

**The Impact of Corporate Culture on Training and Development at
Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown**

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of

Master of Business Administration

College of Law and Management Studies

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June 2015

Acknowledgements

Foremost, I am grateful to God for carrying me through my years of university education. I dedicate this work to God Almighty. His Grace and Mercy has brought me thus far and I am grateful.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to the following individuals, without whose assistance and an indispensable contribution, this study would not have been possible:

- My Supervisor, Mr Alec Bozas, for providing me with superior guidance and engaging me in challenging intellectual debate.
- My Co-Supervisor, Ms Nomkhosi Luthuli, for ongoing support and guidance.
- My dissertation committee for providing outstanding and professional guidance and marking of my thesis.
- My mother, Thandekile Xaba-Zuma, for her steadfast support.
- My father, Mgodleni Zuma, for his influence and inspiration.
- My wife, Nobuhle Nyathi-Zuma, for her tolerance, appreciation, and support for knowledge.
- My daughter, Nompumelelo Khanyisile Zuma, for her motivation and prayer
- My niece, Nonhlanhla Mabaso, for her exceptional encouragement.
- My cousin, Mzwandile Zuma, for his unwavering belief in my ability.
- My management of Polyoak Packaging Group, for significant and unrelenting support through this journey.
- My respondents, for helping me with the questionnaire and feedback.

Declaration

I, Phillip Mduduzi Zuma, declare that the MBA dissertation entitled '*The impact of corporate culture on training and development at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown*' is not more than 28,000 words in length. This includes references, figures, tables, exclusive tables, and citations. This dissertation contains no material that has already, been submitted for previous research studies conducted for degree or other qualification purposes. All literature consulted has been acknowledged according to academic protocols.

Phillip Mduduzi Zuma

Abstract

Training and development is an important component for the performance and sustainability of all organisations. Different organisations have different cultures that influence how they do things in a particular way. The research problem concerns the existence of corporate culture and its impact on training and development. The objective of the study was to investigate the impact of corporate culture on training and development at Polyoak Packaging in Pinetown in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It will recommend practices that will lead to improved employee engagement and better understanding of corporate culture, to ensure that after training, implementation of knowledge and skills is happening, hence improving performance, and productivity in the organisation.

A qualitative research study was for the purpose of this study undertaken to solve the problem. Qualitative data was collected using an open-ended interview schedule developed specifically for this study by the author. Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select 5 managers, 7 production setters, and 13 packers from the business units of Polyoak Packaging in Pinetown. The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis to assign information and concepts to the various research questions.

The research findings showed a general agreement that corporate culture has an influence on training and employees' commitment, and ultimately improvement of performance and productivity in the organisation.

Conclusions from the study are that communication before and after training; knowledge sharing; and the workplace environment; trainees' support for skills transfer after training; and continuous evaluation and monitoring post training are essential and core parts of an organisation to improve its activities and sustain competitiveness in the industry it serves.

Key terms: Organisation, Culture, Training and Development, Skills Programmes, Performance, Productivity, Environment, Continual Improvement, Communication

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH

1.1 Introduction

South Africa is a developing country and organisations are in the process of improving operational, functional, as well as human resource components. Organisations focus on continuous improvement, and as a result training and development of human capital has become an important area. Organisations carry out training and development in order to improve and become efficient in what they do, and hence continue to play a major part in the market in which they operate and to gain competitive advantage both locally and globally. Organisations around the world and in Africa embark on training and development of employees either formally or informally. These organisations expect employees to learn new skills and apply those skills in what they do when carrying out their duties and tasks. Organisations expect improvements in productivity and increased employee motivation and willingness to do better (Grobler, Warnich, Carrel, Elbert, & Hatfield. (2011). Organisational culture plays a pivotal role that could impact training and development, and this is the reason why this research has been conducted in this area.

1.2 Background to the research

Polyoak Packaging is a privately owned national company consisting of business units that specialise primarily in the design and manufacture of plastic blow moulded, thermo-formed, injection and compression moulded plastic packaging for the dairy, beverage, food, industrial and retail sectors. Its extensive manufacturing and distribution network ensures continuous and excellent customer service across Southern Africa, and the Pinetown branch is a KwaZulu-Natal manufacturer and distributor of quality plastic packaging in which this research study was conducted.

The organisation in KwaZulu-Natal Pinetown has 180 permanent employees (i.e. Production Setters, Supervisors, and Packers) and a 100 Managers in permanent positions at different levels. This constitutes a population of 280 people or more. The research sample was taken from this population. The author for this study is a permanent employee of the organisation

at management level and is one of the skills development facilitators for the Business School in which he developed an interest to understand the impact of culture on training and development in the organisation, and establish whether skills programmes fulfil business objectives.

The Business School is the in-house training facility at Polyoak, founded in 2008 to focus on development and growth of employees through education and training in all the organisation's branches. The organisation addresses the skills development needs through appropriate and relevant training initiatives. Facilitators are drawn from a range of Polyoak competent experts who are regarded as specialist in their fields and who believe in sharing and passing on their knowledge.

It is for this reason, the author wanted to investigate the impact of corporate culture on training and development of employees attending skills programmes provided at the Business School so that improvements could be made where training and development is affected negatively.

Skilled employees are capable of adapting to changing and unpredictable technologies and environments that directly or indirectly affect performance and productivity, either as individuals or as a team (Grobler, *et al.*, 2011). This study focused on the managers and production staff who are directly involved in skills programmes. It is the aim of this study to establish the impact of corporate culture on training and development. It will assess how managers, setters, and packers in the organisation perceive training before and after attending the skills programmes.

1.3 Problem statement of the study

This study investigated the impact of corporate culture on training and development of employees, which the organisation has not done before, hence the lack of knowledge thereby. Lack of knowledge for the organisation to monitor and manage perceptions on corporate culture with respect to employees who undergo training and development programmes within the Polyoak Packaging's Business School is an impending problem that requires investigation.

In a series of informal discussions with core Polyoak managers, it became evident that Polyoak management have no idea of the extent to which corporate culture impacts on the firm. This resulted in this research study being undertaken.

This qualitative research focused on production staff at management and operations level to gain their views on how corporate culture impacts on training and development at Polyoak Pinetown.

1.4 Objectives

This study aimed to determine the impact of corporate culture on training and development at Polyoak Packaging in Pinetown. It planned to examine corporate culture's influence and how it affects employees' performance and productivity after new skills are transferred and implemented. Previous researches have not adequately addressed this area of focus.

The objective of this study is:

- To assess the receptiveness of managers and production employees to training and development
- To understand their views on employee training and development
- To understand their perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace.
- To assess the impact of corporate culture on training and development and its impact on productivity improvements

1.5 Key research questions

The key research questions of this study are as follows:

- What is the perception on receptiveness of training and development?
- What are the views on employee training?
- What is the perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace?
- What is the impact of corporate culture on training and development and on productivity improvements?

