (2015:1) supports this viewpoint by stating that local government plays a key role in ensuring economic and infrastructure development in local communities owing to its regulatory function in relation to planning, building and resource management.

In view of the above, Daniel (2018:1) asserts that the former Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene has revealed a shocking statistic regarding competency levels amongst municipal accounting staff. More than half of the country's municipal managers and chief financial officers (CFO) are unqualified to do their jobs. These appalling levels of incompetency were revealed during a parliamentary question and answer session, spurred on by the Democratic Alliance (DA). Kevin Mileham, an official opposition Member of the Parliament was told that only 94 of the 193 accounting officers met the minimum competency level. Therefore, the issue of financial

management skills has been highlighted by Nene, who has resolved to embark upon a nationwide up-skilling programme to allow all officials 18 months from the date of appointment to obtain the relevant competency levels.

However, Trutkowski, Loizou and Del Bianco (2018:9) furthermore states that a training needs analysis, therefore, should offer an answer to the question on whether it is indeed the educational effort that will help the organisation to attain the desirable state of affairs. After all, it might well happen that mayors, heads of administration, or other officials do have the necessary knowledge and skills to act but legal regulations or other systemic constraints prevent them from performing their tasks efficiently. Hence, the development of the training and development programme is largely dependent on or informed by the needs that have been identified. As a result, the success of the training would be determined by the precision with which this step is carried out.

2.14.5 Step 5: Formulating training objectives

Erasmus *et al.*, (2013:30) state that during this stage, the training objectives against which performance will be assessed are outlined. Organisations set clear learning objectives and tailor these objectives to meet the developmental needs of their employees (Pooe and Mahlangu, 2017:1). According to Haruna and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2015:146), training objectives serve as a guideline for the entire training programme. The training objectives are formulated after the training needs have been determined. A difference exists between the general training objectives and the specific training objectives and these are referred to as learning outcomes. An objective is used to state what trainees will be able to do on completion of training, and when they have achieved a satisfactory standard of performance under training conditions. Rajaram (2017:43) points out that during this stage, problems are scrutinised, needs are evaluated and goals are formulated to establish if training is the most suitable and worthwhile answer to organisational problems and challenges.

Tshukudu and Nel (2015:201) support the above statement by stating that it is necessary that these training objectives are measurable, assessable, observable or determinate, as they form the basis of training standards, as well as the evaluation of training and development. Trainers must be certain that the training objectives are specific in demarcating and distinguishing the terminal behaviours trainees should display on completion of the programme, as well as ensuring that each objective describes a specific behavioural action. The objective must indicate the standard of performance required, expressed in terms of numbers, degree and accuracy. Having indicated the required performance standard, it is imperative that the trainer confirms that the individual trainee is aware of these standards from the outset, in conjunction with how their individual capabilities may be developed to achieve them. Rajaram (2017:43) further formulated the following objectives of training:

- At the end of training, employees will be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies to perform their work effectively, in pursuit of the vision and the mission of the organisation as well as the employee's vision.
- At the end of training, employees will be able to deal effectively and pro-actively with change and the challenges of dynamic work and external environment.
- At the end of training, employees will have acquired development orientated professionalism and the appropriate competencies.
- At the end of training, employees will be able to address issues of diversity whilst promoting a common organisational culture so as to or in so doing support unity at the workplace.
- At the end of training, employees will develop a better understanding of the needs of the communities that they are serving, as well as the capability to respond to these needs.
- At the end of training, employees will create an enabling environment for the training and development of present and future incumbents.

2.14.6 Step 6: Compile a syllabus

According to Erasmus *et al.*, (2013:30), this step considers the compilation of a syllabus for training so that relevant material can be included to address the skills gap. Contextual research on Human Resources Development (HRD) in organisations states that organisations in many countries use in-house training practitioners to develop their training syllabus based on the training needs and the skills deficiencies of their employees (Nolan and Garavan, 2016:1). The training and development syllabus have to be carefully compiled; this should include new subject content for both educators as trainees and trainers, so that they are able to give support to the trainees. A syllabus is compiled that contains information about what must be learned and in which order the information must be learned. This information, which guides the trainer, is centred on the training objectives (learning outcomes) that will assist the participants to attain the training objectives.

According to Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence and Educational Innovation (2019:1), a syllabus is a learning contract between the trainer and the trainees. It sets the ground rules for all the classroom goals, objectives, activities, assessment tools, policies, and exceptions. In normal use, the syllabus will serve as a planning tool for both trainers and trainees. In extreme cases, the syllabus can be used to resolve disputes between trainees and trainers, for example on the number and weight of various assignments. As such, the syllabus should contain all the elements trainees will need to know at the very beginning of the class, and in writing. The purpose of a syllabus, first and foremost, is to assist trainees to become a more successful trainee. This is because the instructor cannot, however, educate the trainee against his will.

2.14.7 Step 7: Select instructional strategies

DeSimone and Werner (2012:28) are of the view that, if lack of performance really warrants training, selecting the specific instructional strategies need to be attended to so that the training process can be a success. During this stage, the training methodology that the training practitioner will use is considered. This is done based on the content of the training intervention and the uniqueness of the training situation (Erasmus *et al.*, 2013:30). A study on training and development practices in firms mentions that both on-the-job training and off-the-job training are used to upskill and re-skill employees (Sharma and Kaur, 2016:1). On the other hand, the study of Nolan and Garavan (2016:1), which focuses on Human Resources Development (HRD) in South African organisations, documents that both formal and informal methods of training are used in the organisations. There is no single training and development method that fits all situations. The selection of the training and development method may be situational. The most commonly used training and development strategy that municipalities use for trainees is on-the-job training methods, such as learnership programmes.

Blanchard and Thacker (2013:101) suggest that it should however be indicated from onset that, the success of training programme requires that, trainees be involved from the planning to the evaluation phase. Participation creates a spirit of ownership. By providing trainees with an opportunity to participate during the different phases of training, it affords them an opportunity to reflect critically on the whole training process. When they have been part of the process from the beginning, they develop interest and enjoy the training. This puts them in a state where they become free to share their experiences, something that can help to better understand what they are doing even by other colleagues. There could be no way that trainees could ever develop a spirit of resistance to change. Trainees could therefore commit themselves fully to the programme and it could be a success.

2.14.8 Step 8: Acquire instructional resources

In this step, the effectiveness of the training intervention depends on the resources that are provided by the organisation (Erasmus *et al.*, 2013:30). Three broad categories of resources can be distinguished: human resources that refer to people, which include the programme facilitators, instructors and students; financial resources that focus on the cost effectiveness of training and management of the training budget; and physical resources that include equipment, material and facilities. Haruna and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2015:146) reiterate that during this step the resources have to be identified (such as finance, which must be spent in a cost-effective manner).

Haruna and Vyas-Doorgapersad (2015:146) further reiterate that the success of any training and development presentation depends on the training resources that are provided by the

organisation. The resources available for training and development strategies that trainers use within the organisation play an important role in determining the success of the training and development programme. These resources are physical resources that include training equipments, financial resources and human resources – who are trainers, instructors, and trainees. The challenges regarding resources that the study has identified include the underutilisation of training and development funds that most South African municipalities faces, a shortage of competent municipal officials with scarce skills, as well as engineers and artisans with technical skills. However, this study recommends the municipalities to impart municipal officials with such skills for the sake of not compromising service delivery.

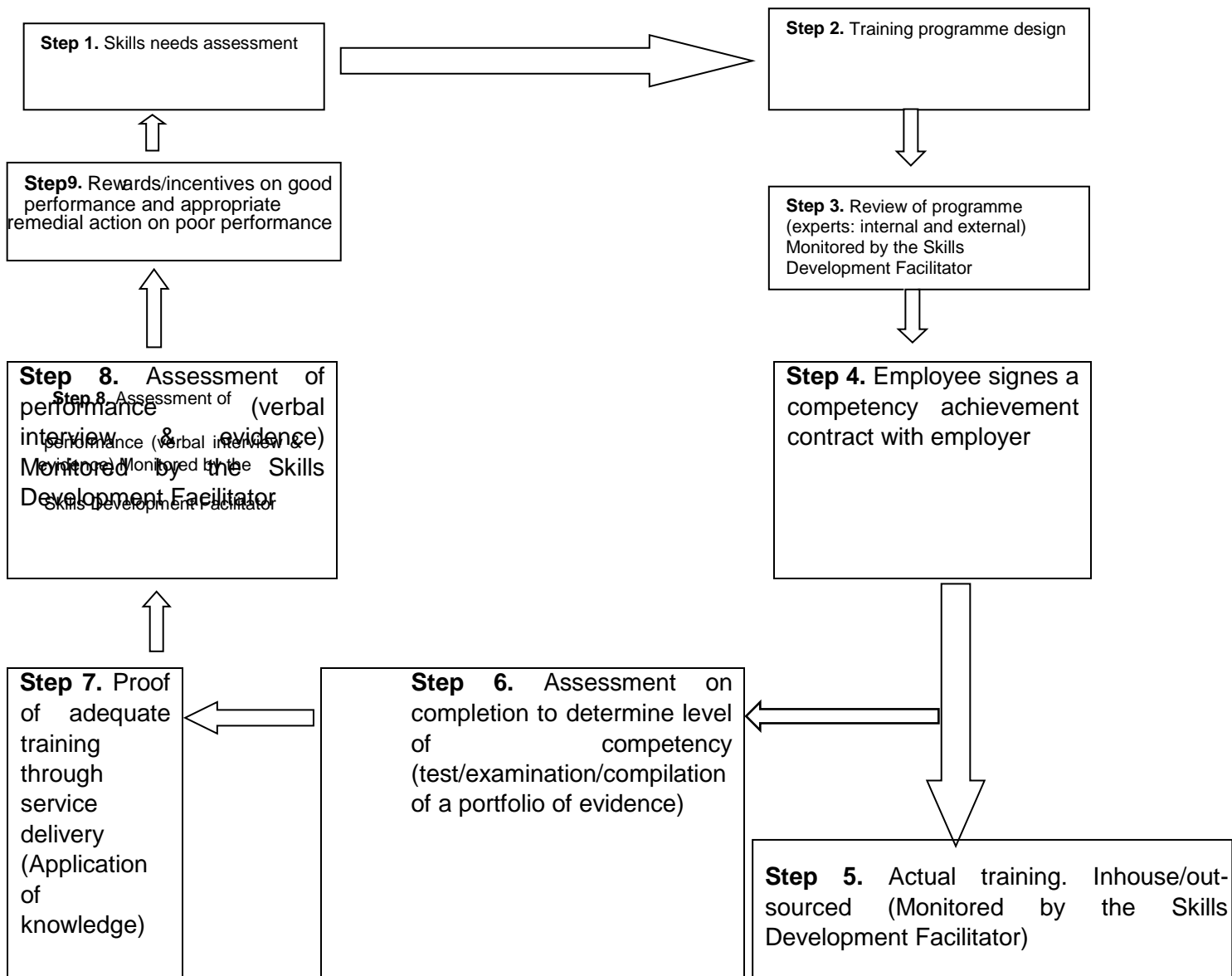
2.14.9 Step 9: Present training

In this final stage, Step 1 to Step 8 are collated to enable training to be presented effectively (Erasmus *et al.*, 2013:30). In organisations, this step means that they implement the course of action selected and train their employees for the skills required (Salimi, 2016:1). The step indicates the actual activity of a training process whereby all the preparations from step one down to step eight are combined, so that training can be carried out effectively in the organisation. Tshukudu and Nel (2015:203) state that presenting a training programme is the culmination of all the preceding activities of the training design process. In order to ensure an efficient presentation of the programme, the trainer must make provision for a wide variety of learning experiences and apply specific guidelines and principles. Comprehensive and rigorous planning is a prerequisite for good presentation. During the planning, the trainer must ensure that the content of the programme corresponds with the expected learning outcomes and that it fulfils the requirements of the target group. Once this planning and design has been accomplished the trainer is in a position to present the programme.

Tshukudu and Nel (2015:203) further point out that the trainer needs to ensure that the correct learning climate is created at the commencement of the programme. The trainer may consider using pre- and post-tests to assist in the evaluation of trainees, as well as making certain that the trainees are aware of the anticipated, projected results. The communication of the envisaged outcomes may influence their attainment and must precisely inform the learners of what type of behaviour is required for successful realisation of the expected effects. Additional aspects a trainer must take into account include learners' attitudes; previous experience and knowledge levels; and the expected outcomes in this regard. Unnecessary or superfluous details, issues or elements must be omitted, exclusively incorporating the learning material required for realising the desired outcomes.

2.15 NEKHAVHAMBE'S PROPOSED TRAINING MODEL

Figure 2.17: illustrates Nekhavhambe's proposed training model



(Source: Nekhavhambe, 2017:141).

Nekhavhambe (2017:141) is of the view that on this proposed model, the issue of monitoring by the Skills Development Facilitator is added on some steps as if proper monitoring is exercised, training programmes designed by institutions can benefit both employers and employees. Step number 4 on the training model requires employees to enter into an agreement with the employer through the signing of a contract that the training he/she is being sent to attend will result in him/her getting a certificate of competence. As the model suggests for an assessment exercise at the end, this aims to stop tendencies of employees of just attending trainings just for the sake of attending, but to acquire the requisite knowledge and skills as per the expected outcomes of such training.

2.16 Summary

This chapter reviewed literature on Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government. In this chapter the researcher has presented the already available literature focusing on the theoretical framework that underpins skills development plan; historical background of skills development plan in South Africa; conceptualising training and skills development; purpose of training and skills development; role of skills development plan in enhancing performance; challenges facing the municipalities as a result of poor skills and legislative framework for the Skills Development Plan. The researcher further focused on issues such as structures responsible for municipal Skills Development Plan in South Africa; role-players in skills development plan; approaches to skills development plan; Skills development plan in selected countries; Nadler's Critical Events Model and Nekhavhambe's proposed training model relating to the area of research. Research studies have shown that the skills shortage of employees is a root cause of municipal underperformance. It is clear from this chapter that skills development plan is paramount and effective in increasing the knowledge and skills of employees, therefore improving performance in both quality and quantity. Hence, a better performer as compared to a non-trained employee result in guaranteed efficiency and improved services.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher discussed the research design and methodology for this study. The chapter also outlined the research paradigm, research design and research methods, study area and population of the study, sampling procedure and sampling size thereafter, data collection methods, pilot study, and data analysis procedures, followed by ethical considerations.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

The term paradigm is derived from Greek, meaning a pattern, and has been broadly defined by many academics (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017:26). Paradigm indicates a pattern or model or typical example, including cultural themes, worldviews, ideologies, and mindsets (Perera, 2018:4). According to Hughes (2010:35), a paradigm is a way of seeing the world. It frames a research topic and influences the way that researchers think about the topic. Research is undergirded by a paradigm, or a specific way of seeing the world and making sense of it (Mukherji and Albon, 2015:24). In essence, paradigms represent the researchers' beliefs and values about the world, the way they define the world and the way they work within the world. A paradigm is an assumption about how things work, sometimes illustrated as a worldview involving shared understandings of reality (Brown and Dueñas, 2019:545). In its simplest form, a paradigm is worldview about how to conduct a research. A research paradigm is the set of common beliefs and agreements shared between scientist about how problems should be understood and addressed (Perera, 2018:5).

Johnson and Christensen (2014:31) state that, a research paradigm is a perspective about research held by a community of researchers that is based on a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values, and practices. Importantly, these are normally shared by most, if not all, people in a research community (those undertaking research into particular problems at one time). Marchiori (2018:279) maintains that, a research paradigm encourages academics to observe the same phenomena in different ways. A research paradigm is applicable in this study, because it guide how problems are solved and directly influence an author's choice of methods. In other words, the researcher's thoughts and beliefs about any issues explored would subsequently guide their actions (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017:26). The researcher used research paradigm because the researcher wants to know what is important, legitimate, and reasonable about the study. A research paradigm, or set of common beliefs about research,

should be a key facet of any research project. All researchers make assumptions about the state of the world before undertaking research (Brown and Dueñas, 2019:545).

A paradigm therefore has important implications for every decision made in the research process. Therefore, Saunders, Thornhill and Lewis (2010:13) regard research paradigms as being made up of the following: positivism, interpretativism, and pragmatism approaches. Every research uses one of the research paradigms as a guideline for developing its research methodology and to take on the research venture in a manner that is most valid and appropriate. For this study, the researcher used the pragmatic research paradigm, which is discussed below. The paradigm adopted directs the researchers' investigation, which includes data collection and analysis procedures (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017:26). These assumptions are important, as they impact upon the interpretation of a study's results (Brown and Dueñas, 2019:545).

3.2.1 Pragmatic research paradigm

According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017:1), this paradigm emerged from the argument among philosophers that a mono-paradigmatic orientation of research by employing a single scientific method was not sufficient to either access the truth about the real world by the Positivist paradigm or determine social reality under the Interpretivist paradigm. A worldview providing the most practical, appropriate, and pluralistic research methods for studying the phenomenon at hand is thus needed. This has given rise to a paradigm that employs the mixed methods as a pragmatic way (Pragmatic paradigm), to understand participants' actual behaviours, their beliefs behind the behaviours and the consequences of their different behaviours (Morgan, 2014:1). Pragmatism is a deconstructive paradigm that advocates the use of mixed methods in research, sidesteps the contentious issues of truth and reality (Feilzer, 2010:8). Pragmatism is all about the notion of "what works". This mainly refers to the pragmatic theory of truth. Pragmatism is simply oriented towards solving practical problems in the real world, rather than being built on assumptions about the nature of knowledge (Creswell, 2014:1). This means that pragmatism leads "action-oriented" research procedures (Cameron, 2011:1).

Pragmatists believe that reality is not static; rather, it changes at every turn of events. Similarly, the world is also not static; rather, it is in a constant state of becoming. The world is also changed through actions as action is the way to change existence. Actions have the role of an intermediary. Therefore, actions are pivotal in pragmatism (Morgan, 2014:1). In other words, pragmatism concentrates on beliefs that are more directly connected to actions (Nguyen, 2019:7). As a research paradigm, pragmatism orients itself toward solving practical problems in the real world. It emerged as a method of inquiry for more practical-minded researchers (Creswell and Clark, 2011:1). Therefore, while designing a research project,

pragmatist researchers in general always consider the various differences that designing and conducting a research project would make (Morgan, 2014:1). The pragmatic researcher is similarly able to maintain both subjectivity in their own reflections on research and objectivity in data collection and analysis (Baker, 2016:322). Biesta, in Tashakkori and Teddlie (2011:112) noted that pragmatism offers a very specific view of knowledge, one claiming that the only way researchers can acquire knowledge is through the combination of action and reflection.

The current researcher chose the pragmatic research paradigm. This is because pragmatism accepts a flexible approach to solving research problems. According to pragmatists there cannot be one way to solve a problem, but a mix of approaches can better help solve a problem and find the truth (Morgan, 2014:1). In pragmatism, focus is on the application- 'what works', rather than methods, allowing the researchers to use all approaches from a pluralistic view to understand the problem at hand. This means that the truth about the subject under study is what works at the time. The current researcher used the pragmatic research paradigm because it allows researchers to maintain both subjectivity in their own reflections on research and objectivity in data collection and analysis. The analyses, the interpretation, and the discussion of the findings in this study were done within the overarching paradigm of pragmatism (Nel and Jordaan, 2016:382).

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Kumar (2014:122), a research design is a plan or strategy that a researcher will follow to achieve probable solutions to the research questions. The plan comprises of various methods and procedures to be applied during the research activity. A research design can also be defined as the procedure of inquiry, including the specific data collection methods, interpretation and data analysis method (Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin, 2013:64; Creswell, 2014:3). This, therefore, means that the research design provides the blueprint or action plan for the entire research study. It allows the researcher to structure research questions appropriately and choose instruments which support the purpose of the study. The two research designs used in this study are contextual and descriptive research design.

3.3.1 Contextual research design

Holtzblatt and Beyer (2017:1) state that contextual research is a unique research design that allows the researcher to visit the research participants in their day to day working environment, allowing them to observe how they execute their tasks. Malpass (2018:1) reiterates that contextual research implies that the researcher should familiarise herself/himself to a natural participants' environment which the information is found and collected, thus observing behaviours and asking questions to find out more about the

research participants. The researcher chose contextual research design because she had direct contact with the research participants, analysing research participants' skills, behaviours, and working environment which influences their performance. This helped the researcher to make the best recommendations and conclusions on the research study.

3.3.2 Descriptive research design

Punch (2013:1) points out that descriptive research design is a scientific method which involves observing and describing the behaviour of a subject, without influencing it in any way. Bernard (2012:14) defines descriptive research design as a research used to describe a situation, subject, behaviour, or phenomenon. Descriptive research design was utilised in this study to describe phenomenon, as it naturally occurs in order to obtain valid information, which influenced the truthfulness of the study. The researcher took the information the way it was, without adding anything. This helped the researcher to be efficient, as she did not waste time controlling and influencing the behaviours, subjects, and situations pertaining to the study.

3.4 RESEARCH METHODS

A research methodology is the means for the collection of data needed for a study (Maphazi, 2012:160). A research methodology includes the design, setting, sample, methodological limitations and the data collection and analysis techniques in the study (Kobus, 2011:33). According to Kobus (2011:33), it refers to ways of obtaining, organising and analysing data. Sileyew (2019:1) points out that a research methodology is the path through which researchers need to conduct their research. It shows the path through which these researchers formulate their problem and objective and present their result from the data obtained during the study period. Maree (2016:20) concurs that research methodology is the systematic process of solving research problems. It allows the researcher to conduct the study in a certain way, thereby establishing answers to the research questions. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the mixed method, where both qualitative and quantitative approaches were used.

3.4.1 Mixed Research Method

Gray (2016:204) defines the mixed methods as the collection or analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study, in which the data are collected concurrently or sequentially, are given a priority, and involve the integration of data at one or more stages in the process of research. Schoonenboom and Johnson (2017:108) state that mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analysing, and integrating quantitative (experiments and surveys) and qualitative (focus groups and interviews) research. The mixed research method is used in research in order to increase

validity. The mixed method is used in this research to answer the questions from a number of perspectives and ensured that there are no ‘gaps’ to the information or data collected. When one methodology did not provide all the information required, a mixed research covered the weakness identified.

3.4.1.1 Quantitative research

Brynard (2014:39) defines quantitative methodology as methods that use numbers to count and measure “things” or “objects” to explain the observations made. In so doing, it leads to the production of data. According to Bhat (2017:18), quantitative research, is the systematic investigation of phenomena by gathering quantifiable data and performing statistical, mathematical, or computational techniques. The researcher chose quantitative study because data collected is more reliable and objective. Quantitative studies allowed the researcher to collect and gather information within a short period of time. The results obtained in quantitative research were reported and analysed in an honest way.

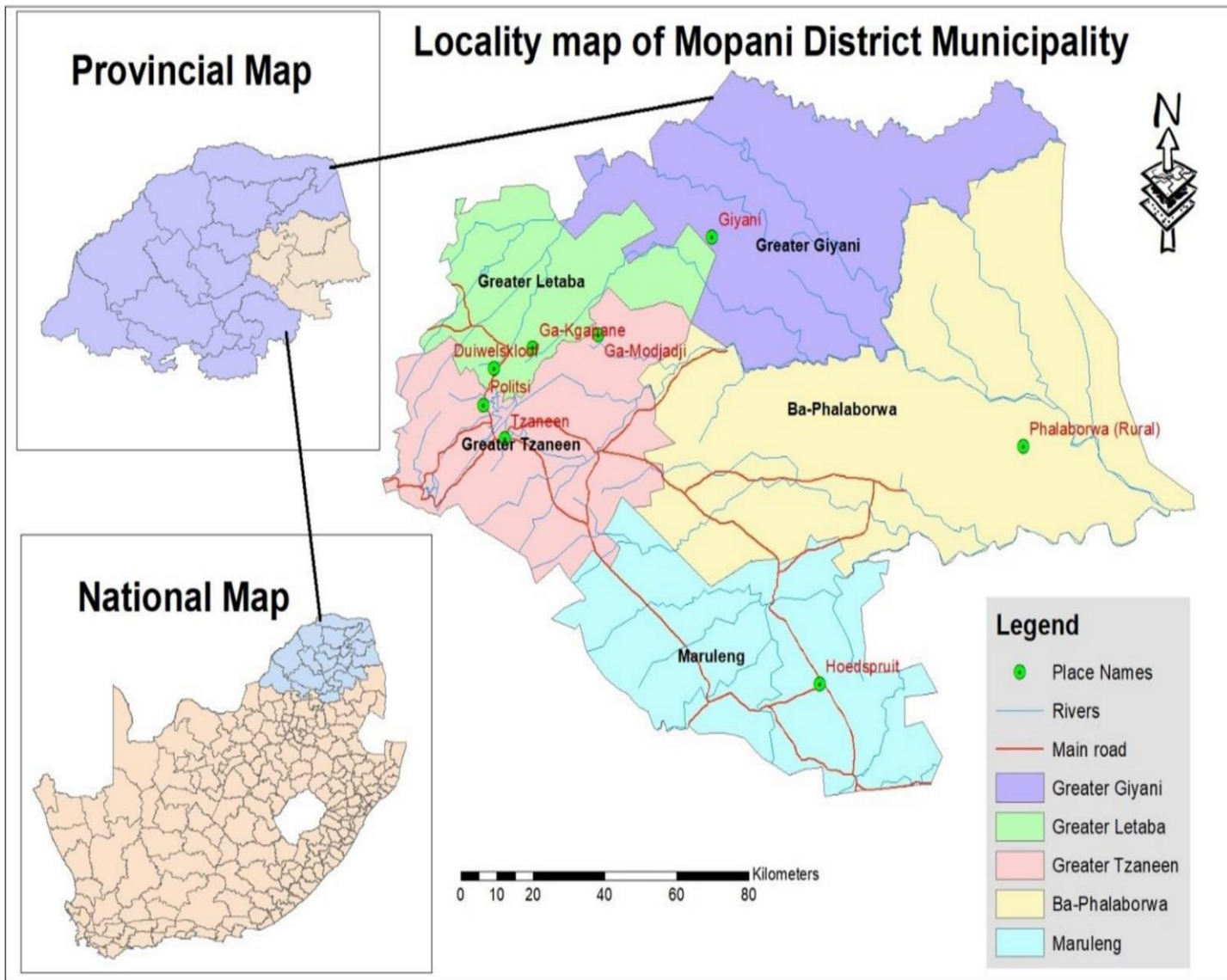
3.4.1.2 Qualitative research

Kumar (2014:133) defines qualitative study as research that provides rich data, obtained from interviewees’ written or spoken thoughts. Qualitative research can also be defined as a method of research that “focuses on stories and observations, seeking an in-depth understanding based on the first-hand experience of people and their environment” and the methods used include interviews, case studies and focus groups (Johnson, 2010:11). The reason qualitative research has been chosen is that data collected is based on human experiences and observations. A qualitative approach is applicable in this study, because it allowed research participants to freely disclose their ideas, experiences, opinions, thoughts, feelings, and perceptions without constraint.

3.5 STUDY AREA

The location or area of the study is the place where researchers conduct research appropriately (Johnson, Beck, Asghar and Broussard, 2018:9). According to Williams, Sethi, Duggleby, Ploeg, Markle-Reid, Peacock and Ghosh (2016:5), the location of the study is the geographic location for which data is analysed in a report. The researcher used the location of the study to ensure that data and analysis are confined to a specified area. The researcher carried out the study in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality, which is a Category B municipality, established in terms of Local Government Structures Act, 1998 (Act No. 117 of 1998), influenced by the characteristics of the participants that the researcher is looking for.

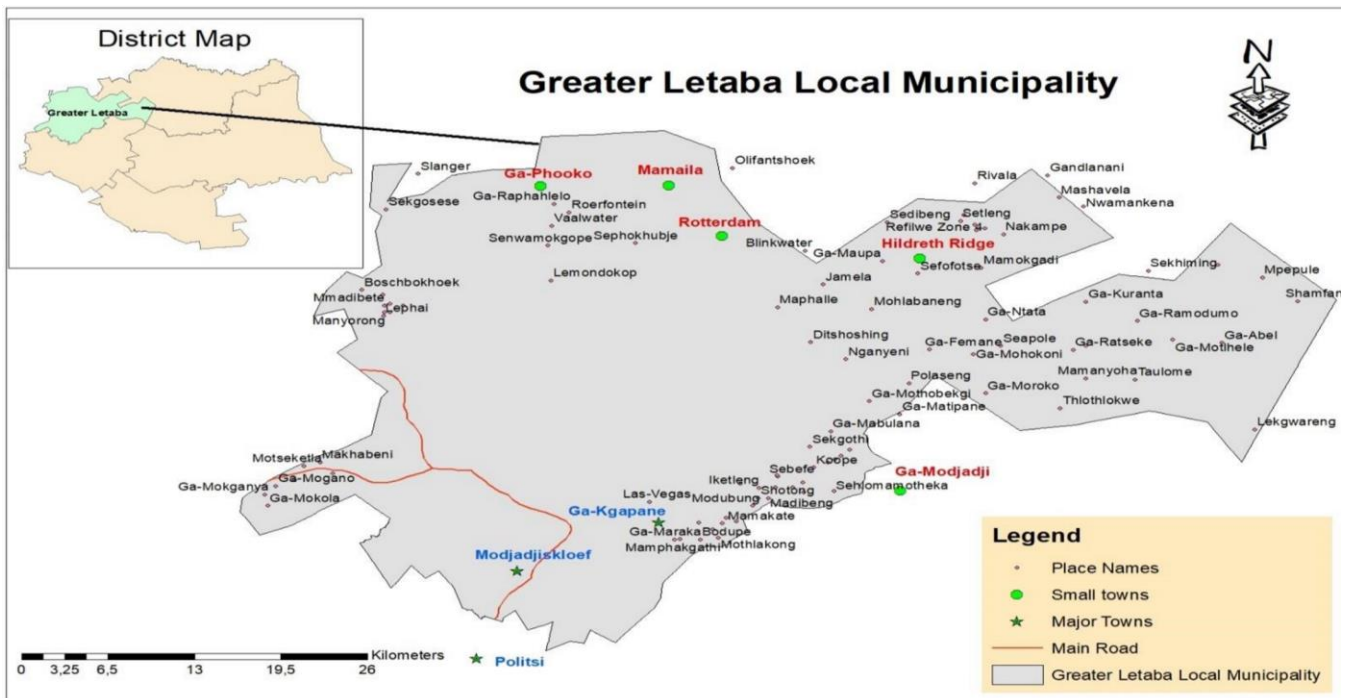
Figure 2.18: Map of Limpopo Province, indicating the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality



(Source: Geographic Information System, November 2019).

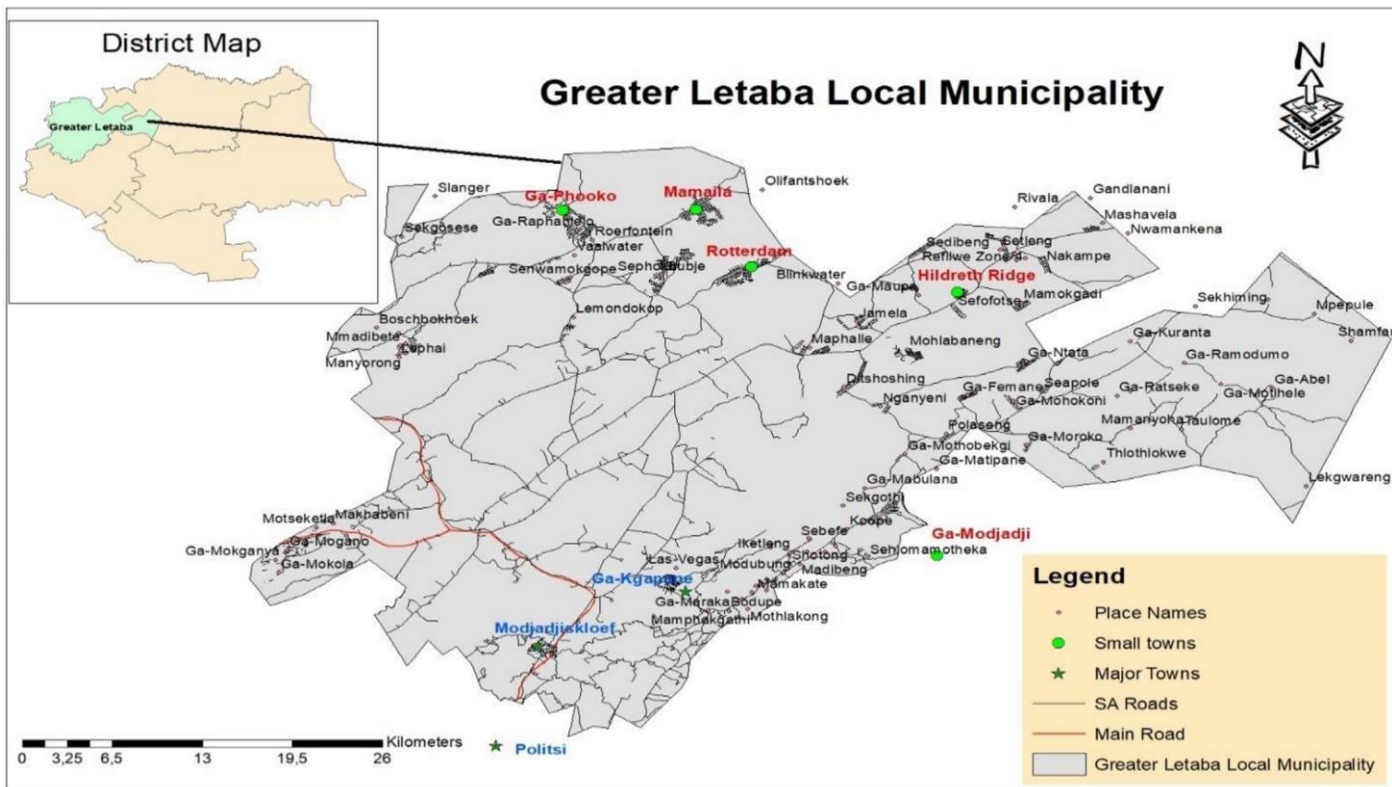
The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is located in the Mopani District, which is one of the municipalities that forms the Limpopo Province in South Africa. The municipality is the smallest of the five local municipalities in the Mopani District Municipality. The 'gates' to the municipal area are considered to be Mamaila-Kolobetona in the North, Modjadjiskloof (previously Duiwelskloof) in the South, Makgakgapatse in the East, and Sekgopo in the West. Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is predominantly occupied by Lobedu-Khelobedu, Sepedi, Tsonga– Shangaan, TshiVenda, Setswana, and Afrikaans-speaking people. The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality can therefore, be called the gateway to Limpopo and the north-eastern part of the Province (Greater-Letaba Local Municipality: Draft Integrated Development Plan, 2019:31).

Figure 2.19: Map of Limpopo Province, indicating the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality



(Source: Geographic Information System, November 2019).

Figure 2.20: Map of Limpopo Province, indicating the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality



(Source: Geographic Information System, November, 2019).

3.6 POPULATION OF THE STUDY

A population is the total group of individuals with whom the researcher is concerned and to whom the research findings can be applied (Wiid and Diggines, 2013:1). The population is also defined as a group of persons, elements, or both that share a set of common characteristics as predetermined by the researcher (DePoy and Laura, 2013:161). It is for the benefit of the population that research is conducted. In this regard, the researcher intended to conduct research and draw conclusions from the target population. According to Creswell (2014:1), a target population is the group of people who share similar characteristics such as geographical area, norms, and values. This is the population from which information is wanted or desired by the researcher. The target population for this study to which the researcher generalised the study findings for the sake of an effective research process on using skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, include + 110 municipal officials.

3.7 SAMPLING

According to Holloway and Wheeler (2013:137), sampling refers to the technique of selecting units (people, organisations) from a population of interest, so that by studying the sample researchers may fairly generalise their results back to the population from which they were chosen. Ben-Shlomo, Brookes and Hickman (2013:25) define sampling as the method that allows researchers to infer information about a population based on results from a subset of the population, without having to investigate every individual. Nembudani's (2017:20) notion about that sampling is done because it may not be practical and possible for the whole population to participate in a research; hence, if a decision is made to include the whole population, the study may not come to an end motivated the researcher to examine sample of a larger group of potential participants.

In this study, the selected sample group included the following: Municipal Manager; Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Manager; Local Economic Development (LED) Manager; Municipal Councillor; Proportional Representation (PR) councillor; Public Participation Manager; Human Resource Manager; Human Resource Staff Members; Performance Management System Staff Members; Communication Officer (Municipal Spokesperson); Ward Committee Member; Speaker; Chief Financial Officer; Mayor; Traditional leader and Selected community members. The sampled group were established based on their involvement in the human resources issues and their functionalities in administration, politics, community development, tradition, and media. The reason these participants were chosen as a sampled group of this study is that they are involved and affected by the day-to-day activities of the municipality hence they provided the researcher with the correct information.

3.7.1 Sampling procedure

Sampling procedure can be defined as a method used to select sample within the population to be included in the study (Trochim, Donnelly and Arora, 2015:85). There are two types of sampling procedures; namely, probability and non-probability sampling techniques (Wild and Diggines, 2013:183). For the purpose of this study, the researcher used non-probability sampling and its subtype purposive sampling to select the respondents of the study. Wolf, Joye, Smith and Yang-chih Fu (2016:329) define non-probability sampling as a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population equal chances of being selected. Non-probability sampling can also be defined as a sampling technique wherein the sample is selected in such a way that the chance of each unit being selected within the population or universe is unknown (José, Barragués, Morais and Guisasola, 2014:178). The researcher chose non-probability sampling because the researcher wanted to select participants that are well equipped with high quality information relevant and pertinent to the study focus.

Allen and Babbie (2016:1) define purposive sampling as the selection of the sample based on knowledge of the population and the context of the study. Ilker, Sulaiman and Rukayya (2016:2) define purposive sampling as a form of non-probability sampling in which researchers rely on their own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in their study. The researcher employs his or her own "expert" judgment about who to include in the sample frame as being influenced by the characteristics of the members that serve the purpose of the study (Showkat and Parveen, 2017:7). Purposive sampling was utilised in this study because the researcher wanted to judge the characteristics of members as a mechanism of choosing suitable participants who possess relevant characteristics, which are needed by the current researcher for completing this study with credibility.

3.7.2 Sampling size

Fusch and Ness (2015:3) define sampling size as the total number of participants selected to represent the whole population in the study. Sampling size is the number of respondents in the sample selected by the researcher to gain information about the whole population (Robinson, 2014:2). The reason why the researcher chose 110 respondents for this study is that she wanted to interact with each participant, ensuring that they become aware of the significant role that they can play in skills development plan. The sampling size of this study consisted of 110 respondents of which are as follows: 01 Municipal Manager; 01 Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Manager; 01 Local Economic Development (LED) Manager; 01 Municipal Councillor; 01 Proportional Representation (PR) councillor; 01 Public Participation Manager; 01 Human Resource Manager; 02 Human Resource Staff Members; 02

Performance Management System Staff Members; 01 Communication Officer (Municipal Spokesperson); 01 Ward Committee Member; 01 Speaker; 01 Chief Financial Officer; 01 Mayor; 01 Traditional leader and 93 Selected community members.

Table 3. 1 Targeted Sampling size

Category	Targeted Sample Size
Municipal Manager	01 Municipal Manager
Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Manager	01 IDP Manager
Local Economic Development (LED) Manager	01 LED Manager
Municipal Councillor	01 Municipal Councillor
Proportional Representation (PR) councillor	01 PR councillor
Public Participation Manager	01 Public Participation Manager
Human Resource Manager	01 Human Resource Manager
Human Resource Staff Members	02 Human Resource Staff Members
Performance Management System Staff Members	02 Performance Management System Staff Members
Communication Officer	01 Communication Officer
Ward Committee Member	01 Ward Committee Member
Speaker	01 Speaker
Chief Financial Officer	01 Chief Financial Officer
Mayor	01 Mayor
Traditional leader	01 Traditional leader
Selected community members	93 Community members
Total	110

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

3.8 DATA COLLECTION

According to Burns and Grove (2013:30), data collection is a series of interrelated tasks with the intention of collecting rich information to provide answers to the research questions. Creswell (2015:14) states that data collection is the systematic and precise gathering of data that is relevant to the purpose, objectives, and questions of the study. For this study, two data collection methods were used; namely, questionnaire and interview. The reason why the researcher used a questionnaire and an interview is that the researcher wanted to collect the relevant information for this study.

3.8.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire method was used in this study for collecting data. According to Patten (2016:34), a questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of a series of questions for the purpose of gathering information from the respondents. Annum (2018:1) defines a

questionnaire as a form of inquiry document, which contains a systematically compiled and well-organised series of questions intended to elicit the information, which will provide insight into the nature of the problem under study. The researcher used structured questionnaires (closed-ended questions) in this study because she wanted to give respondents an opportunity to choose from alternatives such as yes or no, true, or false and agree or disagree questions. These structured questionnaires were focused on the selected community members because the researcher believes that the community takes a while to submit their questionnaires. Hence, using structured questionnaires reduced the amount of thinking that a respondent needed to undertake to complete the task. This generally led to a higher response rate and more accurate data. For the purpose of this study, 100 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. The researcher distributed these questionnaires using research assistants. Before distributing the questionnaires, the researcher made appointments with the respondents.

3.8.2 Interview

The researcher used an interview as a method of collecting data. According to Gray (2016:396), an interview is a verbal exchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to acquire information from and gain an understanding of another person, the interviewee. Quad (2016:12) points out that, an interview is typically a face-to-face conversation between a researcher and a participant involving a transfer of in-depth information from a participant's perspective on the topic to the researcher. In this regard, the researcher applied open-ended interview for this study. Schaefer (2017:25) defines an open-ended interview as an interviewing technique wherein the participant is free to reveal more information on his experiences, knowledge, and opinions on the topic. Spaces are also provided for respondents to make their inputs (Annum, 2018:2). The researcher used open-ended interview for this study because the researcher wanted to interact with each participant face to face, with the intention of exploring different views and expressions of participants through observing body language, which conveyed relevant information for the study. Thus, for the purpose of this study, 10 participants from the municipality were interviewed by the researcher and the research assistant. This allowed the researcher to better access the respondents' true feelings on the current municipal skills development plan. Before interviewing participants, the researcher made appointments with the participants.

3.9 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study is a preliminary, small-scale undertaken in which researchers test the methods they plan to use for their research projects (Polit and Yang, 2016:30). Van Teijlingen, Ireland, Hundley and Sathian (2014:38) state that a pilot study is a specific pre-test of the research

instruments, questionnaires, and interview guides to be used in the study. The reason why the researcher used a pilot study for this study is that she wanted to minimise errors, check wording in the questions or to test whether the questionnaire and interview schedule solicit the required data from the respondents. Hence, based on the results of the pilot, revisions were made to the research instruments. After the elimination and correction of items from the research instruments, the researcher distributed the pre-tested questionnaires and interview schedule to the Municipal Manager; Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Manager; Local Economic Development (LED) Manager; Municipal Councillor; Public Participation Manager; Human Resource Manager; Human Resource Staff Members; Performance Management System Staff Members; Communication Officer (Municipal Spokesperson); Chief Financial Officer; Mayor; Traditional leader and Selected community members. This is because these are specialists, and community stakeholders who are aware of the implementation of skills development plans taking place in the municipality.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is the most crucial part of any research. Walia (2015:1) is of the view that in some cases, data analysis begins when all data have been collected and prepared. According to Gordon (2016:52), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data. LeCompte and Schensul (2018:45) views data analysis as a process used by researchers for reducing data and interpreting it to derive insights. JeongHee (2015:25) defines data analysis as a mechanism which involves the interpretation of data gathered through the use of analytical and logical reasoning to determine patterns, relationships or trends. According to the current researcher's perspective, data analysis is the most crucial part of any research because it organises, interprets, and structures research. It also presents the data into useful information that provides context for the data. Two data analysis methods were be used; namely statistical and thematic analysis.

Ali (2016:336) asserts that, statistical analysis is the use of statistical data including varying variables, entities, and events to determine probabilistic or statistical relationships in a quantitative manner. Maguire and Delahunt (2017:2) point out that, thematic analysis is a flexible data analysis plan that qualitative researchers use to generate themes from interview data. In this regard, data collected through questionnaires was analysed using a computer programme called International Business Machinery (IBM): Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS), Latest Version 25.0. The information was presented in graphical or tabular form, showing frequencies and percentages.