1.6 Significance of the research

Global competitiveness requires continuous improvement to gain competitive advantage and increase market share. According to Khan, Khan and Khan (2011) human resources (HR) is the backbone of and an important component of organisations and the reason for organisations investing in training and development which would ultimately increase overall organisational performance and ability to compete in the global and local market.

There is a gap between trained and untrained employees in the organisation, which could affect organisational competitiveness in the marketplace. Understanding the impact of corporate culture becomes fundamental to training and development because of this. Global competitiveness requires organisations to focus on employees' training and development as a crucial element to improve business performance and to become sustainable in a volatile and unpredictable marketplace. The corporate culture is therefore a key element or aspect which needs to be studied to understand how it enables employees to learn and apply acquired skills in order to improve organisational performance and therefore delight customers with better and improved service, (Grobler, *et al* ,. 2011)

1.7 Limitations of the research

The research was conducted in one corporate organisation, Polyoak Packaging located in KwaZulu-Natal, Pinetown. There were no research samples taken from other regions and branches of Polyoak. The research sample was purposively taken from production departments of each business unit, targeting managers, setters and packers. As the research did not include the entire population, its findings relied purely on the sample to provide important and accurate information that could be used by all the branches in other regions to measure the impact of corporate culture on training and development. The assumption was that all employees who participated in this study would be honest in their responses, to provide important and valuable information that would attempt to answer the research questions.

1.8 Chapter outline

Chapter one: This chapter provides the direction and orientation of this research study. It provides the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives, and key research questions, the significance of the research, limitations, and an outline of the chapters.

Chapter two: This chapter provides a review of the literature on the impact of corporate culture on training and development, covering both theory and empirical studies. The literature review sets the scene for the study research topic.

Chapter three: This chapter covers the methods used and its structure is as follows: introduction, research methodology, overview of research studies, and the approach and justification of the method chosen for this study. The author discusses the population, sampling strategy, validity and reliability procedures, construction of the questionnaire, pilot study, data collection, and analysis.

Chapter four: Here the qualitative findings and analysis are presented, together with interpretation based on the study participants' responses.

Chapter five: In this chapter, the qualitative research findings are discussed and compared with relevant literature embedded in this research study. The outcomes of the research form the essential conclusions that may be implemented by Polyoak Packaging in Pinetown to improve the organisation's performance and productivity and to understand the impact of corporate culture and its effect on aspects of human development.

Chapter six: This chapter summarises the dissertation and highlights its benefits and limitations, concluding with recommendations that require consideration and adoption. Lastly, future research opportunities are offered based on the study scope.

1.9 Summary

This chapter has set the scene and outlined how the following chapters will execute the research study.

The next chapter is a review of the literature with regard to the impact of corporate culture on training and development. There is discussion of the theories in order to provide a background to the current study and previous studies

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

The HR management function is an integral component in an organisation. For this component to be effective, training and development becomes an important area of focus. Since organisations deal with people, the question of the impact of organisational culture become inevitable when dealing with people and the environment in which training and development takes place, (Grobler, *et al.*, 2011).

In Chapter one, an outline of the background to the study was presented. In light of the limited research relating to the impact of corporate culture on training and development in manufacturing organisations, this study aims to determine and examine the impact of corporate culture in terms of enabling employees to perform and apply new skills acquired from training programmes. In the real world, training should impart new knowledge and skills when it is relevant and applied based on employee and organisational requirements. When training and development is effective, the target employees and groups should improve the way they do things, and as the organisation grows, people also grow their skills and required competency level.

2.2 Review of the literature

Taking into account the limited research in this area of focus, as comprehensive an overview as possible of the literature in relation to the phenomenon under study will be provided in this chapter. Various literature was consulted, using the following databases: Science Direct, Ebsco Host and Medline, and books using the following key words: Impact of corporate or organisational culture on training and development.

The search revealed various appropriate publications that included relevant articles, reference and citations, that were used in the study. A reasonable number of articles were found to be relevant and were used in the review. It must be noted that there were articles

that were partially outdated that were also included because there was no newer relevant information that could be used for critical arguments in the study.

Adeniji, Osibanjo and Abiodun (2013:119) assert that an organisation's training plan should be implemented with a view to meet all required learning to assist employees to be competent in performing their jobs. Employees' competencies include knowledge, behaviours, and / or skills they need to perform in the workplace. In order for the organisation to realise its objectives and better organise the HR component, training and development is key.

This qualitative research study and the literature that follows were steered by the conceptual model shown in Figure 2.1, indicating aspects which the author perceived as relevant.

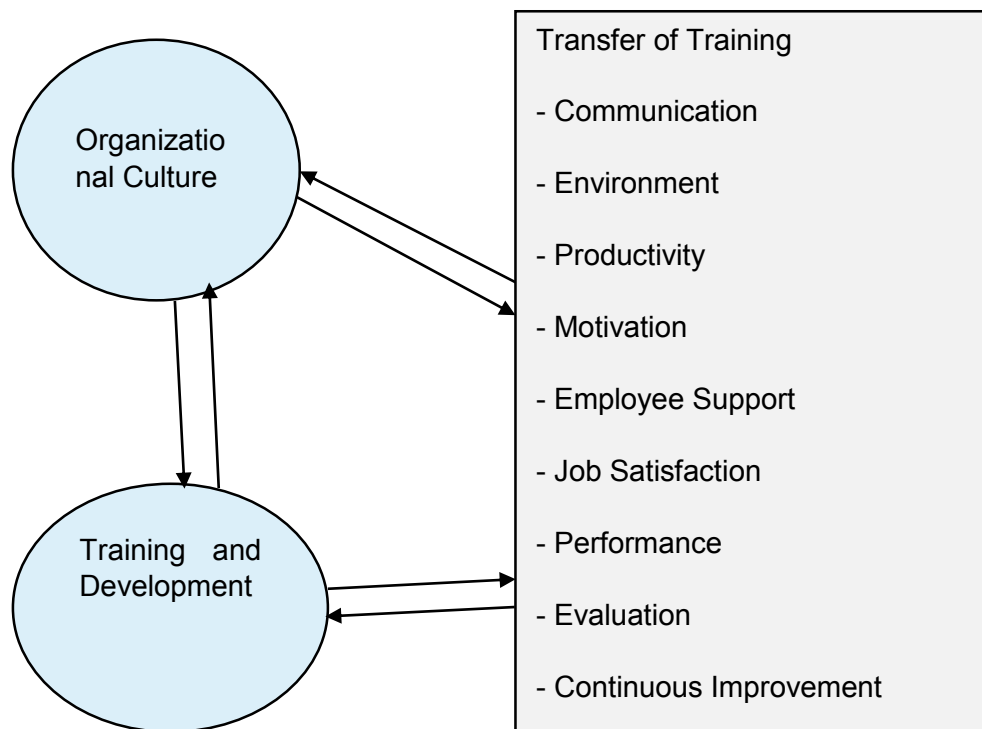


Figure 2.1: The proposed research model.