The data collected through interviews was analysed using thematic analysis. The information was grouped into memos and coded, and presented in a narrative form. In this study, the

researcher analysed the data from the interview schedule using narrative analysis. According to Maree (2007:102), narrative analysis refers to a variety of procedures for interpreting the narrative generated in research. The word narrative is generally associated with terms such as “tale or story”, especially a story told in the first person. Narrative data analysis focuses on stories told by participants. The story aspect is seen as a complete entity in itself, with a beginning, middle and an end (Grbich, 2007:124). Each stage of thematic data analysis involves data reduction, as the large amounts of collected data are reduced to manageable parts. The researcher applied thematic-narrative data analysis in which a variety of procedures for interpreting data is generated in research. The researcher followed the steps of qualitative data analysis as outlined by Creswell (2014:197), which are as follows:

- **Phase 1: Planning for Recording Data**

The researcher planned for the recording of data in a systematic manner which is appropriate to the setting of participants or both and facilitated analysis before collecting information. She planned to use tape recorders, cameras, and other devices delineated in the research proposal demonstrating what researcher will use. Creswell (2013:1) agrees that the researcher in this study should use a tape recorder to record the discussions from each of the participants during the interviews. The next step will be to transcribe the recorded data by converting audiotape recordings into text data.

- **Phase 2: Data Collection and Preliminary Analysis**

Data was collected, analysed and recorded by the researcher. This means that the coding was an iterative process whereby the researcher listened and read through the recordings several times (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun, 2017:1736). The first one involved data analysis at the research site during collection of data. The second one involved data analysis away from the site. Data collection and analysis go hand in hand in order to build a coherent interpretation of the data.

- **Phase 3: Managing or Organising Data**

This is the first loop in the spiral: the researcher organised data into file folders and analysed it well and in order. Data was then organised and kept into file folders. The researcher labeled data properly with a notation system that makes retrieval manageable. The data generated by qualitative methods are voluminous. Organising and analysing a mountain of narrative seemed like an impossible task. The purpose was to organise and elicit meaning from the data collected and draw realistic conclusions (Bengtsson, 2016:10).

- **Phase 4: Reading and Writing Memos**

Memoing is an important tool which is essential during data collection to record insights gained from reflecting on data. Thus, the researcher read through all memos and notes with comments as written on all field notes (Johnson and Christensen, 2012:1). The researcher read the data collected and checked if it is organised and grouped information together. Reading the data once more forced the researcher to become familiar with the data in intimate ways. After organisation and conversion of the data, the researcher continued analysis getting a feeling for the whole database. People, events, and quotes sift constantly through the researchers' mind.

- **Phase 5: Generating Categories: Themes and Patterns**

The data collected during the study was classified and categorised in order to attain the logical connections between categories and in order to create a pattern that establishes connections (Doyle, Brady and Byrne, 2016:1). The process of category generation involves noting regularities in the setting or people chosen for the study. The researcher searched for those who have internal convergence and external divergence. The researcher broke the information down into a small manageable sets or themes to write into final narrative. The analytic process demands a heightened awareness of the data, focused attention to the data and openness to the subtle tacit undercurrents of social life. The researcher made reflective notes about emerging concepts, themes and patterns found in the data (Johnson and Christensen, 2012:1).

- **Phase 6: Coding the Data**

The data was presented analytically, where the researcher then applied some coding scheme to those categories and delinquently and thoroughly marked passages in the data using codes. The researcher selected the form which she applied when coding the data. The researcher used abbreviations or key words, colours, dots or numbers. The codes took several forms: abbreviations of key words, coloured dots and numbers. Myers (2013:1) concurs that during coding, a code can be a word or symbol that is applied to characterise or condense a sentence, paragraph, or colour code entire text such as an interview. When using coding, the big collected data is labelled and then organised into certain categories or themes.

- **Phase 7: Testing Emergent Understanding**

A set of codes was organised into categories that was developed by a researcher (Gale, Heath, Cameron, Rashid and Redwood, 2013:1). As categories and themes was developed and coding was well underway, the researcher began the process of evaluating the plausibility of her developing understanding and exploring them through enough data. Part of this phrase was evaluating the data for their uselessness and centrality. This entailed a search through the data during which the researcher challenged the understandings,

searched for negative instances of patterns and incorporated these into larger constructs, as necessary.

- **Phase 8: Searching for Alternative Explanations**

Alternative explanations always exist; the researcher searched to identify and describe them, and then demonstrated why the explanation offered is the most plausible of all. The researcher discovered categories and patterns in the data also engaged in critically challenging the validity of patterns that seem to be apparent. Majadibodu (2016:15) explained that data analysis is intended to aid in the understanding of meaning in complex data through the development of summary themes or categories from the raw data ('data reduction'). The researcher searched for other plausible explanations for those data and the linkages among them.

- **Phase 9: Representing and Visualising the Data**

In the final phase of the report, the researcher presented the data, a packaging of what was found in text, tabular, or figure form. The hypothesis or proposition specifies the relationship between categories of information also represent information. For the purpose of this study, the researcher analysed data using the following steps: planning and recording data, reading and writing memos, and representing and visualising. The researcher collected data and recorded all the information given by the respondents. After collecting the data, the researcher read all the information collected from respondents, to check if the data were organised and then grouped all similar information together. Tessier (2012:451) is of the view that where the researcher needs more clarity, the audio tapes can be replayed so as to analyse the relevant data in the study. The researcher presented data in a narrative form.

3.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Velasquez, Andre, Shanks and Meyer (2017:140), ethics is the branch of philosophy that deals with values relating to human conduct. Specifically, that human conduct that deals with the rightness and wrongness of certain actions and the goodness and badness of the motives and outcomes of such actions. Chowdhury (2014:37) defines research ethics as a set of principles about how researchers and research organisations should conduct themselves when dealing with research participants, other researchers and colleagues, the users of their research and society in general. Hence, according to the researcher's perspective, ethics in research means that researchers should conduct themselves in the right manner which is morally acceptable towards the selected participants during the execution of the research process. The following ethical considerations was observed by the researcher while conducting the study:

3.11.1 Permission to conduct the study

The researcher obtained an ethical clearance letter from the University of Venda and permission was sought from the institutions where the research was conducted. Maxwell (2013:1) states that research can have both benefits and/or burdens for the participants and the community; hence, the need for ethical clearance. The letter from the University of Venda and the letter from the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality, to grant permission to conduct the study are attached to this study as annexures. Both letters served as examples of permission letters sent to the authorities in various organisations. The research study was carried out within a traditional rural area; therefore, the researcher obtained the approval of traditional leader. All these authorities were responsible to grant the researcher the permission to conduct the study in the various targeted research sites.

3.11.2 Informed consent

Informed consent is the process of providing information to the participants, about the rationale for the study, its methods and possible risks and options so that the participants understand this information and can make a choice about whether to participate in the study or not (Bryman and Bell, 2015:48). The researcher obtained consent from the participants when collecting data. Participants were informed about the nature and consequences of the research in which participants were involved. Participants were fully informed about the procedures and the risks involved in the research project. Participant's agreement was based on full and open information. Participants were not forced to participate in the research project, but participants were asked whether participants want to be involved in the study or not. In this study, participants were given informed consent forms prior to participation. Explanations were given to the respondents regarding the purpose of the research and what it entails. Respondents were interviewed after they have given their consent. Vital information which the respondents need to know was also given to them.

3.11.3 Voluntary participation

The principle of voluntary participation requires that people should not be coerced into participating in the research at all times. Creswell (2013:12) confirms that, voluntary participation ideally means that a researcher does not pressure anyone into agreeing to participate in a research project, but rather seeks to obtain participants' voluntary consent. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:101) argue that no one should be forced to participate through threats or any sort of influence. International law, national law, and the codes of conduct of scientific communities protect this right. In this study, the researcher explained to the respondents that if a participant, in the process of the study decides to withdraw; he/she is allowed to do so without fear. Thus, any participant's decision to withdraw from the study was respected by the researcher.

3.11.4 No harmful deception of subject or description

Coleman (2018:36) states that deception in research is the practice of deliberately providing false or incomplete information to participants for the purpose of misleading participants about research purposes or activities. According to Van Niekerk (2014:23), deception is when an investigator gives false information to subjects and intentionally misleads them about some key aspect of the research. This might relate to the purpose of the research, the role of researcher or other subjects, the true nature of the procedures, or other parts of the study. This means that what is being researched is withheld from the research subjects in order to attain the required results. Sieber (2012:35) asserts that the unethical uses of deception in research can cause distress to those being deceived and undermine public trust in the research enterprise. In this regard, the researcher did not deceive the participants about the study. The researcher was truthful and honest in her dealings with the participants. Furthermore, she did not hide information to the participants. Furthermore, the information provided by the participants was not misinterpreted by the researcher. Finally, the researcher was open and transparent about everything concerning the study, as the informed consent letter attached to the interview schedule and questionnaire contained all the necessary information, and it was clear and uncomplicated.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the research design and methodology to justify how data collection was conducted. Chapter 3 paved a way regarding how the data would be analysed using the various steps, as outlined in this section. This chapter focuses on what is happening on the ground. It focuses on presenting, interpreting and analysing data collected through structured questionnaires (closed-ended questions) and open-ended interviews on the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The data was collected by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The two methods of collecting data were used because in reality they support each other. Responses of the participants to the questionnaire items are presented graphically in a tabular form and followed by a brief discussion of the findings. On the other hand, responses to the interview schedules are presented in narrative form, followed by a brief discussion of the findings.

A total of 110 respondents participated in the study and 100 responded to the closed-ended questionnaires while ten (10) were interviewed. Questionnaires were handed out to communities in Bolobedu and some municipal officials. Therefore, the municipal officials and political leaders in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality were interviewed. It is important to emphasise that the study did not aim at criticising the expertise of the municipal officials and political leaders in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality but rather to address the need for successful implementation of the skills development plan.

4.2 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH QUESTIONNAIRES

This section presents the data collected through the questionnaires. The data is presented in a graphical tabular format, with frequencies and percentages. This section is divided into Section A and B. Section A consists of the biographical details of respondents; and Section B consists of Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance. Each table will be followed by a brief discussion of the findings.

4.2.1 Section A: Biographical details of respondents

In this sub-section the researcher presents the biographical details of the respondents who took part in this study by answering the questionnaires. The information or data in this subsection is presented in a graphical tabular form with frequencies and percentages followed by a synthesis of the findings. The biographical details of respondents are presented

in relation to gender; age; position; number of years in the position; educational attainment; and ethnic group. The researcher presented it as follows:

Table 4.1: Gender of Respondents

Items	Gender of Respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Male	44	44%
2	Female	56	56%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.1 shows the biographical information of the respondents in terms of gender. From the above table, a total of 100 of the respondents participated in this study, 44 (44%) were males whereas 56 (56%) were females. All the targeted 100 (100%) respondents were able to fill the questionnaires and return them to the researcher to be analysed. The respondents who participated in this study are the communities residing in Bolobedu falling under the GreaterLetaba Local Municipality and few municipal officials working within this municipality. The above information, indicates that majority of respondents who participated in the study were females than males. This shows that female respondents were more responsive than males. This means that women living in Bolobedu understands the purpose of skills development plan in the municipality. On the other hand, women, working in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality are aware of their lack of skills which need to be nurtured for improving their performance.

Table 4.2: Age of Respondents

Items	Age of Respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Less than 30 years	34	34%
2	31 - 40 years	31	31%
3	41 - 50 years	25	25%
4	51 - 60 years	08	8%
5	61 years and older	02	2%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.2 above, indicates that 31 (31%) of the respondents who participated in the study fall between the ages 31-40 years, while 25 (25%) fall between 41-50 years and 08 (8%) fall between the ages 51-60 years. Few respondents at 02 (2%) were 61 years and older, hence majority of the respondents at 34 (34%) who took part in this study were less than 30 years. It can therefore be concluded that majority of the respondents who were more responsive in this study were the youth. This can also be interpreted to mean that responses given are not dominated by the senior citizens with old school of thought and expectations of retirement but are dominated by the new generation who are eagerly receptive to change and new ideas. This enables the municipality to have properly prepared managerial and political leadership positions instilled with better performance which is advantageous to introducing development projects to uplift the lives of the communities.

Table 4.3: The following positions responded to the closed-ended questionnaires

Items	Position of Respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Municipal Councillor	01	1%
2	Human Resource Manager	01	1%
3	Human Resource Staff Members	02	2%
4	Performance Management System Staff Members	02	2%
5	Chief Financial Officer	01	1%
6	Selected community members	93	93%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.3 revealed how sampled respondents answered the questionnaires as per their position in the municipality and communities. Based on the above table, the researcher distributed 100 questionnaires to these respondents. Few respondents from the municipality filled the questionnaires where 01 (1%) was the Municipal Councillor who preferred to focus on the questionnaire and not to be interviewed. One, 01 (1%) Human Resource Manager took part in the study and two, 02 (2%) of the Human Resource Staff Members was found to be part of the study. Two, 02 (2%) of the Performance Management System Staff Members and one, 01 (1%) Chief Financial Officer answered the questionnaire. The above table shows that the sample population was dominated by the Selected community members at 93 (93%)

to determine their level of awareness on the municipality' skills development plan since they were the ones who are affected by the performance of the municipality.

Table 4.4: Number of Years in the Position of Respondents

Items	Number of Years in the Position	Frequencies	Percentages
1	01 - 05 Years	47	47%
2	06 - 10 Years	27	27%
3	11 - 15 Years	17	17%
4	16 - 20 Years	06	6%
5	21 Years and Above	03	3%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Information on table 4.4: indicate that 47 (47%) respondents who took part in this study have 01 - 05 years working experience while 27 (27%) respondents have 06 - 10 years working experience, and 17 (17%) were having 11 - 15 years working experience. Six (06) constituting 6% of the respondents were having 16 - 20 years working experience followed by 03 (3%) who were having 21 years and above working experience. As can be seen from table 4.4, about 47 (47%) of the respondents constitute most of the respondents who took part in the study having 01 to 05 years working experience. This means that those respondents who have few years working experience are quite interested on the future of the municipality in terms of the successful implementation of skills development plan and improved performance.

Table 4.5: Educational Attainment of Respondents

Items	Educational Attainment	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Primary Education	16	16%
2	Secondary Education	34	34%
3	Tertiary Education	46	46%
4	Other	04	4%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

It can be seen from table 4.5 that most of the respondents who took part in the study at 46 representing 46% reported that they have a tertiary qualification consisting of certificates,

diplomas, and degrees. These respondents emphasised that poverty pushed them to further their studies with the help of bursaries to improve their standard of living. Sixteen (16) representing 16% of the respondents reported that they have acquired primary education such as Grade 10, 11 and 12. Thirty-four (34) representing 34% of the respondents managed to obtain a secondary education wherein some of these respondents stated that they want to further their studies as they have not limited their academic level. Four (4) representing 4% of the respondents reported that they have other qualifications such as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) qualification. It should, therefore, be concluded that the level of education of the respondents is worrisome because of the pressure which community protests have on the municipality's performance. It is not debatable that highly educated communities and employees are critical when raising the service delivery issues sustained by the proper implementation of the skills development plan.

Table 4.6: Ethnic Group

Items	Gender of Respondents	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Tsonga (Va-Tsonga)	02	2%
2	Venda (Vha-Venda)	0	0.0%
3	Sepedi (Northern Sotho)	98	98%
4	English (Whites)	0	0.0%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

The majority of the respondents 98 (98%) who participated in the study used Sepedi as their means of communication. Two, 02 (2%) of the respondents used Tsonga (Va-Tsonga) as a means of communication. This means that Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is dominated by Sepedi (Northern Sotho) speaking people followed by Tsonga (Va-Tsonga) speaking people. This is no surprise since Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is predominately rural-based wherein most people embrace their mother tongue language as a means of communication. Most municipal officials and communities are Blacks which is also in line with the demography of the municipalities. As far as other languages are concerned, there are no respondents who spoke other languages apart from those listed above by the researcher.

4.2.2 Section B: Skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance

In this subsection data was analysed in a graphical tabular format which arose from the questionnaire items. This sub-section is divided into four themes which arose from the specific objectives of the study, namely; the role of skills development plan positively serving as a tool for enhancing performance; the impact that skills development plan has on performance; challenges of implementing skills development plan at the Greater- Letaba Local Municipality; and mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing skills development plans. Each category has statements that respondents have indicated whether they strongly agreed, agreed, not sure, disagreed and strongly disagreed. After each statement and table that gave figures and percentages on how respondents answered, an interpretation and analysis followed.

4.2.2.1 The role of skills development plan positively serving as a tool for enhancing performance

This sub-section presented data regarding the role of skills development plan positively serving as a tool for enhancing performance. Data was analysed using statistics which arose from the respondents' questionnaires. The data in this theme was presented in tabular format with frequencies and percentages followed by a brief synthesis.

Table 4.7: The Municipality provides skills development programmes

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	10	10%
2	Agree	05	5%
3	Not sure	20	20%
4	Disagree	30	30%
5	Strongly disagree	35	35%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

The information above on the table 4.7 indicated that 10 (10%) respondents strongly agreed that the Municipality provides skills development programmes and 35 (35%) strongly disagreed. Five, 05 (5%) respondents agreed that the Municipality provides skills development programmes, whereas 30 (30%) disagreed. However, 20 (20%) of the respondents were not sure. Therefore, the information above showed that a huge portion of this statement went to community members and municipal officials who strongly disagreed that the Municipality provides skills development programmes, followed by respondents who disagreed which in combination add up to 65%. The above statistics can be an indication

that the fact that the Municipality provides skills development programmes has not been felt within the communities and other municipal officials. This means that these municipal officials are not satisfied with the implementation of the skills development programmes because of the skills gaps which they experience in their daily activities. On the other hand, this highlights the fact that other community members do not believe that the municipality attends to the skills deficit of the municipal officials because of the lack of service delivery which compromises their standard of living.

Table 4.8: Employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	05	5%
2	Agree	02	2%
3	Not sure	40	40%
4	Disagree	05	5%
5	Strongly disagree	48	48%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

According to the above table 4.8, it can be noted that 05 (5%) respondents strongly agreed to the idea that employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives, while 48 (48%) respondents strongly disagreed to the same sentiment. Two, 02 (2%) respondents agreed that employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives, whereas 05 (5%) disagreed. Fourty, 40 (40%) of the respondents were not sure whether employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives. The majority of respondents strongly disagreed that employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives. This is an indication of the municipality's commitment with regard to meeting the objectives of the organisation through employee training and skills development. This will help the municipality to determine how it can align its skills development plan with the organisation's objectives.

Table 4.9: The Municipality assesses the skills needs of municipal officials for improving performance

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	03	3%
2	Agree	0	0.0%
3	Not sure	70	70%

4	Disagree	07	7%
5	Strongly disagree	20	20%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.9, revealed that 03 (3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that, the Municipality assesses the skills needs of municipal officials for improving performance whereas 20 (20%) strongly disagreed. Seven, 07 (7%) of the respondents disagreed that the Municipality assesses the skills needs of municipal officials for improving performance. On the other hand, 70 (70%) of the respondents were not sure. From the above table, it is shown that few respondents strongly agreed implying that the Municipality does assess the skills needs of municipal officials for improving performance. However, the fact that the respondents within the municipality and communities were not sure and strongly disagreed are the majority, this means that these respondents perceive the skills needs as the root causes of the poor performance in the municipality. This clearly indicates that poor performance of the municipality is blamed on the skills needs of municipal officials which need to be assessed and successfully implemented.

Table 4.10: The Skills development plan improves the productivity of employees

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	22	22%
2	Agree	36	36%
3	Not sure	39	39%
4	Disagree	02	2%
5	Strongly disagree	01	1%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

From the one hundred (100) respondents who took part in the study, 36 (36%) agreed that the Skills development plan improves the productivity of employees, while 02 (2%) respondents disagreed. Twenty-two, 22 (22%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the Skills development plan improves the productivity of employees, whereas only 01 (1%) respondent strongly disagreed. Thirty-nine, 39 (39%) of the respondents were not sure. The fact that the majority of respondents therefore were not sure, followed by those who agreed which means that the Skills development plan improves the productivity of employees. This shows that the skills development plan is significant in the municipality as it determines whether the knowledge and skills improved helps the productivity or not. Productivity in the municipality is very critical as it enhances the provision of services in the communities.

Table 4.11: The Municipality encourages employees to participate in learning programmes

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	05	5%
2	Agree	03	3%
3	Not sure	83	83%
4	Disagree	04	4%
5	Strongly disagree	05	5%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.11 indicates that 05 (5%) respondents strongly agreed that the Municipality encourages employees to participate in learning programmes, whereas 05 (5%) respondents strongly disagreed to this notion. Few respondents at 03 (3%) agreed that the Municipality encourages employees to participate in learning programmes while 04 (4%) of the respondents disagreed. A greater number of respondents at 83 (83%) were not sure to the notion that the Municipality encourages employees to participate in learning programmes. The high number of respondents who were not sure to the notion that the Municipality encourages employees to participate in learning programmes are within the communities, followed by the few respondents who are the municipal officials who disagreed. This shows that the relevancy of what the Municipality wants to achieve with the learning programmes at the municipality does not benefit its communities and other municipal officials' growth.

Table 4.12: Skills development plans have been successfully implemented in the municipality

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	02	2%
2	Agree	0	0
3	Not sure	60	60%
4	Disagree	10	10%
5	Strongly disagree	28	28%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.12, shows that, 28 (28%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the skills development plans have been successfully implemented in the municipality whereas 02 (2%) of the respondents strongly agreed. Ten, 10 (10%) of the respondents disagreed that skills

development plans have been successfully implemented in the municipality. However, 60 (60%) were not sure. The high number of undecided responses to the statement is an indication that the communities who are the majority respondents and other municipal officials are not convinced that the municipality' skills development plan is implemented successfully. This is because most communities mentioned various reasons why they think municipality does not implement its skills development plans successfully, amongst other reasons they mentioned the unfulfilled promises and expectations of service delivery created by politicians during election time. Lack of socio-economic opportunities such as employment which will help residents to improve their welfare was amongst other reasons. This does not, however, mean that the skills development plans cannot be improved.