Source: Adeniji *et al.*, (2013:124).

2.2.1 Impact of corporate culture on training and development

It is fundamental to understand how the current literature views and argues about corporate culture and its impact on training and development, in order to try to answer the research question.

Employee training and development programmes are an important priority for South African businesses. The country has adopted the training strategy to follow other countries in the world. Strong economies who are major partners with South Africa spend in a region of 10% of budget on training and development because this component is seen as a key factor to meet strategic business operational goals and keep up with international competition as well as technological changes, and social and economic realities, (Grobler *et al.*, 2011).

According to Schein (2010) culture is defined as a pattern of shared basic assumptions that management and employees have learned as it solved organisational problems of external adaptation and internal integration and produced intended results to be considered valid. New members are taught in the correct way to perceive and be able to think and feel in relation to those challenges and problems. Figure 2.2 shows the level of culture in an organisation.

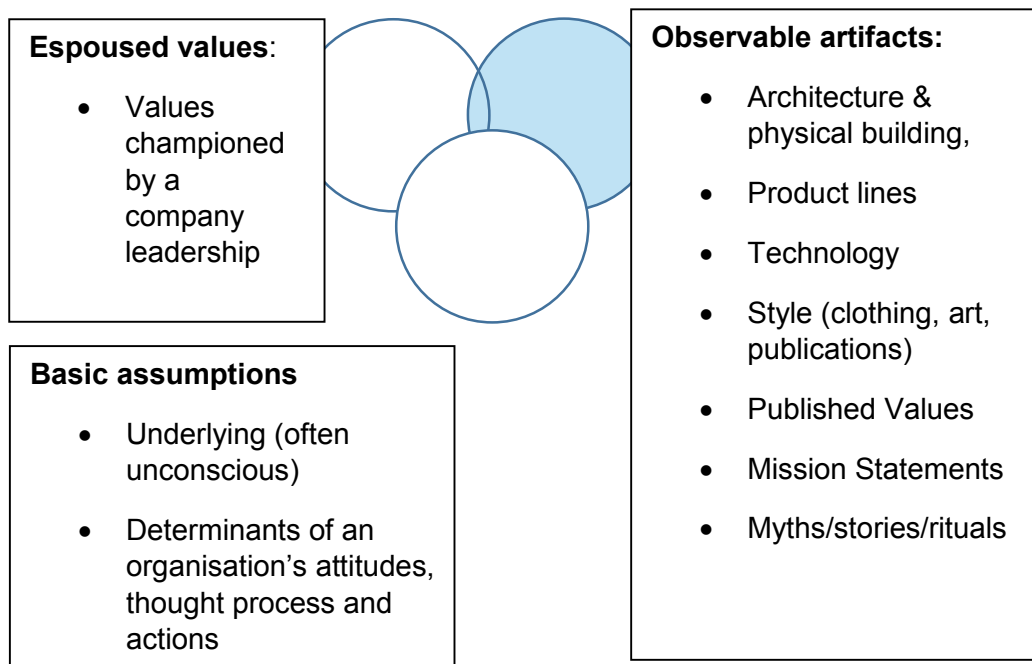


Figure 2.2: Levels of culture.

Source: Schein (2010).

Schein (2010) further defines organisational culture by three cognitive levels. The first level, artifacts, refers to visible organisational attributes that can be felt and heard by observers. The building, the way people dress and how people interact with one another in the organisation are all artifacts.

The espoused values level deals with the expressed culture of an organisation's members, in the form of, among others, the mission statement and rituals. At this level leadership of the organisation, when faced with business challenges, would convince subordinates or the team to share the perception of successful solutions that would ultimately begin to take the shape and make the process of cognitive transformation within the organisation. First it transforms into shared values and/or beliefs, and finally into shared assumptions. The transformation process would continue to be used if it is implied that the solution is correct.

Basic assumptions, is the third and deepest level of tacit assumptions in an organisation. These cultural elements are unseen and unidentifiable cognitively in everyday interactions between management and employees. Schein (2010) states that culture is not adopted in a single day but is formed over time as the management and employees go through different stages or changes, adapt to the external environment and solve challenging problems within the organisation.

Corporate culture is the manifestation of an organisation's collective values, beliefs, and individual and team behaviours. Robins, Judge, Odendaal, and Roodt (2009) concur that organisational culture is the way in which members share their perceived meanings and distinguish the company from other organisations. These beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts are conscious and unconscious, and are central to the way the organisation functions and in maintenance of programmes in training and development of employees.

The organisational values include a belief that everyone has an important and influential contribution to make within the company. In building on the above statement Daft (2010) believes that amongst the manager's most important duties is the creation and influence of an adaptive culture which allows training and development opportunities for employees in the organisation. Management should be seen to allow employees to develop in their areas of responsibility.

Jones and George (2011) define corporate learning as a process through which management seeks to improve employees' desire and ability to understand and manage the organisation and its task environment. As a result, managers and employees can make decisions that continuously raise corporate effectiveness.

Adele and Anthonia (2013) support the view that organisational culture is core to any organisation's activities, and impacts on overall effectiveness and quality of product and services. In addition, Schein (2010) views organisational culture as a vigorous force within the organisation, which is interactive and is shaped by employees and management movements, behaviours and attitudes. In support of the above assertion, Kozlowski and Klein (2000) cited by Adele and Anthonia (2013) asserted that individual employees require a supportive organisational culture to guide and assist them to achieve their objectives and to continue to shape individual performance. In order to make this happen, the culture of the organisation must be conducive.

According to Adeniji *et al.*, (2013) training and development play a vital role in optimisation and deployment of HR, that further helps employees to achieve their goals in the organisation. Organisational culture development also improves through building positive perceptions and feelings about the organisation.

2.2.2 Literature on training and development

The purpose of training and development programmes among others, are to improve performance, update employee skills, avoid managerial obsolescence, solve organisational problems, prepare for promotion and satisfy personal growth. An organisation's training and development is an important and comprehensive component that helps to deliberate on the skills, knowledge, and employees' attitudes which are necessary for competitive advantage, and to achieve organisational goals, (Grobler, *et al.*, 2011).

According to Noe (2002) training and development is defined as a systematic process aimed at changing employees' knowledge and skills and ultimately their attitude in order to meet organisational objectives through improved performance.

Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert, and Hatfield (2011) argue that a learning organisation is one in which learning is open-ended and consciously takes place at all different organisational levels. Trained employees in the organisation improve their capabilities, knowledge, and skills that prove to be a major source of competitive advantage in a global market

In their global journal Khan *et al.*, (2011) agree that training and development plays a vital and distinct role in the achievement of goals by incorporating the interests of the organisation and its employees. It is imperative to note that South African organisations are not unique, and they experience and share the same global challenges as other organisations at national and international levels.

In support of the above assertion, Robin *et al.*, (2009) opine that training and development in South Africa is a requirement for all citizens. The South African Government has put a legal framework in place to support training and development initiatives, as follows:

- The Skills and Development Act, 97 of 1998
- The Skills Development Levies Act, 9 of 1999
- The South African Qualifications Authority Act, 58 of 1995
- The National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act, 56 of 1999
- The Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 52 of 2000, and
- The Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998

The South African government implemented a legal framework to take responsibility and obligate itself to the commitment of training and development of all employee across industries. The acts introduced relevant structures and policies to serve as guidelines for institutions to focus on skills and development investments, to improve the quality and relevance of training that will play a major role in the country's current and future economic conditions, (Robin *et al.*, 2009).

Wick, Pollock, and Jefferson (2010) state that learning and development programmes create value when the new knowledge and skills they impart are transferable out of learning environment and into the work of the organisation and the individual. The above statement by Wick *et al.*, (2010) raises the question as to whether company-based training creates an environment for skills transfer.

Niazi (2011) argues that training and development is a process of obtaining and transferring knowledge, skills, and abilities that are required to do specific jobs and tasks. Therefore, a strategic component helps the business to meet its current and future challenges.

The organisation needs to achieve its objectives and consequently, management should understand that the need to develop employees is compelling and inevitable, because sound training and development will contribute heavily to increased productivity and quality of

products. If the needs for employee development are met in the organisation, this could improve employees' motivation, amongst other things, and encourage employees to want to acquire more skills and knowledge to make themselves competitive, Niazi (2011).

Robin *et al.*,(2009) assert that training and development interventions at all organisations are duly deliberated to teach employees the necessary skills, knowledge, required attitudes and competencies to perform their work to satisfaction and make the contributions that are needed and valued by the organisation.

Grobler *et al.*, (2011) argue that a learning organisation is one in which learning is open-ended and consciously takes place at all different organisational levels. Trained employees in the organisation improve their capabilities, knowledge and skills, that prove to be a major source of competitive advantage in a global market, (Enalga & Imran 2013).

2.2.3 Literature on the role of training on employee morale and growth

Effective training and development leads to more productive work and greater personal satisfaction and job enrichment, and makes employees feel that the organisation is interested in their advancement. It is therefore crucial for organisations to align their work environment and culture in order to have a positive impact on the transfer of training and employees' decision to apply what they learn at training interventions. The corporate culture, supervisor support, and peer support are dimensions that impact on transfer of skills in an organisation. The organisation must be ready with a conducive environment that permits its training interventions, (Nel *et al.*, 2012).

In building on the above argument, training is viewed as a systematic process, which organisations initiate to create a permanent and ongoing change of attitudes, skills and knowledge of all employees, (Kraiger 2002).

Akoojee (2012) asserts that fundamental changes in national development in South Africa are inevitable, and training and development provides a significant backdrop to understand the challenges and nature of South Africa's development after 1994. In order to meet these challenges, organisations should clearly define and understand employee development. By definition, development is the knowledge, skills and attitudes that managers need to acquire to manage organisations effectively, and should be future focused,(Nel *et al.*, 2012).

According to, (Nel *et al.*, 2012), training is a learning experience, because it seeks permanent and ongoing transformation of an individual employee to improve his or her ability to do the

job effectively and efficiently. It is a deliberate intervention, task orientated and specifically focused on the job, and relevant tasks.

In addition to the above deliberations, it is argued that development is the improvement of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all employees of the organisation are required to attain in order to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently, and is carried out according to future requirement, (Nel *et al.*, 2012).

South Africa is a developing country and all corporates are in the process of improving operational resources, including employees, in order to be able to participate competitively and gain advantage in local and international markets.

It is asserted that a handful of the adult population is functionally illiterate and only a small portion of the South African population studies further and obtains a post-school qualification. This results in the country suffering a serious skills shortage in almost all job fields, firstly because not enough people have had training, secondly because globalisation has made it possible for skilled people to work abroad, and thirdly because skills training in the past had no alignment to the skills requirements of the country,(Robins *et al.*, 2009).

Hence, the development promulgation of the Skills and Levy Act, that binds companies to up-skill their employees. Although training is and will be provided to employees, does it benefit the company – or are employees doing it for the sake of keeping their jobs? Companies are facing this problem.

Organisations should prioritise training and development assessment to ensure continual alignment with operational requirements to achieve excellent results. The organisation can achieve results by providing an enabling and conducive corporate culture and environment for all employees. The impact of corporate culture will provide evidence of whether the gap between it's current position and desired results have been reduced to a minimal, hence the achievement of corporate goals, (Grobler *et al.*, 2011).

Building on the above argument, the South African Skills, and Levy Act (97 of 1998 and 9 of 1999) states that companies have to develop the skills of South African employees, and hence have to:

- Improve the standard and quality of life of employees and their competency in the labour market.
- Improve the productivity and competitiveness of the organisations.
- Improve employees' self-employability.

- Raise the level of investment in training and development in organisations.
- Encourage organisations to continually use the workplace as an active learning environment and provide opportunities to acquire new skills to improve work experience and
- Encourage employees' participation in learning programmes.

Grobler (2011) argues that, continuous improvement in an operation means different things to different people. Some view it as lower operating costs and reduced inventory, while others describe it in terms of increased efficiency and better quality. The process of improvement in an organisation often involves management setting one of these goals and employees making changes in their areas of responsibility to achieve it, then management setting a new goal that well trained employees can focus on to achieve.

Furthermore, the above argument concurs with Robins *et al.*'s (2009) assertion that fundamental to great performance is continuous measurement of results to weigh benefits and align the training and development strategy with corporate culture and the existing technology and needs of the organisation. The precise application of excellent training and development in operations will influence the overall outcome of corporate performance and meet intended goals.

Organisations train employees in order to improve knowledge and increase performance. This ultimately should improve the way in which the organisation does things.

2.2.4 Literature on transfer and implementation of training

The characteristics of the work environment after training may affect transfer outcomes. These characteristics may, amongst others, include the presence of situational factors, such as support from supervisors and co-employees and the opportunity to apply one's knowledge and skills on the job. The employees who had discussions with their managers before and after training shows significantly higher levels of skills application and felt more accountability for application of new skills on the workplace, (Wick *et al.*, 2010).

In building on the above assertion, Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) cited by Abdullahi, Ismail, Sakiru, & Abudallahi (2013), argued that organisational support is a situation or condition that constrains or assists trained employees to apply skills they have learned on the job. Kraiger (2002) argued that transfer of training is the degree to which trained employees are able to

apply skills, knowledge, and attitudes gained in a training context for the job. Some organisations have struggled tremendously with transfer of training. In a perfect environment employees should learn and transfer all acquired knowledge and skills to their jobs, (Wick *et al.*, 2010).