4.2.2.2 The impact that skills development plan has on performance

In this theme, the researcher presented the data regarding the impact that skills development plan has on performance. The data in this theme is presented in tabular format with frequencies and percentages followed by a brief synthesis.

Table 4.13: Skills development plans administered to municipal officials are of a high standard and help municipality meet their skills needs

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	20	20%
2	Agree	04	4%
3	Not sure	0	0
4	Disagree	30	30%
5	Strongly disagree	46	46%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

According to table 4.13 above, 04 (4%) respondents who took part in the study agreed that skills development plans administered to municipal officials are of a high standard and help municipality meet their skills needs, whereas 30 (30%) of the respondents disagreed. Fourtysix, 46 (46%) strongly disagreed while in contrast 20 (20%) strongly agreed that skills development plans administered to municipal officials are of a high standard and help municipality meet their skills needs. A majority of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement, which implies that the skills development plans administered to municipal officials are of a high standard and help municipality meet their skills needs. The above information could have been influenced by the fact that the communities always question the skills of the municipal officials because of the poor performance of the duties assigned to them but not completely addressing the challenges faced by the communities.

Table 4.14: Skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	20	20%
2	Agree	70	70%
3	Not sure	10	10%
4	Disagree	0	0
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.14 outlined that majority of 70 (70%) respondents agreed that skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents. Twenty, 20 (20%) of the respondents strongly agreed that skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents. Ten, 10 (10%) of the respondents were not sure on whether skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents. In the above table, respondents who have strongly agreed, and agreed contributed a huge portion by having a sum total of 90% and this indicates that skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents without any reasonable doubt. Therefore, in order to ensure that this consent is maintained, municipality should always ensure that it improves services offered to municipal residents through improving employee performance.

Table 4.15: The right skills development plan helps the municipality to close gaps between current and desired skill levels

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	30	30%
2	Agree	60	60%
3	Not sure	10	10%
4	Disagree	0	0
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

The data presented in table 4.15 above, revealed that majority of the respondents at 60 (60%) agreed with the statement that the right skills development plan helps the municipality to

close gaps between current and desired skill levels. This is followed by 30 (30%) of the respondents who answered that they strongly agreed with the notion that the right skills development plan helps the municipality to close gaps between current and desired skill levels. Ten, 10 (10%) of the respondents replied that they are not sure whether the right skills development plan helps the municipality to close gaps between current and desired skill levels or not. This show that the right skills development plan helps the municipality to close gaps between current and desired skill levels. This is an indication that with the right skills, municipality can be effective in closing the gap between current and desired skill levels needed for improving performance.

Table 4.16: Skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	10	10%
2	Agree	68	68%
3	Not sure	22	22%
4	Disagree	0	0
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

The results in table 4.16 indicated that a total of 68 (68%) of the respondents agreed that skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results. Ten, 10 (10%) respondents strongly agreed that skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results. A total of 22 (22%) were not sure on whether or not skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results. The above data is in favour that skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results. This shows that the communities and other municipal officials believe that skills development plan is a comprehensive response to deal with critical skills shortages for producing better results hence fulfilling the mandate of developmental local government.

Table 4.17: Skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	41	41%
2	Agree	30	30%
3	Not sure	20	20%

4	Disagree	04	4%
5	Strongly disagree	05	5%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.17 shows that 41 (41%) of the respondents strongly agreed that skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation, whereas 05 (5%) respondents strongly disagreed. Thirty, 30 (30%) of the respondents agreed that skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation, while 04 (4%) respondents disagreed. However, 20 (20%) of the respondents were not sure on whether skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation. The majority of respondents have however, strongly agreed with the statement and as such, it means that skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation. This means that skills development plan goes beyond addressing skills shortages but ensuring that municipal officials realise that they are talented enough not to be comfortable in staying in one position and relying on few skills which limits their potential as employees to contribute to the success of the municipality.

Table 4.18: The Skills Development Plan transforms the municipality to become learning organisations, determined to address skills deficit

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	38	38%
2	Agree	30	30%
3	Not sure	27	27%
4	Disagree	03	3%
5	Strongly disagree	02	2%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

From table 4.18, the majority of respondents at 38 (38%) strongly agreed that the Skills Development Plan transforms the municipality to become learning organisations, determined to address skills deficit while in contrast 02 (2%) strongly disagreed to the same sentiments. Thirty, 30 (30%) respondents agreed, whereas 03 (3%) respondents disagreed that the Skills Development Plan transforms the municipality to become learning organisations, determined to address skills deficit. On the other hand, 27 (27%) respondents were not sure. According to the shown results in table 4.18 most of the respondents strongly agreed that the Skills Development Plan transforms the municipality to become learning organisations, determined to address skills deficit. The results indicate that the Municipality provides officials with opportunities to attend trainings and learn. This also entails that the Municipality does have valuable training programmes available for its employees and furthermore, provide

employees with the necessary assistance be it financially or giving them study leave in order to afford them an opportunity to acquire knowledge and improve on their skills to enable them to perform their duties well.



4.2.2.3 Challenges of implementing skills development plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality

In this theme, the researcher presented the data regarding the challenges of implementing skills development plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The data in this theme is presented in a graphical tabular format with frequencies and percentages followed by a brief synthesis.

Table 4.19: Skills development programmes are properly coordinated

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	10	10%
2	Agree	78	78%
3	Not sure	07	7%
4	Disagree	04	4%
5	Strongly disagree	01	1%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

According to the results from the participants in table 4.19 above, most respondents at 78 (78%) agreed that skills development programmes are properly coordinated, however, those respondents at 04 (4%) who disagreed are very few. Only one, 01 (1%) respondent strongly disagreed while in contrast 10 (10%) strongly agreed. Seven, 07 (7%) of the respondents were not sure whether the skills development programmes are properly coordinated or not. From the information above, it can be stated that large portion of the respondents who took part in this study are those who agreed followed by respondents who strongly agreed which in combination add up to 88%. This shows that most of the respondents feel that the skills development programmes are properly coordinated. However, this should not end in coordination but the successful implementation of the skills development programmes.

Table 4.20: The Municipality appoints qualified service providers for implementing skills development plans

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	24	24%
2	Agree	06	6%
3	Not sure	68	68%
4	Disagree	01	1%
5	Strongly disagree	01	1%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

The information above on the table 4.20 indicates that 06 (6%) of the respondents agreed that the Municipality appoints qualified service providers for implementing skills development plans, while on the other hand 01 (1%) of the respondents disagreed. Twenty-four, 24 (24%) respondents strongly agreed that the Municipality appoints qualified service providers for implementing skills development plans whereas 01 (1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed. A total of 68 (68%) respondents were not sure on whether the Municipality appoints qualified service providers for implementing skills development plans or not. The majority of respondents who were not sure are the communities who are influenced by the fact that the municipality do not provide them with services which meets their expectations. Therefore, this shows that outsourcing is a waste of time and resources as the municipality do not get the proper returns of such kind of an arrangement which benefits the communities.

Table 4.21: The Municipality has the capacity to implement skills development plans

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	20	20%
2	Agree	35	35%
3	Not sure	38	38%
4	Disagree	04	4%
5	Strongly disagree	03	3%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.21 indicates that 20 (20%) of the respondents strongly agreed that the Municipality has the capacity to implement skills development plans while 03 (3%) respondents strongly disagreed. On the other hand, 35 (35%) of the respondents agreed, whereas 04 (4%) respondents disagreed. However, 38 (38%) respondents were not sure whether the Municipality has the capacity to implement skills development plans or not. The results indicate that large portion of the respondents who took part in this study are those who were not sure followed by respondents who agreed which entails that indeed the Municipality has the capacity to implement skills development plans. This calls for proper planning of the capacity at hand so that municipal officials can be efficient, wherein they avoid wasting available resources and as such, they are irrelevant on what the municipality wants to achieve that aims at benefiting its communities.

Table 4.22: Skills development programmes are assessed and monitored to determine if whether they are achieving the predetermined goals or not

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	04	4%

2	Agree	02	2%
3	Not sure	80	80%
4	Disagree	06	6%
5	Strongly disagree	08	8%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

In table 4.22, it can be noted that 02 (2%) respondents agreed to the idea that Skills development programmes are assessed and monitored to determine if whether they are achieving the predetermined goals or not, while 06 (6%) disagreed to the same statement. Four, 4 (4%) respondents strongly agreed that Skills development programmes are assessed and monitored to determine if whether they are achieving the predetermined goals or not, whereas 08 (8%) strongly disagreed. Eighty, 80 (80%) of the respondents were not sure to the notion that Skills development programmes are assessed and monitored to determine if whether they are achieving the predetermined goals or not. Most respondents who replied these questions are the communities, although they were unsure about their answers. Most of the reasons stated were that they felt that the municipality do not pay attention to the skills shortages of the municipal officials probably not assessing and monitoring the Skills development programmes. Because assessing and monitoring indicate that generally, the implementation of the skills development programmes will have positive results hence promoting communities' interests.

Table 4.23: The Skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	03	3%
2	Agree	02	2%
3	Not sure	35	35%
4	Disagree	40	40%
5	Strongly disagree	20	20%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

The information above on the table 4.23 indicates that a greater number of respondents at 40 (40%) disagreed to the notion that the Skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality while in contrast, 02 (2%) agreed. Twenty, 20 (20%) respondents strongly disagreed that the Skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality whereas 03 (3%) strongly agreed. Thirty-five, 35 (35%) of the respondents were not sure whether the Skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality or not. The above data indicates that majority of respondents disagreed that the Skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality. This shows that the communities do not have confidence on their municipality and trusting the municipality on strategically

prioritising its Skills development plan. This might be caused by the poor performance of not meeting the communities' needs. On the other hand, other municipal officials' response might be influenced by the lack of employee growth in the municipality. This means that attention should be given to prioritising the Skills development plan strategically.

Table 4.24: Municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	10	10%
2	Agree	70	70%
3	Not sure	20	20%
4	Disagree	0	0
5	Strongly disagree	0	0
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.24 shows that 10 (10%) of the respondents strongly agreed that municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes. Seventy, 70 (70%) of the respondents agreed to the notion that municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes. However, 20 (20%) of the respondents were not sure whether municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes or not. The majority of respondents, agreed with the statement, and this is an indication that, municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes. This can be seen by the need for municipal officials to spend more time in training or workshop sessions and to get the opportunity to learn from others' experiences. This is the correct way to go, as those municipal officials who need training are the ones who should indicate where they lack and need assistance on, so that they can be helped to improve on their knowledge and skills for better performance and improve their productivity in future.

4.2.2.4 Mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing skills development plans

In this theme, the researcher presented the data regarding the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing skills development plans. The data in this theme is presented in tabular format with frequencies and percentages followed by a brief synthesis.

Table 4.25: The facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes are highly qualified and meet municipal officials' skills needs

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	06	6%
2	Agree	22	22%
3	Not sure	65	65%
4	Disagree	04	4%
5	Strongly disagree	03	3%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

According to table 4.25 above, 22 (22%) of the respondents who took part in the study agreed that the facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes are highly qualified and meet municipal officials' skills needs while 04 (4%) of the respondents disagreed. Six, 06 (6%) of the respondents strongly agreed while in contrast 03 (3%) strongly disagreed that the facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes are highly qualified and meet municipal officials' skills needs. Most of the respondents at 65 (65%) were not sure on whether the facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes are highly qualified and meet municipal officials' skills needs or not. The high number of undecided responses is an indication that the communities and other municipal officials are of the opinion that facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes might be highly qualified. However, the unsure response raises a concern that the communities and other municipal officials are not influenced by the highly qualified facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes who meet municipal officials' skills needs. Because one can be qualified and skilled but be unable to give anything tangible that is of value. Therefore, there must be willingness to execute those qualifications and skills effectively.

Table 4.26: The Supervisors make efforts to coach subordinates on how to perform their work well

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	03	3%
2	Agree	04	4%
3	Not sure	72	72%
4	Disagree	14	14%
5	Strongly disagree	07	7%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

The results in table 4.26 indicate that 04 (4%) of the respondents agreed that the supervisors make efforts to coach subordinates on how to perform their work well while 14 (14%) respondents disagreed to the same sentiments. Three, 03 (3%) respondents strongly agreed while in contrast 07 (7%) respondents strongly disagreed. A total of 72 (72%) respondents were not sure on whether the supervisors make efforts to coach subordinates on how to perform their work well or not. This shows that the communities monitor the work of the municipal officials at lower level. Therefore, when the communities observe their municipality based on the lower-level municipal officials who are the ones who always come into contact with communities when providing services, communities introspect the municipal officials and question where they fail to execute their tasks based on whether they receive coaching from their supervisors or not. Poor performance of the lower-level municipal officials can mean that they do not have a supervisor who actually coach and mentor them. On the other hand, better performance means that lower-level municipal officials have a supervisor who coach and mentor them to help them to improve on their performance by providing them with the necessary knowledge and helping them to acquire the skills required to do their work efficiently and effectively.

Table 4.27: Research and analysis on skills needs and shortcomings is done before skills development plan is administered

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	05	5%
2	Agree	02	2%
3	Not sure	80	80%
4	Disagree	08	8%
5	Strongly disagree	05	5%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.27 reveals that 05 (5%) of the respondents strongly agreed that research and analysis on skills needs and shortcomings is done before skills development plan is administered, whereas 05 (5%) strongly disagreed. Two, 02 (2%) of the respondents agreed, while 08 (8%) disagreed. However, 80 (80%) of the respondents were not sure whether research and analysis on skills needs and shortcomings is done before skills development plan is administered or not. The majority of respondents who were not sure are the communities because regardless of the implementation of the skills development plan in the municipality, the communities still believe that the municipal officials need as many skills as they can for, they deal with societal issues which require comprehensive solutions. Hence these societal issues require the municipality to embrace innovative new approaches to

finding appropriate solutions and delivering core municipal services. This means that research and analysis on skills needs and shortcomings is significant so that they can complement the skills development plan to be administered appropriately.

Table 4.28: Municipality considering skills development plans run by internal service providers who are familiar with the organisational objectives and municipal officials

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	03	3%
2	Agree	05	5%
3	Not sure	77	77%
4	Disagree	10	10%
5	Strongly disagree	05	5%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

From table 4.28, 05 (5%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that the municipality considers skills development plans run by internal service providers who are familiar with the organisational objectives and municipal officials, while 10 (10%) of the respondents disagreed. Three, 03 (3%) of the respondents strongly agreed, whereas 05 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed to the same sentiments. Only 77 (77%) of the respondents were not sure on whether the municipality considers skills development plans run by internal service providers who are familiar with the organisational objectives and municipal officials or not. Large portion of the respondents was taken by those who were not sure followed by respondents who disagreed which in combination add up to 87%. The responses to this statement indicate that the municipality do not consider skills development plans run by internal service providers who are familiar with the organisational objectives and municipal officials hence this proves the previous statement which emphasised that the municipality outsource external service providers to be correct.

Table 4.29: Municipality have sufficient budget for implementing skills development plans

Items	Responses	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Strongly agree	15	15%
2	Agree	20	20%
3	Not sure	48	48%
4	Disagree	12	12%
5	Strongly disagree	05	5%
	Total	100	100%

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

Table 4.29 above, shows that 05 (5%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that the municipality have sufficient budget for implementing skills development plans whereas 15 (15%) strongly agreed. Twenty, 20 (20%) of the respondents agreed while 12 (12%) disagreed. However, 48 (48%) of the respondents were not sure that the municipality have sufficient budget for implementing skills development plans or not. It can, therefore, be indicated that, the majority of respondents were undecided on whether the municipality have sufficient budget for implementing skills development plans or not. It means that a conclusion can be drawn that when the communities are questioning the skills shortages of the municipal officials, they do not also question the sufficient budget allocated for implementing skills development plans to equip the municipal officials with the requisite skills needed for fulfilling the promises made to the communities.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA COLLECTED THROUGH INTERVIEW

The researcher used a note taking and recording during the interview session. This study was conducted in order to answer the research questions that arose from the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality; the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality ensuring that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance; the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance, especially relating to service delivery; the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater- Letaba Local Municipality; the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans; and the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan. In this section, the researcher presented the data that was collected through interview and the information is presented in a narrative format followed by a brief synthesis.

Table 4.30: Themes and sub-theme of the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance

Item No.	Themes	Sub-theme
1.	What is the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality?	
1.1.	What can be done by the Greater Letaba Local Municipality to ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance?	

2.	What is the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance especially relating to service delivery?	
3.	What are the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater- Letaba Local Municipality?	3.1. What are the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans?
4	What are the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan?	

(Source: Researcher's own construct, 2021).

4.3.1 Question 1: What is the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality?

The first question sought to find out the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality and the participants revealed the following:

Participant A:

“The role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality includes among other; to motivate municipal officials to identify their skills shortages for acquiring them through skills development programmes; to utilise skilled and capable municipal staff members to deliver quality services to the communities; to encourage employee growth skilled of meeting the municipal goals innovatively, effectively, efficiently and economically. The respondent provided reasons for his answers and mentioned that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is not financially stable and the best way to drive service delivery and infrastructure is to have equipped municipal staff members who will help the municipality to find the best possible ways to meet the communities’ expectations.”

Participant B:

“To train the municipal staff on how to execute their duties which they are hired to perform at the highest standard. To ensure that the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Manager is educated enough to understand the processes of the IDP. The Municipality’s IDP implementation is efficient and realistic but there is room for improvement to ensure that the majority of the poor people are reached by the basic services. The majority of the villages are far apart from each other and thus present a huge challenge and high cost in providing and maintaining service delivery. Relevant skills in planning and financial matters are crucial.

Thorough planning at all levels and reliable prioritisation is of concern. The skills development plan plays a major role in developing project prioritisation model.”

Participant C:

“The skills development plan plays a role by adequately equipping employees such as the Local Economic Development (LED) Manager to deal with LED challenges in their locality. As municipal staff members we deal with lot of issues which sometimes are beyond our control namely, unemployment which falls under them. The problem is about jobs, people want jobs. I have experienced that the community is always shouting, complaining and some are very angry when they want to raise their issues hence some of the issues are never attended to, so it is a long-standing problem. COVID-19 has negatively impacted the tourism sector and most people complain about injustice in the awarding of tenders. These reveals that the LED unit needs the skills development plan to play a role in identifying workshops to fill the gap of these critical skills”.

Participant D:

“To ensure that both councilors or political component and the administration continuously receive necessary skills to improve their daily work and providing services to the people”.

Participant E:

“The skills development plan assists in checking which skills municipal employees lack so that the municipality can take them to training to ensure that they enhance their scarce skills according to the plan”.

Participant F:

“The skills development plan is important; however, I feel it is not fully functional as we as employees are not developed in terms of career development and enhancing our skills to perform work better”.

Participant G:

“Enhance capacity and capability of municipal staff. It also serves as an addition to the staff retention policy of the municipality”.

Participant H:

“As an employee when you get your education, it is different when you get into the work environment. Positions are designed mostly to fit a particular institution that I have picked up, like in my case I am a journalist by a profession, I also did public relations, but the position that I occupy in Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is different from the position that is in Polokwane Local Municipality. The position I have is communication and events but when they give you the qualification requirements upon the position’s advertisement, they would say Journalism is also acceptable, Public Relations is allowed, communication you can qualify, event you can qualify. Therefore, it happens that you might come with one part of the skill, and not have the other, these are actually two positions in one, the communication element and the events management element that are combined into one position. When you work into such a position, you are obliged to get some form of skills because the position itself is more comprehensive, like events management, it is not something as a journalist you would get training for and you might know more about the communication element which would be the media and being the spokesperson of the institution. Further being able to interact or communicate on behalf of the council and the municipality at large”.

“But then comes the events management aspect which possibly you might not have a training for hence the skills development is required so that you are able to execute both responsibilities well. They do give us the skills development programmes, we have the skills development facilitator who is able to ensure that every year we do an assessment of what kind of skills we require as employees of the municipality. Hence, we are given a form where we say that I am lacking in this part, can you enhance my skill in this part. And also as the world evolves, as technology develop, there is now the element of social media, which possibly when you are employed as a communication officer you are expected to explore the world of social media, hence now the skills of social media needs to be given to that person who is responsible. Because you have to go and communicate on twitter, you have to go and communicate on facebook, whatsAp, Instagram, so you need to be managing municipal accounts in a manner that is acceptable, so if you do not get skills in that regard, it becomes difficult for one to be able to match up with the standards and move with the times, especially the technological times”.

“Hence the skills development is extremely important as when the times changes we are able to inform our skills unit, and tell them that there is this new platform called social media, that I am also trying to jump into and you have to develop a policy around it. You do not even know where to start, we need to have a social media plan, so you need a lot of training around

it so that you are able to execute that role well. So that training or the skills development is extremely important and that cuts across all the units or directorate in the municipalities, there are so many things that changes over time that they need to keep up with. We need to advance so that we are not seen to be lacking behind as an institution. We need to be in the same power with all the other municipalities across the country”.

Participant I:

“Skills development plan plays an exceptional role in ensuring that the recommendations of the auditor-general and municipal public accounts committee are implemented in full. The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality has previously faced charges of fruitless, irregular, and unauthorised expenditure. Therefore, identifying the need of providing financial training to municipal employees and councillors in the skills development plan is relevant. This will also help to clean the image of the municipality which has been put in the mud”.

Participant J:

“The role of skills development plan is not deniable in the municipality for it ensures that both traditional leaders and ward councillors are educated and properly equipped to work together to improve the lives of the communities. The skills which traditional leaders would receive will enable them to interact with the communities as the rightful custodians of the communities”.

Participant A mentioned that the skills development plan plays a significant role in motivating municipal officials to identify their skills shortages for acquiring them through skills development programmes; to utilise skilled and capable municipal staff members to deliver quality services to the communities and to encourage employee growth skilled of meeting the municipal goals innovatively, effectively, efficiently, and economically. This important role played by the skills development plan made the Participant A to argue that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is struggling financially hence negatively affecting the provision of services and infrastructure. Therefore, it is for this reason that municipal staff members should be equipped to find the best possible ways to meet the communities’ expectations. Participant B indicated that the skills development plan ensure that the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Manager is educated enough to understand the processes of the IDP.

Participant B emphasised that understanding the processes of the IDP is essential to ensure that poor people are reached by the basic services. Developing project prioritisation model can help in this regard, given the fact that it is challenging and costly to provide and maintain

service delivery because majority of the villages are far apart. Participant C pointed out that the skills development plan plays a role by adequately equipping employees such as the Local Economic Development (LED) Manager to deal with LED challenges in their locality. Participant C stated the need for the municipal staff members to deal with socio-economic issues such as unemployment, especially because of the severe calamity of COVID-19 which negatively impacted the tourism sector and injustice in the awarding of tenders. This means that critical skills are of concern and the LED unit needs the skills development plan to play a role in identifying workshops to fill the gap of these critical skills.

Participant D stipulated that the skills development plan ensures that both councillors or political component and the administration continuously receive necessary skills to improve their daily work and providing services to the people. This means that lack of skills and expertise remains an obstacle to improving service, hence the need for the skills development plan to play an exceptional role. Participant E elaborated that the skills development plan plays an exceptional role in checking the skills municipal employees lack and need to improve. Therefore, this means that the municipality would take the municipal employees to training to ensure that they enhance their scarce skills according to the plan. Participant F stated that the skills development plan is important; however, the Participant arguably emphasised that the skills development plan is not fully functional as employees are not developed in terms of career development and enhancing their skills to perform work better. Based on this viewpoint, the implementation of the skills development plan is not felt by the Participant F as he indicated the need to develop his career for improving his skills to enhance performance.

Participant G pointed out that retaining skilled municipal staff members is a crucial role which the skills development plan plays in the municipality's performance. This is because maintaining talented municipal staff members is of paramount importance to ensure effective and efficient work performance. Participant H stressed on the role that the skills development plan plays in filling the gap between educational requirements and workplace requirements. This entails that qualified municipal officials might show signs of a skills gap wherein they lack the skills required for a job and the skills employers need. Participant I did not hesitate to state firmly that the role of the skills development plan is to implement the recommendations of the auditor-general and municipal public accounts committee in full. Therefore, this means that the skills development plan pursues the financial training for these recommendations to be implemented successfully. Participant J stated that the role which skills development plan play is to ensure that the traditional leaders and councillors are educated and properly equipped to work together to improve the lives of the communities. This perspective is influenced by the fact that some traditional leaders and councillors did

not acquire education which allows them to understand the mechanisms needed to drive community development.

4.3.1.1 Question 1.1: What can be done by the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality to ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance?

The second question sought to find out about what the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality can do to ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance and the participants revealed the following:

Participant A:

Participant A stated that *“skills audit can serve as a contributing factor in drafting the skills development”*.

Participant B:

“Take notes of the lessons learnt from the past poor performances and highlight the skills constraints which contributed to the poor performance to train the municipal staff members in accordance with such skills”.

Participant C:

“Develop skills related to one’s position. As an LED manager, I have realised that filling a post with relevant qualification, experience and skills is important. In order for an employee to execute the duties of an LED manager in an exceptional manner, he must have a social science degree, and, in my side, I have a developmental studies degree which forms part and parcel of social sciences. Nevertheless, it is required that filling of posts with relevant skills related to the Economic Sectors in this post is necessary. The municipality must align the Skills Development Plan to sector skills needs”.

Participant D:

“We acquire some of the skills when we are having an exposure to the municipality’s environment. Therefore, the municipality should update its skills development plan by ensuring that it is favourable to the working environment”.

Participant E:

Participant E replied that *“it is for the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality to stick to the skills development programme itself and not to deviate from the programme. They must stick to the programme as aligned to the budget. They must follow the skills development plan which will help them to know how many people they should train. You know that the Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) plan and when he plans, therefore his plan is aligned to the budget. In this regard, the SDF must follow the plan the way it is and when he is following it the way it is, there is SETA which gives the municipality a certain percentage back (percentage of money) to be able to develop skills. It is called levy”*.

Participant F:

In a discouraged mood, participant F stated that *“the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality should make sure that employees are consulted on which areas (operational, tactical, or strategic) to develop rather than making assumptions”*.

Participant G:

“All employees must identify their training needs in order to allow the Skills Development Facilitator to include them in the annual plan”.

Participant H:

“The municipality should always ensure that it updates the requirements of skills, every year they need to be giving feedback in terms of what kind of skills do they need to be able to impact positively on the institution’s performance. So, we need to always keep checking and updating the skills development in terms of what they need as employees so that they can positively be giving positive performance in terms of how we are supposed to be doing our work”.

Participant I:

“Adopt a new skills development strategic approach to the plan which will encourage an acceptable performance. Those who produce poor results should be warned that they will have to pay back the money to the municipality after training. There should be good returns for this investment especially because the municipality is struggling financially”.

Participant J:

“We are not fully educated about the municipal duties as traditional leaders. We are community leaders by birth and not by qualifications. We want to know beyond our cultures in terms of dealing with communities’ issues. The municipality should link its skills development plan to the performance goals of the traditional leaders in order to make our work easier”.

Participant A indicated that skills audit serves as a contributing factor in drafting the skills development plan. Skills audit will ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance. This is because skills audit is conducted to ascertain the level of skills of employees. Such audit help identify gaps in required competencies, after which appropriate skills development plan can be designed to meet the skills gaps for improving performance. Participant B mentioned that it is of paramount importance for the municipality to know that experience is the best teacher. Participant B justified his viewpoint by stating that the past poor performances should contribute as the lessons learnt by the municipality to ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance. Poor performances highlight skills needed to improve performance and therefore acquiring such skills through training programmes. Participant C emphasised the need for the municipality to develop skills related to one’s position. This means that the municipality must align the Skills Development Plan to sector skills needs. For example, the LED manager should receive relevant skills related to the Economic Sectors in this post as it is necessary for improving performance.

Participant D pointed out that it is important for the municipality to update its skills development plan by ensuring that it is favourable to the working environment. The working environment is attributable to change, especially during this COVID 19 pandemic which is driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution and technology. Therefore, the skills development plan should be adjusted to the current municipality’s working environment to positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance. Participant E stated that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality should stick to the skills development plan itself and not to deviate from the plan. This entails that the budget will be followed as the skills development plan will be aligned to the budget. This will guide the municipality to know how many people they should train and be consistence with the budget. Participant F emphasised sadly that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality should make sure that employees are consulted on which areas (operational, tactical, or strategic) to develop rather than making assumptions. This means that consultation of the municipal employee’s skills needs will ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance.

Participant G indicated that identification of employees' training needs to allow the Skills Development Facilitator to include them in the annual plan will ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance. This will promote efficiency in budget allocated as the annual plan will only entail training programmes needed in one specific year to ensure that municipal staff members acquire all the skills, they need to improve performance. Participant H similarly emphasised that the municipality should always ensure that it updates the skills requirements, and every year they need to be giving feedback in terms of what kind of skills do they need to be able to impact positively on the institution's performance. This will help the municipality to check and update the skills development plan in terms of what the employees need to ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance.

Participant I elaborated the need for a strict policy which will encourage an acceptable performance. This means that the municipality should give those who produce poor results after training a warning that they will pay back the money to the municipality after training. This policy will promote the financial stability of the municipality. Participant J addressed the point that education can fill the gap of skills for traditional leaders who want to know beyond their cultures in terms of dealing with communities' issues. The performance goals of traditional leaders must be attributable to service delivery and this can happen when they are trained about the service delivery mechanisms and model.

4.3.2 Question 2: What is the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance, especially relating to service delivery?

The third question sought to find out the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance, especially relating to service delivery and the participants revealed the following:

Participant A:

“When the municipal staff members are trained, they will be able to perform better and service delivery will not be compromised. We have the Performance Management System (PMS) Officer who assess the performance of the Municipal Manager and Directors and reward them with the performance bonuses when the productivity which services are as the results of is excellent”.

Participant B:

“To speed up service delivery. Poor and slow service delivery discourages community participation. Capacity building is an answer to address these challenges. We need to be trained on how to market ourselves better to the community and that start with improving our performance”.

Participant C:

“Skills development plan assist in deliberations pertaining to budget related matters in enhancing service delivery. It also assists in drafting the service delivery budget and implementation plan”.

Participant D:

“Oh! both councilors and administration, when they have been provided with development skills, they will be able to match the current basic needs of communities with the level of service delivery that is required by communities and to be successfully delivered. What I mean is that the impact of skills development is that the councilors and administration will be able to implement service delivery as per the need required in the communities, within the GreaterLetaba Local Municipality”.

Participant E:

“The municipality is sending councillors on a training so that they can get more knowledge and improve on their skills. When councilors and other municipal officials have been trained and have skills, especially the scare skills identified to take them to schools, then they will have the capability to perform better and improve service delivery”.

Participant F:

Participant F stated that *“skills development ensures that service is delivered in an effective and efficient manner”.*

Participant G:

“Municipality benefiting on the implementation of the skills development plan as properly skilled employees deliver services to the best of their ability”.

Participant H:

“The biggest challenge that we have with service delivery is that services are basic, there are the straight ward services like the provision of water, sanitation, roads, infrastructure, with

some the municipality is responsible for and some they are not, like water it is the responsibility of the district, but all service delivery related issues of water come to us. So, they need to be abreast as an institution in terms of how they are managing these elements, especially the coordination of all the service delivery units, or the other spheres of government. If one is trained to understand how the district works, how the provincial level work, aligned to the services that are required in the municipality, an employee is able to capture the requirements properly. And hand them to the other sphere of government, so that when they bring the service, they bring something that is required, something that is correct, and it is able to serve its sole purpose”.

“When they understand all the spheres of government and how they operate. It becomes easier, when they understand what the other spheres are doing; it is easy for them to be able to communicate it better what the people want it from the ground. The people belong to the employees who are in the local sphere. Their job is just to convey the message to the other sphere of government. So, when you have the better knowledge of how the other spheres of government operate you are able to forward the relevant information, then it would be able to bring in the relevant service delivery requirements”.

Participant I:

“It has a positive impact on providing quality services to the communities. Educational background is never enough because the municipal environment is challenging especially with the mere fact of being positioned closer to the people. One must be imparted with the strategic skills which is very critical within the municipal environment. I mean that one has to be strategic in dealing with service delivery issues addressed by the people with the limited amount of budget”.

Participant J:

“We must be skilled on how to communicate service delivery matters to the communities. We have to acquire communication skills because they will help us to know the needs of the communities and then inform the municipality to meet such needs. Therefore, the need for the identification of these skills in the skills development plan”.

Participant A mentioned that when the municipal staff members are trained, they will be able to perform better, and service delivery will not be compromised. This is because skills development and service delivery are closely related. It is for this reason that the Performance Management System (PMS) Officer assess the performance of the Municipal Manager and Directors and reward them with the performance bonuses based on their improved performance acquired through the implementation of the skills development plan. Participant B indicated that the the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance,

especially relating to service delivery is to speed up service delivery. Participant B argued that community participation is discouraged by poor and slow service delivery. Therefore, the skills development plan is an answer to address these challenges. Training is important in this regard so that the communities can trust the municipality and improved performance can make this a reality. Participant C pointed out that the skills development plan assists in drafting the service delivery budget and implementation plan. This means that in order for one to draft the service delivery budget and implementation plan appropriately, he or she must have acquired financial management skills through training.

Participant D indicated that the impact of skills development plan is that the councillors and administration will be able to implement service delivery as per the need required in the communities, within the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. This will be evidenced by the the quantity and quality of service delivery. Communities needs many streetlights to eradicate crime. The skills development plan will have an influence in this regard. Participant E elaborated that the training of councilors and other municipal officials ensure that they have the capability to perform better and improve service delivery. The municipality identifies their scarce skills in the skills development plan and take them to schools. Participant F similarly stated that the skills development plan ensures that service is delivered in an effective and efficient manner. This means that the lack of skills by municipal officials will not be experienced in the financial allocations which hinders the municipality to improve the welfare of the communities.

Participant G emphasised that the municipality is benefiting from the implementation of the skills development plan as properly skilled employees deliver services to the best of their ability. This entails providing services under limited resources, especially with the COVID 19 pandemic influencing municipal staff members not to come to their work premises everyday and in large number. Participant H pointed out that there must be the coordination of all the service delivery units, or the other spheres of government. This means that the skills development plan should influence one to be trained to understand how the district works, how the provincial level work, aligned to the services that are required in the municipality. This will enable the eemployee to capture the requirements so that when they provide the service, they provide the service that is required, correct, and it is able to serve its sole purpose.

Participant I indicated that the skills development plan has a positive impact on providing quality services to the communities. This is because the municipal environment is challenging as it is located nearby people where service delivery protests are witnessed. This therefore means that the municipal staff must acquire critical skills such as communication through the

implementation of the skills development plan in order to liaise with the communities on the matters of service delivery. Participant J agreed that Skills Development Plan has an impact on ensuring that municipal officials are knowledgeable about how to communicate service delivery matters to the communities. This means that the municipality should eagerly encourage the culture of learning for municipal officials to acquire knowledge and develop their skills to have a better understanding of what is expected from them in terms of the provision of services.

4.3.3 Question 3: What are the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater- Letaba Local Municipality?

The fourth question sought to find out the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality and the participants revealed the following:

Participant A:

“Budget constraints and poor skills audit are the challenges. The municipality does not have the sufficient budget to implement the skills development plan efficiently and effectively”.

Participant B:

“The municipality is always failing to prioritise the implementation of the skills development plan. There are always excuses on attending training because there are trainings which last for long hours and we also need time to execute our duties. It is just not easy to attend training and meet the municipal goals at the same time”.

Participant C:

“Improper identification of training and skills development needs according to the employee, position, job-related responsibilities and units”.

Participant D:

“The challenges can be resources, for example, financial resources in terms of the fact that the municipality does not have enough money to provide or to train the entire municipal staff and entire political component of the institution. Or entire political staff and administrative staff”.

Participant E:

“Deviation of the skills development plan is the problem. Implementing training which is not in the plan is the challenge. The municipality must not move away from the plan”.

Participant F:

“Lack of consultation with employees. The management fails to engage us in the skills development plan”.

Participant G:

Participant G mentioned that *“some skills needs are implemented even though that was not part of the annual skills plan”.*

Participant H:

“The biggest challenge that the municipality have is the budget. They have so many skills that is required from across all directorates, but they can only budget for specific skills in one financial year. So, the biggest challenge is budget. They budget for one financial year (this year). In our assessments, they gave us forms to fill in terms of the requirements. For example, they gave us four (4) trainings that they want for communications as filled in the paper but because now the budget must cover a person who is in IT, finance, audit, or corporate service”.

“One is able for this financial year to get provision for one skill so that even others can be accommodated, so it becomes tricky because a training that one might require for today might get it in four years later because of budget constraints, and in between these 4 years, one must just navigate a way around trying to get more information. One must just do his own research, for example on social media. One must just train herself while waiting for the budget. One must be expected to execute that responsibility in these four (4) years waiting period of the skill itself or the training itself. So, the budget is the biggest challenge that the municipality have”.

Participant I:

“Time challenges because training and skills development can be a time-consuming process, which many elected leaders are not willing to spare. Training and skills development are also costly in terms of staff, time, and money”.

Participant J:

“Weak training capacity and management assigned to drive the implementation of the skills development plan in the right direction”.

Participant A indicated that budget constraints and poor skills audit are the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater- Letaba Local Municipality. This is because the municipality does not have the sufficient budget allocated to implement the skills development plan efficiently and effectively. Participant B argued that the challenge is that the municipality is always failing to prioritise the implementation of the skills development plan. This has to do with the fact that municipal officials make excuses on attending training because of workload and therefore, it becomes problematic for them to attend training and meet the municipal goals at the same time. Participant C pointed out that the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater- Letaba Local Municipality entails the improper identification of training and skills development needs according to the employee, position, jobrelated responsibilities, and units. Lack of employee motivation is the root cause of this challenge because some municipal officials fail to view the value that the implementation of the skills development plan has on their performance.

Participant D emphasised that the challenges can be resources. This happens because the municipality do not have sufficient money to provide or to train the entire political staff and administrative staff. Participant E argued that implementing training which is not in the plan is the challenge. It stems from the fact that there is no cooperation between the political component and administrative component. It is for this reason that the the municipality must not move away from the plan. Participant F elaborated that the failure of the management to engage employees in the skills development plan is the tremendous challenge. Lack of consultation with employees hinders the successful implementation of the skills development plan. Participant G mentioned that the challenge is that some skills needs are implemented even though that was not part of the annual skills plan. This causes deviation of the skills development plan.

Participant H indicated that the biggest challenge is the budget. Therefore, this means that the municipality is unable to budget for many skills that are required from across all directorates in one financial year. In this regard, it becomes challenging because a training that one might require for today might get it in four years later because of budget constraints, hence the performance gap will not be addressed. Participant I mentioned time constraint as a challenge. This entails that training and skills development are time-consuming process, wherein many elected leaders are not willing to spare given the fact that they are also costly

in terms of staff, time, and money. Participant J in a persuadable statement highlighted that weak training capacity and management assigned to drive the implementation of the skills development plan is an unacceptable challenge. This is attributable to the fact that managers fail to release their employees to attend planned training and skills development interventions which is a constraint to improved performance and career development.

4.3.3.1 Question 3.1: What are the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans?

The fifth question is a sub-theme that emerged from the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. This sub-theme sought to find out the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans and the participants revealed the following:

Participant A:

“We do not monitor the quality of training, as well as better judgements about the impact of training on work performance”.

Participant B:

“Lack of funding or prioritising skills development plan in the municipality”.

Participant C:

“Improper strategy as to how the municipality respond to the crucial matters raised on the failure of implementing the skills development plan successfully”.

Participant D:

Participant D mentioned that *“poor revenue collection can be the cause. Poor revenue collection speaking about when the municipality does not collect enough money from community members”.*

Participant E:

“Political intervention in the administration issues. Changing employees and training programmes which are in the skills development plan. Politicians going to training (workshop) instead of officials”.

Participant F:

Participant F stated that *“political interference to the operation of the municipality is the main problem. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is skilful, but his skills are hindered by political interference”*.

Participant G:

“Time frame is the cause of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans”.

Participant H:

“Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is a small municipality. They are graded and the grading also affects the budget that they get from all the grants that they are supposed to receive. So that equally restrict them in terms of how much they can put towards the implementation of the skills development plan. Municipalities are not the same in terms of grading, there are levels. It is determined by the population in that municipality, how many towns they have, how many villages they have, service area in comparison to Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality. They are one level lower than Tzaneen, because Tzaneen has got a bigger population than Letaba, so when national treasury allocates funds, it allocates more funds to Tzaneen than Letaba.

This is because of the population in the area. So national treasury will take more money to Tzaneen than Letaba, hence the little budget”.

Participant I:

“Ageing municipal staff in various areas of functions make it difficult to train them as they do not see long-term benefits of such interventions as they are very close to exiting”.

Participant J:

“When the municipal official has been hired based not on merit, the individual does not see the need to value the implementation of the skills development plan when given an opportunity to be part and parcel of”.

Participant A stated that the municipality fail to monitor the quality of training, as well as better judgements about the impact of training on work performance. This means that the municipality do not measure the impact of training interventions on practice which helps to

identify what could be put in place to provide further improvement through learning and development opportunities. This in a helpful way considering both the quality and quantifiable effects of training. Monitoring will also help the municipality to assess how the performance was achieved. In a nutshell improving training quality is associated with better work performance, which means that continuous training has an essential role on their professional development. Participant B mentioned that lack of funding or prioritising skills development plan in the municipality is the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans. This is because training programmes do not meet the expectations of the municipality's allocated training budget, employees, and resources. This is the tremendous challenge because of ineffective management of funding for the implementation of various skills development initiatives.

Participant C pointed out that improper strategy as to how the municipality respond to the crucial matters raised on the failure of implementing the skills development plan successfully is the challenge. This implies that, the human resource strategy of their organisation is ineffective, in particular the education and training strategies needs to be aligned to their goals and objectives. Failure to execute this mandate results in the improper implementation of the skills development plan. Participant D argued that poor revenue collection is the cause of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans. This is because the municipality does not collect enough money from community members. Revenue collection is a biggest challenge in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality given the fact that some communities are severely impoverished to contribute to the developmental local government. Participant E emphasised that political intervention in the administration issues cause the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans. This is exacerbated by the fact that employees and training programmes which are in the skills development plan are changed to fit the purpose of political leadership. This means that Politicians attend training (workshop) which was supposed to be attended by the officials. The abuse of political power is tremendously affecting improved performance in many municipalities in South Africa.

Participant F agreed that political interference in the operation of the municipality is the main problem. This is evidenced by the fact that the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) is skilful, but his skills are hindered by political interference. The Chief Financial Officer (CFO)'s career development interms of improving his financial management skills are hindered by the political component hence fruitless, irregular and unathorised expenditures arose in this regard bearing a burden on the improved financial performance. Participant G emphasised that municipal officials do not have enough time at their disposal to attend training

programmes addressed in the skills development plan. Time is the most important resource which determines the success of the implementation of the skills development plan. Budget allocation for the training programmes need a shared understanding among participants concerning the implied presuppositions, values, and assumptions that underlie the whole implementation process. This therefore requires enough time which participants are not willing to spare. Participant H elaborated that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is a small municipality, and they are graded, and the grading also affects the budget that they get from all the grants that they are supposed to receive. This means that the grading restricts them in terms of how much they can put towards the implementation of the skills development plan.

The grading is determined by the population density in the area, number of towns, villages, and service area in comparison to the nearest municipalities. The National treasury allocates more funds to the big municipalities and lower funds to the small municipalities such as the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. Participant I attested that age is the cause of these challenges as ageing municipal staff do not value the worth of the skills development plan because they are very close to exit the workplace. This is because they are familiar to the work environment and they do not consider themselves as the most valuable assets of the municipality who can move the municipality to the right direction through skilling themselves with the right skills. Participant J criticised the recruitment system as the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans as the failure to appoint qualified municipal staff weakens employee performance which later disvalue the implementation of the skills development plan. This is because Cadre deployment policy is prioritised over the merit system hence overlooking the importance of the skills development plan.