According to Baldwin and Ford (1988) cited by Wick *et al.*, (2010), there are three main and important determinants of training transfer which should be understood by organisations as follows;

- Training design as an enabling factor;
- Individual trainee characteristics and factors; and
- Workplace environment and skills transfer climate.

In this study, transfer of training is an important element that will be tested using the research tools at Polyoak Packaging in Pinetown.

Cascio (2006) asserts that a global trends in the economy, ever changing technology and the pace of continual improvement, change, and development are growing faster, providing clear indications that training, and development remains significant. Organisations and all stakeholders should always remain focused and continue to pay thoughtful attention to training programmes offered to employees.

According to Krietner (2013) the gap between what the employees do know and what they should know increases. This gap exists even after careful selection and screening of job applicants. In order to gain desired results and attain competitive edge, organisations should focus on effective training and development of its HR. Training remains an important and a vital component for improving organisational performance; it improves the level of competency of both the employee and an organisation. It narrows the gap between what is expected to happen and what is happening with regard to company targets and actual work performance. Many employers continue to have uncertainties about the cost and extent of tangible business returns from training; nevertheless, the development of skills has been identified as a key factor in sharpening competitiveness, and hence customer satisfaction.

Torrington and Hall (2014) viewed the training environment and the structure of organisations, and emphasised that internal political and cultural factors may affect the application and results of training and development in an organisation.

There are perceived and tangible benefits that training can bring into the organisation. According to Cole (2004) training in an organisation can achieve:

- High morale for all employees who receive training, resulting in increased motivation and confidence in what they do.
- Low cost production – training eliminates risks because trained personnel make better and economic use of raw material and equipment to reduce and prevent wastage.
- Low staff turnover – training somehow brings a sense of security to the workplace, which reduces labour turnover and absenteeism.
- Change management – training helps managers to control change by increasing understanding and involvement of employees in the change process, also providing the skills and abilities needed to adjust to new situations and requirements.
- Training provides recognition and greater responsibility and the possibility of increased pay and promotion.
- It also, gives employees a feeling of satisfaction and achievement, and widens opportunities for career progression.
- The organisation thus improves the availability and quality of employees.

According to Dolezalek (2004), in a global perspective, companies spend billions of dollars on professional training in order to sustain continuous improvement. These companies expect return on investment from training provided, and as such, employee satisfaction, increased job performance, retention, and decreased absenteeism is expected. (Holton,2005) asserted that in order to reach the above outcome, transfer of training should always be allowed to take place in an organisation. In agreement with the above assertion, Russ-Eft, Dickison and Levine (2010) further stated that transfer of training is the process by which trained employees' knowledge and skills are demonstrated in the work setting.

According to Sattar (2011) it is imperative for employees to share all the trained skills and knowledge with other employees after training has been attended, as this would enable transfer and creation of knowledge on a continuous basis. This strengthens arguments in the literature that support promulgation of knowledge sharing in the workplace.

In summary,the following factors are present in the transfer of knowledge;

Perceived utility: employees return to work after training and believe that they will be able to utilize their new skills and knowledge and perform more effectively.

Expectations: employees believe they are expected to use their new skills and receive positive recognition for doing it and expect negative consequences of not using new skills.

The organisation would link development, recognition and performance and track progress for all trained individuals.

Opportunity: they expect to be provided with opportunity to apply new skills and knowledge on the job and are provided with resources needed to do the job, e.g. time, tasks, assistance, and materials.

Feedback and coaching: trained employees expect to receive constructive input and assistance from managers and other employees.

Managerial engagement: active management support is expected and discussions before and after training expected to help identify opportunities for new skills application and eliminate obstacles.

Work group impact: co-workers are expected to encourage the application of the new skills learned to effectively do the work.

Personal experience: Employees expect positive outcomes after using what they have learned, and expect increased job satisfaction, productivity improvement, additional respect and advancement, (Wick *et al.*, 2010).

2.2.5 Employee training and development

Training and development of employees is an essential component in the HR strategy of the organisation to drive and effect continuous improvement.

According to Cascio (2006) global economic and technological trends continue to put pressure on innovations, and require organisations to adopt faster changes and developments to remain relevant in the competitive market. Organisations and stakeholders must adopt and plan for ceaseless human capital developments through learning and training.

According to Gordon (2007) the organisation needs to be aware of the following requirements for training to take place:

- **Motivation:** Human beings will be willing to learn new skills and knowledge if they are motivated and have the will to accept new knowledge. Where there is weak motivation, there will be no commitment – no matter how good the training that is provided is.

- Positive reinforcement: This should follow immediately after training, to enable trainees to feel responsible and supported by the organisation.

When employees are motivated, they are ready to learn more knowledge that makes their work execution more interesting and enjoyable. Training is planned to modify employees' behaviour and increase the skills level and competencies to carry out duties effectively and efficiently (Gordon 2007).

Organisations should design and implement their training effectively to enhance performance and productivity. In building on the above, Beardwell and Holden (1993) cited by (Grobler, *et al.*, 2011) argued that the recognition of the importance of training to compete in the market leads to organisational success and realisation of benefits from training and development investments. It is further stated that technological developments have progressively led organisations to realise that success depends on the abilities and skills of their trained employees, and is the reason for organisations continuing to spend money on training and development.

In building on the above assertion, Krietner (2013) argued that no matter how carefully job applicants are screened, typically a gap remains between what the employee does know and what they should know. If the organisation wants to gain the competitive edge in a particular industry, it must provide effective training of its employees.

Training and development is therefore a strategic input for improved organisational performance to increase the level of individual and organisational competence and reconcile the gap between what should happen and what is happening with respect to desired and actual standards.

Success or failure of a training programme is recurrently correlated to the recognition and application of basic psychological attitudes, for example motivation and perceived management support.

According to Cole (2004), in his book *Personnel and human resource management*, training is a knowledge activity directed towards the attainment of specific skills for the purpose of a business requirement and meeting of organisational objectives.

The following section will look at the literature with regard to increased performance and productivity as a result of trained employees in the organisation.

2.2.6 Literature on performance and productivity

Skills elevation has remained an inescapable focus for organisations that want to maintain sustainability with regard to competitiveness in both existing and new markets. All stakeholders have adopted and implemented important measures to ensure this focus is maintained adequately.

According to Lai and Lee (2007) organisational culture influences the successful achievement of employees' knowledge sharing and morale; hence changes in productivity become evident in meeting organisational objectives.