4.3.4. Question 4: What are the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan?

The last question is a sub-theme that emerged from the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. This sub-theme sought to find out the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan and the participants revealed the following:

Participant A:

Participant A mentioned that *“there is a lot of attention that still needs to be put in aligning the municipality’ skills development plan with the resources at hand”*.

Participant B:

“Prioritisation of skills development in budgeting”.

Participant C:

“After the employees have returned from training, proper monitoring should be applied to verify that the employees are implementing what they have learnt”.

Participant D:

“Having strict by-laws that will enforce community members to pay rates as a method of improving revenue collection”.

Participant E:

“After a workplace skills plan (WSP), the plan should be taken to council for council adoption. This is decided in terms of council resolution where we say that the plan cannot be changed because of the signed agreement which we made demanding this adoption to be pursued in a rightful manner”.

Participant F:

“My concern is to highlight a critical strategy that there should be limited political interference. Administration components must be given a space by the political components in order to perform their duties and demonstrate their competency”.

Participant G:

“To send all employees to a workshop in order to educate them on how to identify their training needs”.

Participant H:

“Budget more towards the skills development plan because that is the challenge identified. Channel more budget towards the skills development plan to be able to cover scarce skills and as many skills they can in a very short space of time”.

Participant I:

Participant I stated that *“training must be conducted in a manner that will not take away the employees from achieving the goals of the municipality. Time-management should be enhanced”*.

Participant J:

“The training we receive should be tailor made to suit our level of education. This must start with having an effective management willing to engage us in these matters”.

Participant A stated that there is a lot of attention that still needs to be put in aligning the municipality' skills development plan with the resources at hand. This implies that the training programme should equip management with certain knowledge and skills to do their work more effectively especially when they deal with certain financial aspects which will help them to align the municipality' skills development plan with the financial resources. Participant B mentioned that the prioritisation of skills development plan in budgeting is the best mechanism to be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan. This means that the municipality must conduct a skills audit in order to establish the skills development priorities and to bring inline the department skills profile with its strategic goals or objectives. Basically, the ultimate aim of carrying out skills audit is to ascertain the skills that exist within the organisation, how the skills available within the organisation compare with the organisational skills requirements as determined through the workforce planning and job analyses process. Furthermore, skills audit seeks to establish the skills development priorities as per occupational groups, levels, and demographic profile as well as dolling out a systematic way of addressing the skills development priorities in allocating the budget needed.

Participant C indicated that proper monitoring should be applied to verify that the employees are implementing what they have learnt after they have returned from training. As such, this makes it a good mechanism for assessing what training needs have or have not been met in the organisation. It also makes it easier to assess the training challenges and obstacles to provide necessary interventions. Participant D argued that the municipality should have strict by-laws that will enforce community members to pay rates as a method of improving revenue collection. This not only foster a culture of revenue collection within the municipality, but also leads to Workplace Skills plans (WSPs) that only reflect generic workplace-based skills needs, like computer training, financial management, report writing, and critical and scarce skills related to key technical and functional areas in the organisation as seldom identified and addressed. Participant E agreed that after a Workplace Skills Plan (WSP), the plan

should be taken to council for council adoption. This is decided in terms of council resolution where they say that the plan cannot be changed because of the signed agreement which they made demanding this adoption to be pursued in a rightful manner. This means that political interference will be hindered to influence the implementation of the skills development plan which is an obstacle for fairness in the implementation process.

Participant F similarly emphasised that there should be limited political interference. Administration components must be given a space by the political components in order to perform their duties and demonstrate their competency. Given the skills gap in local government, it should be highlighted that not even a single employee should be denied an opportunity to acquire relevant skills through the successful implementation of the skills development programmes. Participant G supported this viewpoint by stating that the municipality should send all employees to a workshop in order to educate them on how to identify their training needs. If talented employees are not imparted with the right skills where they are needed, the municipality risks missing market opportunities, poor customer service and revenue erosion. Participant H argued that the budget should be channeled towards the skills development plan to be able to cover scarce skills and as many skills they can in a very short space of time. This means that with top management support, a sufficient budget can be provided to achieve the objectives, with the implementation of more effective skills development initiatives within the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality.

Participant I stated that training must be conducted in a manner that will not take away the employees from achieving the goals of the municipality. Time-management should be enhanced. This implies that the municipality should ensure better cooperation at all units in order to engage municipal officials on a turnaround strategy of addressing the key issue areas that municipal officials struggle with in terms of developing their skills. In this regard, municipal officials will know the significant of the successful implementation of the skills development plan regardless of time constraints. Participant J encouraged the idea that tailor made training should be designed to suit the level of education of the municipal staff members. This entails the management team and Training Unit to decide in the future on appointing a consultant that can assist them to improve the current evaluation of training. A consultant can also cover certain areas that are highlighted by the employees such as soft skills needed, dealing with challenges during the identification, implementing and evaluation of development programmes, methods that can be used to motivate employees to participate in attending training and techniques to ensure training improves and is sustained.

4.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, data obtained from the respondents was presented, analysed, and interpreted in a tabular form and the narrative form on the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The data was collected through questionnaires and interviews in terms of the usage of both the qualitative and quantitative methods. Most participants were cooperative and assisted by completing questionnaires and responded to open-ended questions on the qualitative method utilised. The respondents highlighted their understanding of the notion of Skills Development Plan, its challenges and the strategies that can be used to improve the effectiveness of the local government in their need to become knowledgeable and skilful. The next chapter presents discussions of findings, recommendations for the study and recommendation for further research studies.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the analysis and interpretation of the collected data by discussing the sampled population's responses as a way of providing an understanding of the nature of the research findings to the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. In this chapter, synthesised discussions of findings, recommendations for the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality, as well as recommendations for future research study on a related subject, will be documented. This chapter also presented the end product of what the researcher have studied.

5.2 MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The major findings arose from the specific objectives of the study. The following specific objectives of the study benchmarked the realisation of the main aim of the study and they sought to determine the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality; to evaluate the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance; to find out the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality and to recommend mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan. From the interview schedule, the researcher posed a question which addresses the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans.

5.2.1 Major findings on the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government

The first objective of the study sought to determine the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government and the study found out that 15 (15%) of the respondents agreed that the Municipality provides skills development programmes. This is an indication that the fact that the Municipality provides skills development programmes has not been felt within the communities and other municipal officials. The study found that 07 (7%) of the respondents affirmed to the idea that employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives. The researcher found out that

respondents at 03 which constitute 3% supported the statement that the Municipality assesses the skills needs of municipal officials for improving performance. The study findings revealed that at total of 58 which constitute 58% of the respondents pointed out that Skills development plan improves the productivity of employees. The researcher discovered that 08 respondents who constitute 8% are of the view that the Municipality encourages employees to participate in learning programmes. Regarding the idea that the skills development plans have been successfully implemented in the municipality, the study found that only 02 (2%) of the respondents supported the statement. The above findings could have been influenced by the poor performances in the municipality.

From the interviews that were carried out to determine the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, the study findings revealed that the participants who took part in the study pointed out that the skills development plan plays an important role in the municipality. The reasons given were that the skills development plan optimises the municipal staff members to deliver quality services to the communities at an acceptable standard. The study found that quality service delivery can only be attained when there are properly trained and skilled municipal officials. The researcher discovered that the role which skills development plan play is to ensure that the municipal officials are educated and properly equipped to work together to improve the lives of the communities. The findings attest that the skills development plan play a role in filling the skills gap, developing the municipal officials' scarce skills according to the plan and also in terms of career development for the municipal officials to perform work better. The findings of the study highlighted the role that the skills development plan plays in filling the gap between educational requirements and workplace requirements. The study findings revealed that retention of skilled municipal staff members, implementing the recommendations of the auditor-general and municipal public accounts committee in full through financial training are the role of the skills development plan.

5.2.1.1 Findings on the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality ensuring that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance

The second question from the interview was a sub-question that emerged from the first question that dealt with the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The study found that skills audit, skills constraints, sector skills needs, and the working environment must be aligned to the Skills Development Plan so that it can positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance. The study findings revealed that the municipality should consult all employees to identify their training needs rather than making assumptions to update the skills development plan in terms of what they need as employees so that they

can positively enhance performance. The findings of the study highlighted that the Skills Development plan should be aligned to the budget to positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance. The researcher found that the municipality should link its skills development plan to the performance goals in order to make their work easier. The research findings show that those who produce poor results should be warned that they will have to pay back the money to the municipality after training. This will motivate municipal employees to pay attention to the proper implementation of the Skills Development Plan.

5.2.2 Major findings on the impact that skills development plan has on performance

The second objective of the research study sought to evaluate the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance, and the data collected revealed that the respondents at 24 which constitute 24% confirm that skills development plans administered to municipal officials are of a high standard and help municipality meet their skills needs. The study findings discovered that majority of the respondents at ninety (90) constituting 90% responded that skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents. The researcher also found that majority of respondents at 90 which constitutes 90% attests that the right skills development plan helps the municipality to close gaps between current and desired skill levels. The study findings revealed that majority of the respondents at 78 (78%) agreed that the skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results. The findings revealed that 71 (71%) of the respondents concur that skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation. The Skills Development Plan transforms the municipality to become learning organisations, determined to address skills deficit because 68 of the respondents constituting 68% agreed with the idea.

From the interviews that were carried out to evaluate the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance, the researcher discovered that the impact is positive as the findings indicate that quality service delivery will not be compromised, as municipal employees will speed up service delivery, with the capability to perform better and improve service delivery. The researcher found out that Skills Development Plan has an impact on ensuring that municipal officials are knowledgeable about how to communicate service delivery matters to the communities. The findings revealed that if one is trained to understand how the district works, how the provincial level work, aligned to the services that are required in the municipality, an employee is able to capture the requirements properly. The findings of the study highlighted that the skills development plan helps in drafting the service delivery budget and implementation plan.

5.2.3 Major findings on the challenges of implementing skills development plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality

The third objective of the study sought to find out the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The findings revealed that the majority of the respondents, 88 who constitute 88% indicated that Skills development programmes are properly coordinated. The study found that 30 (30%) of respondents were in favour that the Municipality appoints qualified service providers for implementing skills development plans. The findings of the study highlighted that an unsatisfactory number of the respondents at 55 which constitutes 55% responded that the Municipality has the capacity to implement skills development plans. The researcher discovered that the respondents at 06 which constitutes 6% revealed that skills development programmes are assessed and monitored to determine if whether they are achieving the predetermined goals or not. From the questionnaires distributed, the researcher found out that 05 (5%) respondents support the idea that the Skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality. It was also found that the majority of respondents, 80 who constitute 80% affirm that municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes.

From the interviews that were carried out to find out the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality the study findings discovered that budget constraints, time and poor skills audit are the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The findings also revealed that the problem is that the municipality has so many skills that is required from across all directorates, but they can only budget for specific skills in one financial year. The researcher discovered that the failure to prioritise the implementation of the skills development plan is the biggest challenge at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The researcher found that improper identification of training and skills development needs are the challenge of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The study findings discovered that implementing training which is not in the plan is the challenge and when the management fails to engage and consult municipal employees in matters concerning the skills development plan. The findings revealed that some skills needs are implemented even though that was not part of the annual skills plan hence creating a challenge of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The findings of the study highlighted that weak training capacity and management assigned to drive the implementation of the skills development plan is an unacceptable challenge.

5.2.3.1 Findings on the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans

The fourth question from the interview schedule was a sub-question that emerged from the third question that was carried out to find out the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. This sub-question sought to identify the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans. The study found that municipality do not monitor the quality of training, as well as better judgements about the impact of training on work performance. The study findings revealed money as the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans. The research findings discovered that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is a small municipality whereby their grading affects the budget that they get from all the grants that they are supposed to receive hence hindering the successful implementation of the skills development plans. The researcher found that political intervention and interference in the administration issues is a very critical cause of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans. The research findings also revealed time frame, retirement reasons, and recruitment system as the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans.

5.2.4 Major findings on the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing skills development plans

The last objective of the study sought to make recommendations towards mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan. The study found that respondents at 28 constituting 28% revealed that the facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes are highly qualified and meet municipal officials' skills needs. The study findings discovered that few of the respondents at 07 who constitute 7% provided that the supervisors make efforts to coach subordinates on how to perform their work well. The researcher also found that 07 of the respondents who constitute 7% pointed out that research and analysis on skills needs and shortcomings is done before skills development plan is administered. The research findings reveal that respondents at 8% supports the notion of municipality considering skills development plans run by internal service providers who are familiar with the organisational objectives and municipal officials. The findings of the study highlighted that most of the respondents, 35 who constitute 35% affirm that municipality have sufficient budget for implementing skills development plans.

From the interviews that were carried out to explore the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan, the researcher discovered that attention should be channelled more on budget towards the implementation

of the skills development plan. This must start with prioritising the skills development in budgeting to cover scarce skills in a very short space of time. The study findings suggested that the municipality should have strict by-laws that will enforce community members to pay rates as a method of improving revenue collection. The findings also suggested that proper monitoring should be applied to verify that the employees are implementing what they have learnt. The study findings proposed that a signed agreement should be made through council resolution noting that the skills development plan cannot be changed so that the implementation can be pursued in a fair manner. The study findings advocate that there should be limited political interference in the administration issues on how the skills development plan should be implemented. The findings suggested that training must be conducted in a manner that accommodate workplace duties to be executed effectively and efficiently. The findings approve that tailor made training should be designed to suit the level of education of the municipal staff members.

5.3 SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The most important findings of this research study from the research questionnaires can be summarised as follows:

The researcher found that the municipality provides skills development programmes. Although it was found that few people including the communities and municipal officials agreed to this perspective. Reasons for this response is lack of services. Communities are demanding street lights in order to combat crime. The inhabitants of Bolobedu are not safe because crime increases as a result of youth unemployment. COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) has worsened the situation because of bread winners who encountered retrenchments. The communities have every reason to state in this manner given the fact that the skills deficit of the municipal officials impact their standard of living. On the other hand, regardless of municipal officials being provided with skills programmes; they are not satisfied because their potential to perform better is hampered by their limited skills development programmes.

It was revealed that employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives. Hence, minority of the participants from the municipality and communities responded. This is as a result of job description, positions, functionalities and roles given to the municipal officials because those who are at the top level positions believe that they are the only ones responsible to achieve the strategic goals. In this regard, municipal officials in the middle and bottom positions are not imparted with skills which can enable them to meet the organisational goals effectively and efficiently. There are certain

skills which do not arise from education but arise from interaction with other people, it might be through communication, good governance, reporting of duties and brainstorming which are necessary to achieve the organisational goals thus they are not taken into consideration in the municipality. However, the finding that the skills needs of municipal officials are assessed by the municipality for improving performance is of paramount importance hence many municipal officials are complaining of skills needs. Communities' perspective do not differ in this regard for they can see that their ward councillors lack political education and communication skills.

Most of the respondents revealed that the Skills development plan improves the productivity of employees. This is because municipal officials such as ward councillors are not employed; they are deployed by the organisation. Most of the ward councillors are employed by having a membership of the African National Congress (ANC) and not relevant qualification failing to execute their duties to the required standard. Because of this cadre deployment leading to unproductivity, communities criticise and question the whole municipality' skills. Nevertheless employees are encouraged to participate in learning programmes by the municipality. Although the response was low because it is not about providing municipal officials with skills development programmes; it is about encouragement and motivation. Municipal officials tend to forget their potentials and the value they could add in the municipality and communities. It is for this reason that it was found that other municipal officials who are few and community members responded that Skills development plans have not been successfully implemented in the municipality. This is because the blame is not on the unfulfilled promises of quality service delivery; the blame is on the system which is the Skills development plan. This confirms the reason why most respondents disagreed that when the municipal officials are administering skills development plans at a high standard, they help the municipality to meet their skills needs.

The researcher is of the view that any plan without determined actions and desired results do not influence the communities to view the municipality as the legitimate government. It was not surprising when the researcher found that the majority of the respondents revealed that skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents. This is because people are not interested in plans; their interest is on the action-oriented phase, the improved performance and redressing the challenges faced by the communities. This is the reason why most respondents agreed that the right skills development plan helps the municipality to close gaps between current and desired skill levels. Redressing the challenges faced by the communities means replacing the wrong skills development plan with the right skills development plan. President Cyril Ramaphosa on the 16th of June 2021 was addressing the

youth and he mentioned that the Cabinet is currently piloting a new model for skills development where training is linked directly to employment when the person is introduced to the world of work at the very early age. This is after Ramaphosa observed other countries doing successfully when the Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel discussed with him and he found that is the one process that contribute Germany being one of more developed economies in the world. This is the right skills development plan at hand which needs intervention of the municipality.

The majority of the respondents were in favour that skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results. This is because the recommendation of the Auditor-General of South Africa place an emphasis on the municipality to tighten their skills development plans for better performance. Especially because of the hard lockdown restrictions of COVID-19 which demand digital and technological skills. It is for this reason that most of the respondents discovered that skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation. This will be influenced by the organisation's capability because there are municipal officials who are comfortable in relying on few skills; they do not have a student mentality which is someone who is always eager to learn. It is through learning that municipal officials could be aware of their leadership traits that they possess. It is understandable that most respondents revealed that the Skills Development Plan transforms the municipality to become learning organisations, determined to address skills deficit.

The majority of the respondents revealed that skills development programmes are properly coordinated. This is because the Municipality appoints qualified service providers for implementing skills development plans. The majority of the respondents were made aware that the municipality has the capacity to implement skills development plans. However, the capacity is inadequate, especially because of maladministration and corruption of public funds. This also raises concerns on the lack of financial management skills. It is for this reason that most respondents were not sure that when skills development programmes are assessed and monitored the municipality determine if whether they are achieving the predetermined goals or not. Hence leading to a response that most respondents disagreed that skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality. Poor performance has influenced the municipal officials and communities to respond in this manner. The fact that the skills development plan is not treated as a strategic priority does not mean that municipal officials do not attend skills development programmes. It is not surprising that the majority of participants revealed that municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes. This is also with the help of the facilitators and

trainers of skills development programmes who are highly qualified and meet municipal officials' skills needs.

It was found that the supervisors do not make enough efforts to coach subordinates on how to perform their work well. Because better performance means that municipal officials are receiving exceptional coaching and mentorship and the opposite is the poor performance. Although municipal officials might receive exceptional coaching and mentorship, the willingness to execute those skills efficiently and effectively becomes problematic. The need to comply with the supervision is different from the need to solve societal problems of service delivery and infrastructure backlogs. The unforeseen circumstance of COVID-19 has made municipal officials to be involved in illegal awarding of tenders and food parcels; municipal officials not meeting deadlines and following work procedures. As such COVID-19 has created some municipal officials opportunities to show that they can be above the law. It was revealed that not enough research and analysis on skills needs and shortcomings is done before skills development plan is administered. This is because municipal officials are unaware that research and analysis on skills is very much impactful on imparting municipal officials with skills which are aligned to dealing with the socio-economic challenges in the communities provided that the needs of the communities change. This is worsened by the fact that the municipality fail to consider skills development plans run by internal service providers who are familiar with the organisational objectives and municipal officials. Skills development plans run by internal service providers would assist the municipality to have sufficient budget for implementing skills development plans.

The most important findings of this research study from the research interviews can be summarised as follows:

The researcher found that the skills development plan optimises the municipal staff members to deliver quality services to the communities at an acceptable standard. Because the principle of local democracy is applied by discipline, tried and tested municipal officials in the midst of COVID-19 who are better informed with knowledge, skills and expertise. On the 12th of June 2021 President Cyril Ramaphosa attended the Group of Seven (G7) Summit proceedings in the United Kingdom (UK). The Group of Seven is an inter-governmental political forum consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Ramaphosa emphasised that the G7 has agreed to build infrastructure in developing countries including South Africa. The United States President Biden's statement that they will be investing in infrastructure in Africa. In this regard, as South African Municipalities including the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality are battling with poor service delivery and infrastructure backlog, strengthening the capacity of municipal officials to

provide these services to communities is of paramount importance and also securing Foreign Direct Investment.

Most of the participants revealed that the skills development plan plays a role in filling the skills gap, developing the municipal officials' scarce skills according to the plan and in terms of career development for the municipal officials to perform work better. Because in 1955 South Africa's four (4) birds when they met in what became known as the Congress of the people in Cape town said that the only way to give people opportunities is that the doors of learning must be opened. The four (4) birds in the 50s mounted a struggle and finally shown that vision in the freedom charter and said that they want the doors of learning to be opened, including career development in the workplace. This was tremendous and history will judge the municipal officials' failure to fill their skills gap. This will be implemented through skills audit with the key to a developmentally oriented Performance Management System (PMS) as the overall approach to underperformance to promote improvement through feedback, learning and support. Moreover skills constraints, sector skills needs, and the working environment must be aligned to the Skills Development Plan so that it can positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance.

Currently the municipal working environment is challenging, especially because it is positioned at the grassroots level where there is an outcry for improved and quality services. It is for this reason that COVID-19 has influenced the increase in e-Governance (Electronic Governance) which is the application of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for delivering government services through integration of various stand-alone systems between Government-to-Citizens (G2C), Government-to-Business (G2B), and Government-to-Government (G2G) services. Through e-Governance, the government services are made available to the citizens in a convenient, efficient, and transparent manner. Promotion of the 3 good e's (efficiency, effectiveness and economy) is not debatable in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality given its limited budget to meet the skills needs. Hence, it was found that the skills development plan should be aligned to the budget.

It was found that when one is trained to understand how the district works, how the provincial level work, aligned to the services that are required in the municipality, an employee is able to capture the requirements properly. This will in turn assist to address the uneven capacity of the municipality by enhancing coordination of support and monitoring of local government by the national and provincial government. As the municipality will be able to reinforce relationship between national and provincial government and cooperative governance for improving service delivery. However, it was found that the problem is that the municipality has so many skills that is required from across all directorates, but they can only budget for

specific skills in one financial year. This is because in implementing the Skills Development Plan, it was discovered that the municipality implement training which is not in the plan. Hence, the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is a small municipality whereby their grading affects the budget that they get from all the grants that they are supposed to receive thus hindering the successful implementation of the skills development plans. It was found that a signed agreement should be made through council resolution noting that the skills development plan cannot be changed so that the implementation can be pursued in a fair manner. This is because of political interference in the administrative issues pertaining to the attendance of the skills development programmes that yields power relations, where politicians believe that they are superior and administrators are inferior.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following section recommends the strategies that can be used to promote Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government which are based on the findings of the study. The recommendations are clustered based on the research questions of the study which are the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality; the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance; the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality and the strategies that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan. The researcher added a posing question which address the ways that can be done by the GreaterLetaba Local Municipality to ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance. The researcher also added a posing question which address the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans and recommendations were made based on the question.