De Grip and Sauermann (2013) argue that the manner in which training leads to higher productivity is rather obscure, in that it does not explain and reveal whether it is skills levels, higher knowledge of motivated employees, or the organisation's loyalty which drives performance and productivity after training. This also poses the question of whether the organisation has assessment measures in place.

Wick *et al.*, (2010), in their book, *The six disciplines of breakthrough learning*, tabulated major categories of post-learning outcomes and ways to document them, which is relevant in support of the above arguments.

Table 2.1: Major categories of post-learning outcomes

| Type of outcome | Potential data sources | Potential data collection |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|
| Change in behaviour | Participants themselves Participant managers Customers Trained observers | Survey Interviews Observation |
| Improved opinion by key stakeholders | Customers Direct reports Managers, others | Satisfaction survey Interviews Focus groups |
| Improved business metrics | Independent tracking resources | Data extraction |
| Improved work product | Sample of work | Expert review or observation |

Source: Wick *et al.*, (2010).

The organisation should identify and assess indicators to confirm whether training and development has achieved desired results, and support employees to sustain overall improvements to meet organisational objectives.

The Skills Development Act of South Africa has made provision for a number of components that are important for HR development strategy and Productivity South Africa *inter alia* performs the following function in relation to this study (Grobler *et al.*, 2011):

- Promote a great workplace culture of sustainable productivity;
- Develop productivity competencies;
- Facilitate and evaluate improvement of productivity in all areas within the organisation; and
- Undertake productivity-related research.

This affirmation highlights the importance of training and development in South Africa's perspective and that of organisations in all industries. An increase in skills and improvement in productivity are elements of human capital training and knowledge sharing.

De Grip and Sauermann (2013) assert that positive effects of training on different measures of productivity may be explained by an increase in skill levels. As a long-term strategy training and development of employees is necessary to optimise performance in the organisation. It

is a good policy to hire and keep quality employees and develop their skills, knowledge, and abilities to improve productivity. It is therefore crucial for organisations to encourage a culture that is appropriate for training. The organisation has a prerogative to understand and eliminate impediments that prohibit progress; employees must be encouraged, to give suggestions to improve the manner in which they do things in their areas of responsibility, (Wick *et al.*, 2010).

2.3 Summary

The relevant literature was thoroughly reviewed to examine the impact of corporate culture on training and development in order to answer the research question. Authors' arguments in literature, were studied, analysed, and documented in order to test and strengthen arguments in the following chapters.

Research studies suggest that an organisation's work environment affects the transfer of training and employees' way of thinking to apply what they have learned in training programmes. They also share the sentiment that training and development is key to organisational improvement and capability to compete effectively in the industry in which it operates.

The literature presented views and arguments on employee receptiveness and views on training and development element and invariably argued that perception and management support may affect implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace. It also highlighted that performance and productivity improvements could be either positively or negatively affected by corporate culture in the organisations.

The primary aim of this chapter was to review the literature relating to receptiveness to training and development, understand views on employee training and development, understand the perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace and the impact of corporate culture on training and development and its impact on productivity improvements.

Chapter three, which follows, discusses the research methodology of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this qualitative study was to determine the impact of corporate culture on training and development at the business units of Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown. Training programmes are carried out in the company's internal Business School for employees from different departments. This study includes structured questionnaires that were completed by targeted participants. The study further aimed to answer the research questions that were formulated in Chapter one, restated below:

- What is the perception on receptiveness of training and development?
- What are the views on employee training?
- What is the perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace?
- What is the impact of corporate culture on training and development and on productivity improvements?

This chapter presents a discussion of the research methods and design and the process of selecting employees to participate in the study. The chapter will also include discussion of materials and appropriate instruments to be used in the research. Data collection, assumptions, and ethical information will be included. Lastly, there will be a conclusion that summarises the chapter.

3.2 Research methodology

This study aimed to determine the impact of corporate culture on training and development. The construct of the research study is that of phenomenological and qualitative design. Phenomenology is a qualitative research method in which the authors attempt to understand how one or more individuals experience a certain phenomenon.

Creswell (2003) defines phenomenology as a research strategy of inquiry in which the author attempts to identify the crux of people's experiences about a certain phenomenon. In an attempt to understand the phenomenon, an appropriate approach and techniques should be employed for this research.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) an appropriate research design is an outline to be used to collect, measure and analyse data. A phenomenological research method will facilitate the study on the impact of corporate culture on training and development, and measure respondents' experiences and responses in the context in which they perceive and experience it. For the purpose of this study, three research paradigms are discussed.

3.2.1 Qualitative research

According to Strauss and Corbin (2008) qualitative research is a type of research that produces findings not arrived at by any statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Qualitative research can refer to research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions and feelings, as well as about organisational functioning, social movements, and cultural phenomena.

The qualitative research approach is best used when the methods are:

- ✓ Complementary to the preferences and personal understandings of the investigator,
- ✓ Congruent with the research problem, and
- ✓ Used to discover areas about which, little information is known.

Miles and Huberman (2014) articulated an extended position, and specified that qualitative research is conducted:

- ✓ To confirm previous research on a topic in question,
- ✓ When it provides more in-depth detail about something that is already known,
- ✓ To gain a new perspective or a new way of viewing, and
- ✓ To expand the scope of an existing research study.

Listed below are qualitative research methods:

- ✓ Narrative or historical, which researches people, places and events in the past.
- ✓ Phenomenology, a form of qualitative study of the phenomena concerning one or more individuals.
- ✓ Ethnography, which deals with shared attitudes, values, and norms, patterns of interaction, perspectives, and language of a group of people.

- ✓ Grounded theory, a qualitative approach which generates and develops theories from collected data.
- ✓ Case study – research that focuses on providing a detailed justification of one or more event or situation, (Miles and Huberman, 2014).

3.2.2 Quantitative research

This research method relies primarily on collection of quantitative data in order to analyse and resolve a research problem. The following are types of quantitative research:

- Experimental research; which determines cause and effect relationships through manipulation of independent variables
- Non-experimental research; in which the independent variables are not manipulated and have no random assignment to groups. Examples of non-experimental research include causal-comparative research in which the primary independent variable of interest is categorical, e.g. males vs. females, and correlational research in which the primary independent variable of interest is quantitative and correlation coefficient are used to determine the strength and direction of relationships of variables, Sekaran and Bougie (2013).

3.2.3 Mixed-methods research

In mixed-methods research both quantitative and qualitative research approaches are used in a single research study. The author may find the need to use a combination of methods in a research study when the data reveals patterns regarding the phenomenon of particular interest. When theories and hypotheses are developed, methods that are more rigorous are applied to test hypotheses in order to answer the research question and contribute to new knowledge, Sekaran & Bougie (2013).

3.2.4 Approach used for the study (qualitative method)

This qualitative study sought to investigate employees' experiences and understandings of the impact of corporate culture on training and development. The author was interested in exploring whether corporate culture has an impact on training and development.