5.4.1 Recommendations on the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government

The study found that few respondents agreed that the Municipality provides skills development programmes. The researcher recommends that line with the basic values and principles governing public administration which stipulates that good human-resource management and career-development practices, to maximise human potential, must be cultivated enshrined in the Section 195 (1) (h) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996). The municipality must equip municipal officials with the requisite skills and ensure that services are delivered to the communities at the highest standard so that the communities can believe that they are the legitimate government. The

researcher found that the minority of the respondents affirmed to the idea that employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives. The researcher recommends that the municipality should meet its objectives through employee training and skills development programmes. This will help the municipality to fulfil the objects of local government provided in the Section 152 (1) of the 1996 Constitution. This is because failure to meet the organisational objectives will lead to the municipality being held accountable by communities as stated in the Section 152 (1) (a) of the 1996 Constitution which stipulates that local government must provide democratic and accountable government for local communities.

The study findings found that only few respondents supported the statement that the Municipality assesses the skills needs of municipal officials for improving performance. It is evident that there is generally an absence of professionally conducted skills audits, needs analysis, skills gaps analysis, workplace skills planning, and personal development plans. The researcher recommends that these mechanisms should be successfully optimised as they are instrumental in validating adequate responses and skills development interventions. The study found that unsatisfactory number of respondents pointed out that Skills development plan improves the productivity of employees. The researcher recommends that line with the Batho Pele Principles, the municipality must ensure that citizens are told what level and quality of public services they will receive so that they are aware of what to expect. This will ensure that a much larger number of people and interests in the communities and municipality are aware of the service standards which might not have been influenced by the productivity of employees.

The researcher found that few respondents were of the view that the municipality encourages employees to participate in learning programmes. It is recommended that skilled senior officials or technical professionals should mentor more junior or inexperienced municipal staff and technical staff. There is therefore the need for mentorship and career coaching skills development programme in the municipality. These will form part and parcel of encouraging employees to participate in learning programmes. The study findings found that very few respondents supported the idea that the skills development plans have been successfully implemented in the municipality. The findings could have been influenced by the poor performances in the municipality. The researcher recommends that in order for the municipality to implement its skills development plan successfully, they must identify shortage of skills that contribute to unemployment and service delivery problems in the particular municipal area such as water supply, and sewerage to take action in line with these endeavours. It was found in the study that the skills development plan plays an important role in the municipality as it optimises the municipal staff members to deliver quality services to the communities at an acceptable standard.

The researcher recommends that the municipality should pay more attention to the services and infrastructure provided, such as standard of the houses built, and water provided whether it is clean or not and develop skills of municipal officials in line with their performance gap for an effective and efficient local government. The researcher found that the role which skills development plan play is to ensure that the municipal officials are educated and properly equipped to work together to improve the lives of the communities. The researcher therefore recommends that there should be a dominant involvement of cooperation and collaboration in the effective leadership relationship amongst municipal servants (from up to bottom) and citizens for the purpose of dealing with the challenges of COVID 19 in unemployment and injustice in the awarding of tenders to enhance service delivery. The leadership relationship comprises of political and administration component. It is for this reason that there should be successful implementation of the skills development plan addressing leadership skills.

The study findings found that the skills development plan play a role in filling the skills gap, developing the municipal officials' scarce skills according to the plan and also in terms of career development for the municipal officials to perform work better. The researcher recommends that the key role-players such as the municipal manager, senior operational managers, and the Head of Human Resources, responsible for human resources matters must be actively involved in the management of training and skills development. This must take place through an honest consultative process of ensuring that municipal staff participate and speak freely about their skills development challenges and concerns which will help them to improve their performance. The study findings highlighted the role that the skills development plan plays in filling the gap between educational requirements and workplace requirements. The researcher recommends that training of communication officer in social media skills, technical staff and managers of technical fields in both "hard" technical skills such as bricklaying, construction, water pipe-laying, and electrical connections, as well as "soft" skills development should receive attention. Soft skills including mentoring, coaching, supervision, leadership, organising, coordination, monitoring and control, performance assessments and appraisals, are further required.

The researcher found that retention of skilled municipal staff members, implementing the recommendations of the auditor-general and municipal public accounts committee in full through financial training are the role of the skills development plan. The researcher recommends ethics education to enforce integrity and practice self-discipline, for one can be skilled and knowledgeable about financial statements and budget spending and still lack good character to execute public policies successfully. Ethics education can ensure that financial oversight over technical projects is not hampered and the way money allocated for training and skills development is eventually spent. Section 195 of the Constitution, 1996,

states the basic values and principles governing public administration. One of the principles stipulated in Section (1) (a) states that “a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained”.

5.4.1.1 Recommendations on what the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality can do to ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance

The researcher found that skills audit serves as a contributing factor in drafting the skills development plan. The researcher recommends that the term “audit” should be avoided in this regard. The concept conjures images and perceptions of Auditor General audits of financial statements and budget spending. This can make some municipal officials very reluctant to participate or to speak freely about their skills development challenges and concerns. The researcher further recommends that the skills audit should be referred to as a survey so that attitudes will be changed pertaining to the skills audit so that the skills development can be successfully implemented to improve performance. It was found in the study that skills constraints contribute to the poor performance and that the municipality should train municipal staff members in accordance with such skills. The researcher recommends that tailor-made training programs need to be introduced to address specific skills constraints municipal officials face in their day-to-day activities to improve performance. This requires the municipality to determine which types of training programs they should pursue, and successful completion of programs.

The study found that the municipality must align the skills development plan to sector skills needs. The researcher recommends that the municipality should ensure that the skills development priorities for the sector are aligned with five cross-cutting skills development objectives. These are strategic focus areas for the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS III); support of government’s Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) objectives, the National Development Plan, the National Skills Accord to achieve the New Growth Path goals, the Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa, and the Presidential Infrastructure Coordinating Commission. Consideration is also given to attaining the high-level performance targets set by the Executive Authority and the Department of Higher Education and Training. The study found that the working environment must be aligned to the Skills Development Plan so that it can positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance. The researcher recommends that because municipal officials are influenced by the work environments in which they operate.

The reality of globalisation cannot be denied, and to be able to overcome global challenges, a work environment must be provided that gives municipal officials the ability to adapt to a

changing environment by empowering them through knowledge, skills and competencies to be open to change and to be flexible. In today's global environment, knowledge is the currency to success and to improve performance. This is particularly true for the Skills Development Plan to positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance. The study findings found that the municipality should consult all employees to identify their training needs rather than making assumptions to update the skills development plan in terms of what they need as employees so that they can positively enhance performance. The researcher recommends that the municipality should communicate specific information, give people a chance to communicate specific skills they require and allow workers to discuss and share challenges they face in the working environment. This is because assumptions lead to one-size-fits-all approach to training which will not be able to achieve these objectives.

The study findings found that the Skills Development plan should be aligned to the budget to positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance. The researcher recommends that alignment of budgetary process to the skills development plan should be pursued by the municipality. Effective financial management can help municipalities to transform its skills development plan to be implemented successfully and yield good results of better performance. The researcher further recommends that within the skills development plan, the municipality should address only the scarce and critical skills which will support budgeting, and most importantly to improve the municipal financial foes. Similarly, any training related to municipal budgeting (and improving the council's approach to budgeting) must be carefully timed in order to maximize the benefit to the municipality. The researcher found that the municipality should link its skills development plan to the performance goals in order to make their work easier.

The researcher recommends that the managers need to be trained in the first principles of municipal government which is the basic service delivery and linking the municipality's objectives to individual performance targets and outcomes. The study findings found that those who produce poor results should be warned that they will have to pay back the money to the municipality after training. The researcher recommends that the municipality should be consistent in applying the policy of "pay back the money" if the municipal officials do not produce better results after training and failure for the municipal officials to pay back the money means that the municipality should take the money from their salaries.

5.4.2 Recommendations on the impact that skills development plan has on performance

The researcher found the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance, pertaining to the fact that a small number of respondents confirmed that skills development plans administered to municipal officials are of a high standard and help municipality meet their

skills needs. Therefore, the researcher recommends that the municipality should ensure that the skills development system is effective and functional whereby managers' and supervisors' involvement in the workplace skills development planning process is adequate. The researcher further recommends that supervisors should ensure that the workplace skills development planning process is aligned to the overall organisational strategy and the selection of training interventions is in accordance with a proper needs analysis. The study findings found that majority of the participants responded that skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents. The researcher recommends that the municipality should identify municipal officials who at all categories are struggling to operate and maintain their services standard and infrastructure in a cost-effective and sustainable manner and train them. This is because service delivery challenges are generally a result of poor technical skills, the absence of such skills, and the shortage of technical skilled professionals leading to the municipality to outsource their technical services to consultants.

The researcher found that majority of respondents attested that the right skills development plan helps the municipality to close gaps between current and desired skill levels. The researcher recommends that in line with the National Development Plan: Vision for 2030, the municipality must ensure that internship and learnership programmes are set up to deal with specific skills gaps. These programmes should be provided also for experienced municipal staff. The municipality must recognise that many skills are developed on the job. The study findings found that many respondents agreed that the skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results. The researcher recommends that training programmes should be effectively drafted, implemented, and evaluated within the municipality, so that the municipality will have positive results, which would also lead to public satisfaction. When an employee is trained, he or she become knowledgeable and motivated hence this would reduce wastages as the employee will be aware of what is expected from him.

The researcher found that the majority of the respondents agreed that skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation. The researcher recommends that municipal strategy for the skills development plan should be accompanied with an agenda to ensure that municipal officials contribute to how they want their skills to be developed to impact positively on their performances. This will ensure that municipal officials come to the table with their new ideas and innovativeness to contribute to the success of the municipality. The study findings found that a reasonable number of respondents supports the idea that the Skills Development Plan transforms the municipality to become learning organisations, determined to address skills deficit. The

researcher recommends that when choosing training courses, the manager should ensure that the training is specific to the skills the employee needs to develop in line with the the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998. For example, it is a waste of time if the manager sends an employee to a general communications course, when in fact the employee needs training on dealing with customer complaints. The researcher further recommends that the municipality should ensure that training is customised to meet the immediate learning need. This also requires an employee to understand the link between the training and his or her job.

The study found that the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance is positive as the findings indicate that quality service delivery will not be compromised, as municipal employees will speed up service delivery, with the capability to perform better and improve service delivery. The researcher recommends that the municipality should highlight factors that undermine the intention of the process that can enable implementation of the skills development plan to improve the staff performance for an effective and efficient service delivery. The mechanism aims to both inform employees on the status of their performance and identify their weaknesses that hinders the successful implementation of the skills development plan. The researcher found out that Skills Development Plan has an impact on ensuring that municipal officials are knowledgeable about how to communicate service delivery matters to the communities.

The researcher recommends that the municipality should equip municipal staff members such as the councillors with the communication skills so that they could avoid communication breakdown between citizens and municipality as it is the major underlying cause of service delivery protests. When relevant municipal officials do not provide feedback to communities, citizens become disgruntled and voice their anger through violent public protests. The study findings found that the skills development plan helps in drafting the service delivery budget and implementation plan. The researcher recommends that the municipality should develop, implement, and monitor Service Delivery and Budget Implementation Plan (SDBIP) as required by the Municipal Finance Management Act (MFMA) 56 of 2003. The researcher further recommends that the municipality should train the municipal officials about these legislative prescriptions as they influence the municipality's budget to actually be spent on implementing its workplace skills plan.

5.4.3 Recommendations on the challenges of implementing skills development plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality

The study found that the majority of the respondents, indicated that Skills development programmes are properly coordinated. The researcher recommends that the municipal

actors should collaborate to achieve skills development goals and consequently ensure that the skills development programmes are linked to the organisational objectives. This implies municipal actors such as line managers, Human Resource departments and employees ensuring that skills development programmes empower the political component to relate well with the functionalities of the administrative component. The researcher found that a small number of respondents agreed that the Municipality appoints qualified service providers for implementing skills development plans. The researcher recommends that the municipality should appoint the qualified training providers accredited with an Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) to ensure that the municipality get proper returns of this arrangement through implementing the skills development plan successfully.

The study findings found that an unsatisfactory number of the respondents responded that the Municipality has the capacity to implement skills development plans. The researcher recommends that the municipality must undergo a key shift to focus on the institution not the individual. This means that efforts and resources must not be spent on training people that should not have been recruited in the first place. The recruitment process should not be compromised because of political accommodation and nepotism so that the municipality would not have to use its capacity to train such municipal officials. It was found that the few respondents agreed to the statement that skills development programmes are assessed and monitored to determine if whether they are achieving the predetermined goals or not. The researcher recommends that competency assessments should serve as the basis to develop training and skills development programmes to address both personal and organisational needs. The researcher therefore recommends that performance gaps which hinders the achievement of organisational goals should be identified during the competency assessment, and the senior managers should include the skills gaps in their personal development plans, which should be implemented within a period of twelve months.

The researcher found out that small number of respondents supported the idea that the Skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality. The researcher recommends that the municipality should prioritise its skills development plan starting with the curriculum design that is actually guiding the organisation towards its pre-determined goals. This curriculum content should include scarce skill programmes and skills needs for the local government, especially thoses needed to drive service delivery and infrastructural development. It was found that the majority of respondents affirmed that municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes. The researfcher recommends that the municipality should ensure that it encourages municipal officials to attend skills development programmes with the intention of not only complying with the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) legislation but to the investment supports in the

direct and significant impact on poverty alleviation through the sustainable provision of quality free basic services to the poor.

The study found that budget constraints, time and poor skills audit are the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater- Letaba Local Municipality. The researcher recommends that the municipality should enforce a higher level of accountability and transparency with respect to public funds. This implies that the municipality should overcome the capacity challenges, namely, time, financial, and human existing within local government which may limit their ability to implement the Skills Development Plan successfully and have good skills audit. It was found that the problem is that the municipality has so many skills that is required from across all directorates, but they can only budget for specific skills in one financial year. The researcher recommends that the municipality should start the budget process early enough to get meaningful participation for supporting many skills to be imparted to the municipal officials in one financial year. Immediately after the mayor has tabled the annual budget, the accounting officer (municipal manager) of the municipality must make public the annual budget together with any supporting documentation and invite representations in connection with the budget from the local community.

The municipal council must then consider any views put forward by the local community and any other organs of state that may have made submissions on the budget. The mayor is then given an opportunity to respond to the submissions and, if necessary, revise the budget and table amendments for consideration by council. Council must then approve the annual budget for the municipality before the start of the financial year pertaining to imparting the municipal officials with skills through the implementation of the skills development plan. The researcher found that improper identification of training and skills development needs are the challenge of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The researcher recommends that the municipality should improve skills in general and specifically develop financial and supply chain management skills at senior and middle management levels because these are the skills needed to avoid financial mismanagement, and irregularities in procurement for effective and efficient performance. It was found that implementing training which is not in the plan is the challenge and when the management fails to engage and consult municipal employees in matters concerning the skills development plan. The researcher recommends that the management should communicate a range of knowledge, skills and understanding valuable to the municipal officials to include in the implementation of the skills development plan.

The study findings found that some skills needs are implemented even though that was not part of the annual skills plan hence creating a challenge of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The researcher recommends

that the municipality should be committed to follow the workplace skills plan outlining how the municipality is going to address the training and skills development needs. Workplace Skills Plans are prepared annually and submitted on 30 June to the relevant Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA). This covers skills development for the period of 01 April to 30 March of the subsequent year. This will assist the municipality in identifying and providing relevant training that will address the skills gaps within the implementation of the skills development plan. The study findings found that weak training capacity and management assigned to drive the implementation of the skills development plan is an unacceptable challenge. The researcher recommends that the municipality should deal with key processes to strengthen training programmes and management. These processes should deal with setting up a training committee, engaging stakeholders in identifying and addressing skills needs, skills audits and ultimately preparing and submitting the Workplace Skills Plans.

5.4.3.1 Recommendations on the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans

The study found that municipality do not monitor the quality of training, as well as better judgements about the impact of training on work performance. The researcher recommends that the municipality should increase demand on evaluating the training curricula and contents necessary to achieve the learning outcomes in the implementation of the skills development plan to improve performance. The study findings found that money is the cause of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans. The researcher recommends that because when budgets are cut, the training budget is normally the first to go. The municipality should train municipal officials about the Local Government: Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 which intends to secure sound and sustainable management of the financial affairs of municipalities and other institutions in the local sphere of government. The researcher found that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is a small municipality whereby their grading affects the budget that they get from all the grants that they are supposed to receive hence hindering the successful implementation of the skills development plans.

The researcher recommends that the municipality should raise its own revenue, borrow, and rely on donor funding when the revenue financed through intergovernmental grants from both the National and Provincial spheres of government is not enough to implement skills development plan successfully. It was found that political intervention and interference in the administration issues is a very critical cause of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans. The researcher recommends that the municipality should clarify the roles of political leaders and administrators separately to ensure that political influence does not interfere in, and that the skills development plan

remain separate from, the influence of the politicians that manipulate them. It was found that time frame, retirement reasons, and recruitment system are the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans.

The researcher recommends the municipality to adapt the training programmes with a broader curriculum that requires less time to get to what the municipal officials really want and need to learn. This will require the instructor's pace, with a broader curriculum that convey skills in a short period of time. The researcher further recommends that the municipality should motivate the employees who are close to retire to understand the importance of acquiring skills as the municipality faces serious capacity challenges which affect their ability to deliver services. The solution to these service delivery challenges requires the municipal officials' input from all the ages to contribute. The researcher furthermore recommends that the cadre deployment systems through politically disadvantage and other political party must be done in a way to ensure that competent and qualified people are hired to manage certain positions rather than been filled with political apologists.

5.4.4 Recommendations on the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing skills development plans

The researcher found that a small number of the respondents revealed that the facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes are highly qualified and meet municipal officials' skills needs. The researcher recommends that the municipality should appoint a suitably qualified skills development facilitator who is competent and at the appropriate level in the organisation. The skills development facilitator should be appointed where the appointment process is followed in accordance with the municipality's recruitment policy and procedure. The study findings found that few of the respondents provided that the supervisors make efforts to coach subordinates on how to perform their work well. The researcher recommends that the trainees should spend time with an experienced employee or facilitator to learn and acquire skills that will ensure that they improve performance and establish the trusting relationship within which real learning and development can take place.

It was found that very few respondents pointed out that research and analysis on skills needs and shortcomings is done before skills development plan is administered. The researcher recommends research to be commissioned to inform future strategies which take cognisance of the skills needs that seem to be able to tackle many similar skills development challenges within the municipality and efficiency in terms of successful outcomes and impact of the implementation of the skills development plan. The research findings found that a small number of respondents supports the notion of municipality considering skills development

plans run by internal service providers who are familiar with the organisational objectives and municipal officials. The researcher recommends that the municipality should appoint internal service providers to run skills development plans because they are aware of the critical and shortage of skills hindering improved performance and include such skills in the workshop.

The researcher found that the unsatisfactory number of the respondents affirm that municipality have sufficient budget for implementing skills development plans. The researcher recommends that the Chief Financial Officer should possess the necessary skills to develop and monitor budgets as well as develop alternative sources of income to deal with the new economy as well as to balance the budget. Rural municipalities are the most vulnerable to shortages, and yet have the fewest financial resources to attract skills. It is further recommended that alternative funding arrangements be investigated to support the ability of rural municipalities to attract skilled workers in addition to other projects to make the sector more attractive. The researcher found that the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan is that attention should be channelled more on budget towards the implementation of the skills development plan. This must start with prioritising the skills development in budgeting to cover scarce skills in a very short space of time.

The researcher recommends that the municipality should have opportunities to build financial literacy skills for the municipal officials to understand that the budget process is a complex. The study findings found that the municipality should have strict by-laws that will enforce community members to pay rates as a method of improving revenue collection. The researcher recommends that the municipality should have strict by-laws to influence revenue collection. The importance of improving financial governance in local government is noted in many key strategic documents such as the National Development Plan Vision 2030. The financial management reform, with the enactment of the Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003 is aimed at enforcing the competencies of the the municipal officials to channel more on budget towards the implementation of the skills development plan. The study findings found that proper monitoring should be applied to verify that the employees are implementing what they have learnt. The researcher recommends that performance audit should be done to assess the skills of the municipal officials to determine if specific programs or functions are working as intended to achieve stated goals in the skills development plan.

The study found that a signed agreement should be made through council resolution noting that the skills development plan cannot be changed so that the implementation can be pursued in a fair manner. Politicians and administrators need to agree that the quality and standards of public services is imperative in the council resolution, and therefore the skills

development plan is required to develop technical and other skills such as financial management and budgeting to ensure that services are provided effectively and efficiently. The study found that there should be limited political interference in the administration issues on how the skills development plan should be implemented. This is because political interference influences accounting officers to find themselves in a huge dilemma of how to deal with the issue of political interference considering the fact that they are employed by the very same politicians who are interfering in their duties. The researcher recommends that in order for the Greater Letaba Local Municipality to reduce the issue of political interference, government must review the local government system which stipulates that management of municipalities must be employed on five years contract by the politicians.

The study findings found that training must be conducted in a manner that accommodate workplace duties to be executed effectively and efficiently. The researcher recommends that the municipality should know that training is not just about submitting a document so that they can get the skills levy-grant from the LGSETA. It should be about building an understanding amongst all stakeholders in the workplace about the importance of properly skilled municipal officials in achieving the organisational objectives. It was found that tailor made training should be designed to suit the level of education of the municipal staff members. The researcher recommends that tailor made training should be designed to suit the level of education of the municipal staff members because due to their programmes, they are able to meet the required skills needed and, therefore, retain municipal officials and place and implement skills development plan.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PRINCIPLES OF ADMINISTRATION

The following are the recommendations based on the principles of administration:

5.5.1 Staffing

Staffing is an activity where people are recruited, selected, trained, developed, motivated, and compensated for manning various positions. This has to do with hiring of the right kind of people after which their skills are developed through training and providing them with acceptable working conditions as a way of maintaining them. The human resources in the municipality are regarded as the most significant resource. The provision of goods and services can never happen without human beings. As such, it is of importance for the GreaterLetaba Local Municipality to audit the skills of the municipal officials to fill the skills gap. Develop the municipal officials' scarce skills according to the skills development plan specifically with the training programmes and expect them to deliver on their mandates,

especially that of providing quality services to the communities. The performance of municipal officials must be regularly evaluated through performance management.