This research approach is interactive, naturalistic, emergent, interpretive, and humanistic. Although qualitative research is characterised by an emergent and flexible design, a basic research plan was necessary to guide this exploration. The following sections detail the research plan by discussing qualitative methods and the procedures used in data collection and data analysis.

Based on this, it is evident that qualitative methods were most appropriate for this study, the best-suited approach coming from the phenomenological perspective.

3.3 Population

The population for the study comprised all business units in Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown. There are 280 permanent employees including management. The sample was taken from, Production managers, production setters, and packers for the purpose of the study.

3.4 Sampling strategy

Purposive or theoretical sampling is used in qualitative research to focus on those known to experience the phenomenon of interest. It is a strategic and purposeful selection of information-rich participants and used non-probability purposive sampling to ensure that it targeted participants who were relevant and able to provide valuable information due to their knowledge, experience, and background. The sample was restricted to 5 managers, 7 production setters and 13 permanent packers using stratified, purposive sample of people with experience and who have attended Polyoak training programmes.

The selected participants have attended more than two training programmes in Business School. The author wanted to gain an in-depth understanding of participants' perceptions of

their experiences in relation to the research topic. The sample number was determined in an effort to have a minimum of four participants from each category of the production division.

Quantitative research methods use random probability sampling whereas in qualitative research there are no rules for determining the sample size.

For the purpose of this research, the sample size is reasonable to provide valuable qualitative information to answer the research question. The study used 25 questionnaires. The response rate was 100% as all targeted respondents managed to read and complete the questionnaire during normal working hours in the presence of the author who helped respondents to understand where more clarity was required.

3.5 Validity

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it intended to measure. In this study, the questions as the measuring instrument were consistent in measuring the impact of corporate culture on training and development. The responses were identical and reasonable in that they were relevant to what was asked and expected from the respondents. These questions were able to draw out facts and employees' experiences for the study.

The method that was used tested the author's theory and the rigour of the research. The author targeted employees who are expert at or have experience in the subject to participate in the study. Participants were not forced to participate. In this regard, the author ensured that there was no harm to participants and participation was voluntary.

Furthermore, the information collected from the participants will be kept confidential, and the identity of participants is kept anonymous. In ensuring that ethical considerations in research were met, the author was required to complete and submit a signed 'ethical clearance', where the author agreed to abide by the university's code of ethics that entails the principles discussed above.

The following ethical principles were explained to the participants before commencement of the study:

- ✓ No harm to participants,
- ✓ Confidentiality,
- ✓ Anonymity, and
- ✓ Voluntary participation.

Triangulation is a qualitative research method used to check and establish the validity of a study. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) triangulation ensures that research is addressed from multiple perspectives, which could be methods triangulation during data collection, data triangulation from different sources at different times, research triangulation where different researchers collect and analyse data and theory triangulation used to interpret and analyse data.

Research is based on what is around us in the world and what we can possibly discover and in business, research would deal with the following most essential perspectives:

Positivism: In this perspective the world operates by laws of cause and effect that we can distinguish when scientific method and deductive reasoning is applied.

Constructivism is interested in how people view the world and the surroundings as they interact with others, and the context in which interaction takes place.

Critical realism takes the view that measures a phenomenon i.e. people's attitudes, feelings, and emotions, are subjective and generally result in a flawed collection of data, and therefore triangulation is required.

Pragmatism takes the standpoint that objective, subjective meanings and observable phenomena may produce valuable knowledge, depending on the study questions (Sekaran & Bougie 2013). This research process uses the constructivism and a critical realism perspective.

In the context of this study, triangulation was not accomplished because all participants; managers and setters/packers are viewed as experts and sufficient evidence and information is presented for the study.

The participants were informed that they had the freedom to stop participating at any stage of the study, should they feel uncomfortable. The author only undertook the study on receipt of ethical clearance from the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

3.6 Reliability

Reliability refers to measurement of the quality of the data collected in research. The reliability of a measure indicates the extent to which the results are without bias. It indicates stability and consistency of the instrument in use, and helps to assess the effectiveness of a measure, (Sekaran & Bougie 2013). Qualitative research data collection should provide evidence for the perspective under investigation, which provides an opportunity to explore the themes arising from data analysis. According to Kassirjian (1977, cited by Sekaran and Bougie

(2013) reliability can be defined as a degree of consistency between coders processing the same data.

The data collection procedure was applied consistently throughout this study. The author used individually administered questionnaires to collect data from targeted respondents. The questionnaires were handed out to respondents for completion. All questions were completed in the absence of the author, to avoid the author having an influence, after instructions were given to the respondents for clarification purposes.

3.7 Construction of questionnaire

A comprehensive research instrument was developed and tested before the investigation started. In this research, an open-ended interview questionnaire was used to collect information. The questionnaire was developed after discussions with the Business School National Training Manager as well as Production Managers. The questionnaire was divided into two sections, as follows:

- **Section A:** For managers, with 18 questions to be answered.
- **Section B:** For production setters and packers, 16 questions to be answered.

The rationale for two separate questionnaires was the level of comprehension from the setter and packer sub-groups. These groups, especially the packers, required the questionnaire to be further simplified in order to collect data.

The managers were able to answer questions during pre-testing whereas setter and packers with a lower levels of English literacy, had difficulty in understanding the questions.

The charts used for the demographics section of the findings were designed by the author, based on the formation of fields of respondents that were targeted and answered the questionnaire.

3.8 Pilot study

The pilot study involved issuing of the questionnaire to five participants, who were able to give reliable feedback based on their experience in the subject. The author wanted to test the sample questionnaire in order to assess the type and appropriateness of the questions for use on the study.

This was to ensure that the data that would be gained from the questions were valid and reliable. The instrument's reliability was assessed through test; re-test reproducibility by asking the participants to complete the questionnaire on more than one occasion.

3.9 Data collection

The author used a qualitative open-ended interview questionnaire for data collection, and the employees were carefully and purposefully selected as experts on the subject to participate in the study.

Qualitative research can be conducted by utilizing a variety of data collection techniques, or by choosing one technique in particular. For the purpose of this research, a questionnaire was personally administered to respondents in three groups before the beginning of the production shifts. The respondents were briefed and where there were questions to clarity, the researcher was available to ensure that English aptitude was addressed to allow respondents to provide accurate answers on all questionnaires. The open-ended questions allowed respondents the freedom to answer questions in their own way of expression.

3.9.1 Informed consent

The respondents received a complete research synopsis upfront to ensure that they were objective and willing to provide the best information possible. The informed consent letter communicated the research study subject's purpose, procedure and the time required to answer the questions reasonably. It also informed the respondents about the benefits of the study as well as the confidentiality of their information. The participants had the right not to participate if they did not wish to do so.