5.5.2 Organising

The process of organising consists of categorising and arranging functions and assigning the different functions to different organisations and workers in a systematic manner to ensure the achievement of predetermined objectives. Groups of employees consist of individuals who are each given specific tasks to perform and who are required to work together to accomplish a particular objective of the organisation. The organisational structure comes to life with the appointment of employees to perform the functions required within the organisation. The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is composed of the political structure and administrative structure. Municipal officials and political leaders are arranged to achieve set objectives. The municipality should promote this separation of powers between municipal officials and political leaders in order to avoid challenges in the implementation of skills development, such as the political interference in the training of municipal officials. The objective of organising the functions of employees is to deal effectively with the demands of communities on a daily basis.

5.5.3 Financing

There is no institution that can function without funds. Government activities are financed through public funds. These monies are collected in a variety of ways including the following: taxes, levies, fines, and loans. A state therefore starts a financial year with R0.00 and should utilise all monies received and remain with R0.00 at the end of a financial year. The money allocated for different programmes and projects should be spent accordingly as prescribed by legislation. In doing this, communities could be provided with services in an efficient and economical way as provided for by Section 195 (1) (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996). This should start with the municipality planning for funds which requires budgeting. This enables the municipality to know how income will be generated and how it will be spent. The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality' skills development plan should be aligned to the budget for improving work performance. Municipal officials who produce poor results should be warned that they will have to pay back the money to the municipality after training. This will motivate municipal officials to pay attention to the proper implementation of the Skills Development Plan. The municipality should introduce strict bylaws that will enforce community members to pay rates as a method of improving revenue collection needed for implementing the Skills Development Plan successfully.

5.5.4 Control

Control has to do with monitoring individuals or groups' performance on how they execute their duties within a provision to apply corrective measures if not performing up to the required expectation. The process of control can be informal or formal. However, public administration should mainly focus on the formal side of control where measuring, comparing, and correcting as corrective measures play a very important role. Various measures are followed in exercising control and they include the following: written reports; inspection and investigation; auditing; cost accounting, cost comparison and cost analysis; statistical returns and performance management. If performance does not meet expectations, corrective action should be applied in the municipality. The Greater-Letaba Local Municipality receive the publication of reports by the Auditor-General on financial statements and the performance of municipality.

When the audit reports show that the municipality is struggling to perform efficiently and effectively. The Auditor-General recommends the municipality for sound financial management, and achievable progress regarding proper and clean audit outcomes. The municipality should implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General and municipal public accounts committee in full through financial training of municipal officials according to the skills development plan. Control has however its informal side. This is exercised through supervision by senior officials. The supervisors in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality should make efforts to coach subordinates on how to perform their work well.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES

The main aim of the study was to investigate Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government. The research study was conducted at Greater-Letaba Local Municipality in South Africa. The following are the recommendations for future research studies which are based on the results of the study. The funds given to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality for launching successful training programmes requires a financial plan, and this has not yet been fully grasped by the municipality. It was found in the study that the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality is a small municipality whereby their grading affects the budget that they get from all the grants that they are supposed to receive hence hindering the successful implementation of the skills development plans. It is recommended that once there is financial planning, there is a possibility that the effective and efficient utilisation of grants allocated will be highly developed for successfully implementing skills development plan. This is an important area of further research that can be undertaken to investigate how national government can be convinced to put in place enabling legislation. This legislation will allow the Minister of Finance to intervene proactively to unlock the funds allocated based

on grading serving as tools for providing sufficient grants to small municipalities to implement skills development plan successfully.

It is recommended that future research can be undertaken to look into how training and skills development programmes in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality can be designed in such a way that they address the achievement of national, provincial and local priorities and vision. Research studies can also be undertaken to investigate the social, economic, political, and environmental constraints that can hamper the effectiveness of training and skills development programmes in municipalities. The researcher recommends that these research studies should deal with the challenges of political interference in the administration issues hindering the successful implementation of the skills development plan. The researcher recommends that the same research should be conducted in other municipalities with the same topic to get more information about the training programmes which will resolve the skills gaps. It is critical for employees to implement what they have learned in training. The findings assist the municipalities in measuring the effectiveness of training and in identifying whether gaps were addressed. Further research can investigate how the organisational structures, cultures, strategies, and systems in municipalities can be used in a way that would enhance the effectiveness of training and skills development programmes.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations that the researcher encountered in this study had to do with the researcher failing to register early. Furthermore, the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic level 5 lockdown regulations hindered the researcher from going to campus to register. This delayed the researcher. The researcher finally registered online. However, the researcher experienced further delay when applying for ethical clearance as the application could not be processed because the researcher had submitted an unofficial proof of registration. The intern directorate of research and innovation insisted that the researcher resubmit the official with the relevant signature (registrar), for the ethical clearance application to be processed. This took some time and the researcher to resubmit the official one late. It also became difficult for the researcher to request permission to conduct research in the municipality as it had to be approved by the Director of corporate services who was on leave and when she came back it became more difficult to meet her as she was attending meetings.

The community members were not fully committed to completing the questionnaires because of lack of interest in municipal issues due to a lack of service delivery and job scarcity. Such lack of interest might have made the respondents provide irrelevant answers. This could have impacted the validity and reliability of the study. However, these limitations would not affect the results significantly. Shortage of funds for transport, typing, stationery, editing, printing, and binding made it difficult for the researcher to carry out the research effectively.

However, the researcher explored opportunities to complete the research. The researcher's bursary only paid for tuition fees and the researcher had to utilise own money for stationery and for transport.

5.8 CONCLUSION

The study is about the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. This study consists of five chapters; the first chapter is the introduction and the background of the study. The background of the study indicated the core issues related to skills development at local government level. It emphasised about cadre deployment and political interference having dominion towards the appointment of incompetent and unqualified people in strategic positions at municipal level. This chapter also focused on the aim of the study and specific objectives of the study with research questions. The significance of the study, delimitation of the study, and definition of operational concepts were also discussed. The organisation of the study was provided in the chapter.

The second chapter reviewed the literature which was relevant to the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The chapter presented the theoretical framework that underpins skills development plan and historical background of skills development plan in South Africa. The researcher conceptualised training and skills development and emphasised on the types of training to show how they could improve performance. The researcher presented the Skills development within the South African public sector followed by the skills shortage situation in South Africa to know the type of skills needed to drive performance. The researcher presented the role of skills development plan in enhancing performance. The emphasis was to be critic on performance gaps highlighting that the implementation of the skills development plan could fill the gaps.

The researcher noted the challenges facing the municipalities as a result of poor skills. The researcher presented the legislative framework for the Skills Development Plan in South Africa. The researcher further presented the structures responsible for municipal Skills Development Plan in South Africa; role-players in skills development plan; approaches to skills development plan; skills development plan in selected countries; lessons for South Africa' skills development plan from various countries' skills development plans; Nadler's Critical Events Model and Nekhavhambe's proposed training model.

The third chapter presented the research methodology. In the research study, the researcher discussed the research methodologies that were followed when investigating the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government, with specific

reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. The researcher used contextual and descriptive research design. The researcher used mixed methodology. This study focused on Limpopo Province. The research study was conducted in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality, Ga-Modjadji (Bolobedu). Ga-Modjadji (Bolobedu) is predominantly occupied by Lobedu-Khelobedu (Sepedi) speaking people. Non-probability sampling technique and its sub-type of purposive sampling method was used. The researcher used two methods of collecting data which are questionnaire and interview. The ethics in research were considered.

In the fourth chapter, the researcher presented the data, interpretation and analysis of data collected from the sampled group. The chapter is divided into two sections; analysis of data collected through questionnaires and analysis of data collected through interviews. The data was collected in quantitative and qualitative methods which included questionnaires and interviews, from the respondents. The information collected from responses were presented in a tabular form followed by brief synthesis of the findings and the responses to the interview items were presented in a narrative form followed by a brief synthesis of the findings. The last chapter presented the major research findings, synthesis of the study, recommendations of the study, recommendations on principles of administration, recommendations for future research studies, limitations of the study and conclusion. The researcher presented the major findings of the study which focuses on four specific objectives of the research study. The synthesis of the study was presented on the findings of research study from the research questionnaires and interviews.

The study revealed that the impact of training and skills development programmes implemented in the municipality are not effectively evaluated or measured for improved service delivery. The study revealed that once there is effective and efficient management of grants allocated, there is a possibility that the skills development plans will be successfully implemented. Not only must the researcher ensure that the municipalities are aware of such possibilities; the private institutions are also included for continuous training and retraining to keep them competitive and up to date with changes in the work environment. Therefore, it is imperative for the municipalities to consider the recommendations of this study. It is essential for municipalities to develop the implementation plan and to implement some of the recommendations of the study. Furthermore, municipalities should commit the resources necessary to implement the findings of the study. It is believed that this research study made a contribution to the discourse on the training of municipal officials in municipalities in South Africa.

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UHDC APPROVAL MASTER'S PROPOSAL LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC

TO : MR/MS T. SEOPETSA
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

FROM: PROF J.E CRAFFORD
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC

DATE : 21 JANUARY 2020

DECISIONS TAKEN BY UHDC OF 21st JANUARY 2020

Application for approval of Masters Proposal Report in Management Sciences:
T. Seopetsa (14014018)

Topic: "Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing Performance in Local Government with specific reference to Greater Letaba Local Municipality."

Supervisor	UNIVEN	Dr. E. Mahole
Co-supervisor	UNIVEN	Dr. M.M Nekhavhambe

UHDC approved the Proposal



**PROF. J.E CRAFFIORD
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR: ACADEMIC**

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT THE STUDY FROM THE TRIBAL COUNCIL

MODUBUNG VILLAGE

P.O BOX 6096

MODJADJISKLOOF

0837

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves as confirmation that Malatja Royal Council have granted permission to Ms Seopetsa Thato to conduct a research at our village.

I hope you will find this in order

Yours Faithfully

Malatja Royal Council

N.A. MALATJA

Signature

Cell No: 071 435 6870

2021-03-07

Date



ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:

Ms T Seopetsa

STUDENT NO:

14014018

PROJECT TITLE: **Skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba local municipality.**

ETHICAL CLEARANCE NO: SMS/20/PDN/05/2202

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Dr E Mahole	University of Venda	Supervisor
Dr MM Nekhavhambe	University of Venda	Co - Supervisor
Ms T Seopetsa	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

Type: **Masters Research**

Risk: **Minimal risk to humans, animals or environment**

Approval Period: **February 2021 – February 2023**

The Research Ethics Social Sciences Committee (RESSC) hereby approves your project as indicated above.

General Conditions

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following.

- The project leader (principal investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the REC:
 - Annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - Within 48hrs in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the REC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date; a new application must be made to the REC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility, the REC retains the right to:
 - Request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project,
 - To ask further questions; Seek additional information; Require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - Any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected.
 - It becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the REC or that information has been false or misrepresented.
 - The required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - New institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary

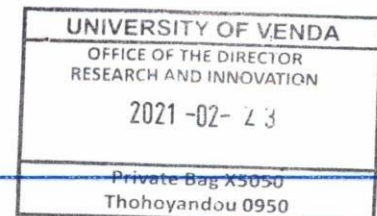
ISSUED BY:

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date Considered: February 2021

Name of the RESSC Chairperson of the Committee: Prof Takalani Mashau

Signature:

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH STUDY

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

17 NOVEMBER 2020


To : Municipal Manager
: Traditional Leader
: Ward Councilor

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR MASTER OF ADMINISTRATION (MADMIN) STUDY OF MS. SEOPETSA THATO - STUDENT NUMBER: 14014018.

The above matter refers.

We hereby wish to confirm that Ms. Seopetsa T (Student Number: 14014018), is a registered student for Mater of Administration (MADMIN) in the Department of Public and Development Administration at the School of Management Sciences, University of Venda. The student is researching on the following topic: **“Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality”**. In order for her to complete her studies, we request your Institution to provide her with the information that she might need for her study project. As an Institution of Higher Learning, we believe that the research she is undertaking will yield the results that might also assist your Institution. We therefore encourage your Institution to assist her with the necessary information that will be collected through research questionnaires and interviews .We undertakes that the information that will be provided to her will be solely used for this study.

We hope that you find this to be in order and therefore, anticipate your assistance. If any queries, please feel free to contact me at Cell: 073 644 6301 or Email: Ephraim.Mahole@univen.ac.za



.....
Dr. E Mahole
Supervisor: Department of Public and Development Administration
School: Management Sciences



University of Venda

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION
SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHYANDOU, 0950.
SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE: (015) 962 8145
E-MAIL: Ephraim.Mahole@univen.ac.za

PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT THE STUDY FROM GREATER-LETABA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY



GREATER LETABA MUNICIPALITY

P.O Box 36, Modjadjiskloof, 0835, Tel (015) 309 9246/7/8,
Fax (015) 309 9419, Email:greaterletaba@glm.gov.za

Enquiry: Mailula M.J

18 November 2020

Seopetsa Thato (9406301319083)

99/ 1235 Umthambeka

Tembisa

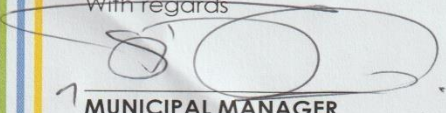
1632

Dear Ms Seopetsa T

RE: ACCEPTANCE TO CONDUCT THE STUDY: YOURSELF.

1. The above matter refers.
2. It is with great pleasure to inform you that Greater Letaba Municipality has approved your request to conduct your research study at the institution.
3. You are requested to ensure that participants partaking in the research are protected and the information collected is treated with confidentiality.
4. You are requested to ensure that during the process of collecting data you do not interfere with normal operations of the institution.
5. Trusting that you will find the research rewarding.

With regards



MUNICIPAL MANAGER

Dr. SIROVHA K.I

"To be the leading municipality in the delivery of quality services for the promotion of socio-economic development"

ANNEXURE F

LETTER TO RESPONDENTS

Enquiries : Seopetsa T 99/ 1235 Umthambeka
Cell : 072 438 2115 Tembisa
Email : thatotery@gmail.com 1632
November 18, 2020

Dear Sir/Madam

I am a registered student at the University of Venda enrolled for the Master of Administration (MADMIN). My research topic is **“Skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality”**.

I would be most grateful if you would help me with this part of my research project, by completing the inventory. I assure you that the information I will get from you will be confidential and will be used for educational purposes only.

In anticipation, please accept my sincere gratitude for your willingness to assist me. Yours

sincerely



.....
SEOPETSA THATO

STUDENT NUMBER: 14014018

CONSENT FORM

I,, hereby agree to participate in the research study, titled “**Skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality**”. By signing this consent form, you indicate that you understand the information provided to you by the researcher regarding the study, your question about the research has been answered to your satisfaction, and you voluntarily agree to participate in this study. A copy of this signed consent form can be provided upon request.

- 2** The study aims to assess whether skills development plan can positively serve as a tool for enhancing performance and recommend the mechanisms which can be used to enhance performance at the local sphere of government.
- 3** The information that the respondents will provide will be solely used for the purpose of the study.
- 4** Participation is voluntary and that I can withdraw anytime without any penalty if I feel like doing so.
- 5** All questionnaire and interview data will be handled with confidentiality.
- 6** Participants can refuse to answer certain questions if they feel uncomfortable during the process of collecting data.

I understand that the information I give may not be used for any other purpose except to help the researcher to meet the scholastic expectations. For more information, respondents can contact Dr. E Mahole, my Supervisor at 073 644 6302 and also at (Ephraim.Mahole@univen.ac.za).

.....
SIGNATURE

.....
DATE

INSTRUMENT – QUESTIONNAIRE

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING PERFORMANCE IN GREATER-LETABA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The purpose of this study is to analyse skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in Greater Letaba Local Municipality. This is an opportunity for you to reflect on your perceptions about skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance. For each of the following statements place an X in the box that applies to you.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

2. Age

Less than 30 years	1
31 – 40 years	2
41 – 50 years	3
51 – 60 years	4
61 years and older	5

3. Position in the community

Municipal Manager	1
Integrated Development Plan (IDP) Manager	2
Local Economic Development (LED) Manager	3
Municipal Councillor	4
Proportional Representation (PR) councillor	5
Public Participation Manager	6
Human Resource Manager	7
Human Resource Staff Member	8
Performance Management System Staff Members	9
Communication Officer (Municipal Spokesperson)	10
Ward Committee Member	11
Speaker	12
Chief Financial Officer	13

Mayor	14
Traditional leader	15
Selected community members	16



4. Number of Years in the Position

1 to 5 Years	1
6 to 10 Years	2
11 to 15 Years	3
16 to 20 Years	4
21 Years and Above	5

5. Educational Attainment of Respondents

Primary	1
Secondary	2
Tertiary	3
Others	4

6. Ethnic group

Tsonga (Va-Tsonga)	1
Venda (Vha-Venda)	2
Sepedi (Northern Sotho)	3
English (White)	4

SECTION B: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING PERFORMANCE

Item No.	The role of skills development plan positively serving as a tool for enhancing performance.	Place an X in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
8.	The Municipality provides skills development programmes.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Employee training and skills development efforts are linked to the organisation's objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The Municipality assesses the skills needs of municipal officials for improving performance.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The Skills development plan improves the productivity of employees.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	The Municipality encourages employees to participate in learning programmes.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Skills development plans have been successfully implemented in the municipality.	1	2	3	4	5

Item No.	The impact that skills development plan has on performance.	Place an X in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
14.	Skills development plans administered to municipal officials are of a high standard and help municipality meet their skills needs.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	Skills development plan leads to an improvement in employee performance, which in turn improves services offered to municipal residents.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	The right skills development plan helps the municipality to close gaps between current and desired skill levels.	1	2	3	4	5
17.	Skills development plan helps municipal officials to acquire new skills for producing better results.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	Skills development plan is a catalyst for municipal officials to realise their hidden talents that would benefit the organisation.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	The Skills Development Plan transforms the municipality to become learning organisations, determined to address skills deficit.	1	2	3	4	5

Item No.	Challenges of implementing skills development plan at the Greater Letaba Local Municipality.	Place an X in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
20.	Skills development programmes are properly coordinated.	1	2	3	4	5
21.	The Municipality appoints qualified service providers for implementing skills development plans.	1	2	3	4	5
22.	The Municipality has the capacity to implement skills development plans.	1	2	3	4	5
23.	Skills development programmes are assessed and monitored to determine if whether they are achieving the predetermined goals or not.	1	2	3	4	5
24.	The Skills development plan is treated as a strategic priority in the municipality	1	2	3	4	5
25.	Municipal officials are encouraged to attend skills development programmes.	1	2	3	4	5

Item No.	Mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing skills development plans.	Place an X in the box that applies to you				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Not sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
26.	The facilitators and trainers of skills development programmes are highly qualified and meet municipal officials' skills needs.	1	2	3	4	5
27.	The Supervisors make efforts to coach subordinates on how to perform their work well.	1	2	3	4	5
28.	Research and analysis on skills needs and shortcomings is done before skills development plan is administered.	1	2	3	4	5
29.	Municipality considering skills development plans run by internal service providers who are familiar with the organisational objectives and municipal officials.	1	2	3	4	5
30.	Municipality have sufficient budget for implementing skills development plans.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you very much for your time and contribution.

INSTRUMENT - INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING PERFORMANCE IN GREATER-LETABA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY

The purpose of this study is to analyse the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance in the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality. This is an opportunity for you to reflect on your perceptions about the Skills Development Plan as a tool for enhancing performance. Please answer the following questions. Note that there is no right or wrong answer.

SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

1. Gender

Male	1
Female	2

2. Age

Less than 30 years	1
31 – 40 years	2
41 – 50 years	3
51 – 60 years	4
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3. Position in the community

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Mayor	14
Traditional leader	15
Selected community members	16



4. Number of Years in the Position

1 to 5 Years	1
6 to 10 Years	2
11 to 15 Years	3
16 to 20 Years	4
21 Years and Above	5

5. Educational Attainment of Respondents

Primary	1
Secondary	2
Tertiary	3
Others	4

6. Ethnic group

Tsonga (Va-Tsonga)	1
Venda (Vha-Venda)	2
Sepedi (Northern Sotho)	3
English (White)	4

SECTION B: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN AS A TOOL FOR ENHANCING PERFORMANCE

7. What is the role of skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality?

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7.1. What can be done by the Greater Letaba Local Municipality to ensure that the Skills Development Plan positively serves as a tool for enhancing performance?

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8. What is the impact of the Skills Development Plan on performance, especially relating to service delivery?

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9. What are the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan at the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality?

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9.1. What are the causes of the challenges facing the municipality in the implementation of the skills development plans?

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10. What are the mechanisms that can be used to overcome the challenges of implementing the Skills Development Plan?

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Thank you very much for your time and contribution.

TURNITIN REPORT

Skills development plan as a tool for enhancing performance in local government with specific reference to Greater-Letaba Local Municipality

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EDITORIAL LETTER

SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

22 March 2021

School of Management Sciences
University of Venda
Private Bag X5050
Thohoyandou
0950

Dear sir/madam

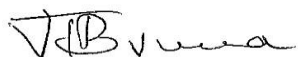
This letter serves to certify that I have proof-read Ms. T. Seopetsa's dissertation, titled, "Skills Development Plan as a Tool for Enhancing Performance in Local Government, with Specific Reference to the Greater-Letaba Local Municipality".

The proof-reading entailed editing some parts of it, where I felt it would make the document more understandable; for example, to avoid wordiness, redundancy, etc. However, I have not tampered with the content of the dissertation, except where I found that this constituted repetition or made the content confusing.

The dissertation is presently ready for examination.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely



V.T. Bvuma
Mobile: 083 423 9227



University of Venda

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