3.9.2 Confidentiality

The author informed participants that records of the subject will be kept in a secure location for a minimum of three years after completion of the study project and then shredded. Each participant was aware that participation in this research study was voluntary and confidential.

The participants' identities remain strictly confidential and will not be used directly or in association with any data or information. Respondents recorded information in the questionnaire response spaces. The author had the option of using a recording device to ensure the accuracy of interpretation and analysis of information when the need arose. There was no requirement to use recording device for this study.

3.10 Data analysis

The data analysis requires reporting of significant and insignificant results and handling of outliers or missing data. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013) there is a difference in analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, in that the qualitative approach has few styles that could be used for data analysis.

In ensuring coherent inclusiveness and consistency of responses, data editing was carried out by the author. Identified mistakes and data gaps were therefore rectified as soon as possible. The data was analysed qualitatively.

The research data analysis was presented with tables, charts, and graphs to ensure easy understanding of the analysis. The data was reviewed after the answers were received from the respondents. These were discussed, analysed and interpreted into meanings to lay the foundation for codification. Creswell (2003) asserts that content analysis categorises, synthesises and interprets qualitative text data.

The analysis will identify patterns of responses of the same ideas and relevance to participants' experiences and perspectives about the impact of corporate culture on training and development.

Finally, the report will present the findings, limitations, individual and independent insight as well as generalisation of the research study in question.

3.11 Summary

Chapter three discussed the research methodology that was used in this qualitative research study. It outlined the research questions, the design, and data collection procedures chosen for the primary research study. This chapter included information on qualitative data analysis and identification of categories that emanate from participants' responses on the research

questions. It discussed the research design relevance to answer research questions and population strategic assumptions. Study limitations and ethical reassurances were discussed.

The qualitative methodology utilised, comprised of a questionnaire for respondents to be completed to answer the research questions. The study population and samples were discussed, including procedures for administering the questionnaire.

The research study discussed issues of data reliability and validity and analysis of qualitative findings.

Chapter four presents the research study findings and analysis.

List of questions from the questionnaire, linked to each objective:

Objective one / Theme one: Managers perception on employees' receptiveness to training and development

Question 1: How did you become aware of the training and development needs in your division?

Question 2: How does corporate culture impact on the company attitude to training and development?

Question 3: How does corporate culture impact on the company attitude to transfer of training?

Question 4: Additional information: Is there any valuable information or tools that you would like to share that would help in assessing the impact of Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown corporate culture on training and development?

Objective one / Theme one: Production Setters'/Packers perception on receptiveness to training and development

Question 1: Are you aware of your skills training needs?

Question 2: Do you believe you need to improve your skills level?

Question 3: Does Polyoak Packaging believe in training its people?

Question 4: Does the company know if you are using what you have learnt in class?

Objective two/Theme two: Managers' views on training and development

Question 1: Are trainees responding positively to training?

Question 2: Are employees willing to use what they have learnt when they perform their duties?

Question 3: What would be a good method to monitor the implementation of new skills in the workplace?

Objective two / Theme two: Production Setters' and Packers' views on training and development.

Question 1: Do you use the lessons you learned in class when you get back into the workplace?

Question 2: How could the company measure (see) if you are using the lessons learnt in the classroom, when back at work?

Question 3: What do you believe would be the best way to implement what you have learnt?

Objective three / Theme three: Manager's perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace.

Question 1: What guidelines could be used to measure receptiveness to training and development?

Question 2: Are employees receiving sufficient support to be able to use what they have learned?

Question 3: Are employees able to implement what they have learned?

Question 4: How do you monitor the implementation of your employees' newly acquired knowledge?

Question 5: Is the monitoring of newly acquired knowledge communicated with employees?

Question 6: What measures are in place at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown to assess the impact of corporate culture on training and development?

Objective three / Theme three: Production Setters / Packers perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace.

Question 1: Are you able to use the training you have learnt once you get back to work?

Question 2: Does your manager or supervisor show an interest in what you learnt when you were trained? (How does he/she show interest?)

Question 3: Are the people that work with you happy for you when you attend training?

Question 4: Should the company expect you to work better after you have received your training?

Question 5: Are you willing to make any suggestions to improve productivity in your area?

Objective four / Theme four: Managers' experiences on the impact corporate culture on training and development in relation to productivity.

Question 1: What criteria do you believe could be used to influence the training and development needs of your employees?

Question 2: What is the impact of training and development on productivity improvements?

Question 3: What would be your best way to assess the impact of corporate culture on training and development?

Question 4: What would be your best way to assess the impact of corporate culture on productivity improvements?

Question 5: Are there any factors at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown that prevent productivity improvements after employees receive training and development?

Objective four / Theme four: Production Setters'/Packers' experiences on the impact corporate culture has on training and development in relation to productivity.

Question 1: Why should a company send you on training?

Question 2: How would Polyoak Packaging know if the training they sent you on has helped to improve your skills?

Question 3: Would you like Polyoak Packaging to assess how you use newly learned skills?

Question 4: Do you believe training improves productivity in your work area?

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, findings are presented from the analysis of responses from questionnaires in this research study, which were obtained from the managers, the production setters, and packers. The qualitative data were collected and then processed in response to the problems posed in chapter one of this dissertation. The qualitative findings in this research study are acceptable and the data is presented in the manner that follows;

- Managers' responses: 2 out of 5 managers are female
- Production setters' responses: 7 out of 7 are male and
- Production packers' responses: 13 out of 13 are male

The findings are presented in three subgroups as per questionnaire design and rationale behind it. The presentation of findings and comparisons were made and commented on.

The recommendations and conclusions are presented in chapter 5 and 6.

This chapter presents the data and discusses elements of the findings as they relate to the research questions. The format of the presentation meets the requirements of the study research questions:

- What is the perception on receptiveness of training and development?
- What are the views on employee training?
- What is the perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace?
- What is the impact of corporate culture on training and development and on productivity improvements?

The first part of the analysis concerns the analysis of research participants' demographics and relevant information on the study of participants' viewpoints of the impact of corporate culture on training and development at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown. Qualitative analysis of findings and where appropriate, quotes from the respondents are included to illustrate relevant views.

4.2 Response rate

Twenty-five questionnaires were personally administered and collected from three different target groups after each production shift pattern;

- Thirteen questionnaires given to production packers were answered and returned (100% of response rate).
- Seven questionnaires given to production setters were answered and returned (100% of response rate), and
- Five questionnaires given to managers were answered and returned (100% of response rate).

4.3 Research study participants

The selection of participants for the study were by purposeful and convenience and were employed by the organisation for two or more years. The age of respondents ranges between 25 to 60 years with the mean age of 33 years.

The research study participants are shown in the Figure 4.1 to indicate the actual composition of the purposive sample used for the study to answer the research questions. The majority of participants were production packers who by the nature of the production environment are more than managers and production shift setters.

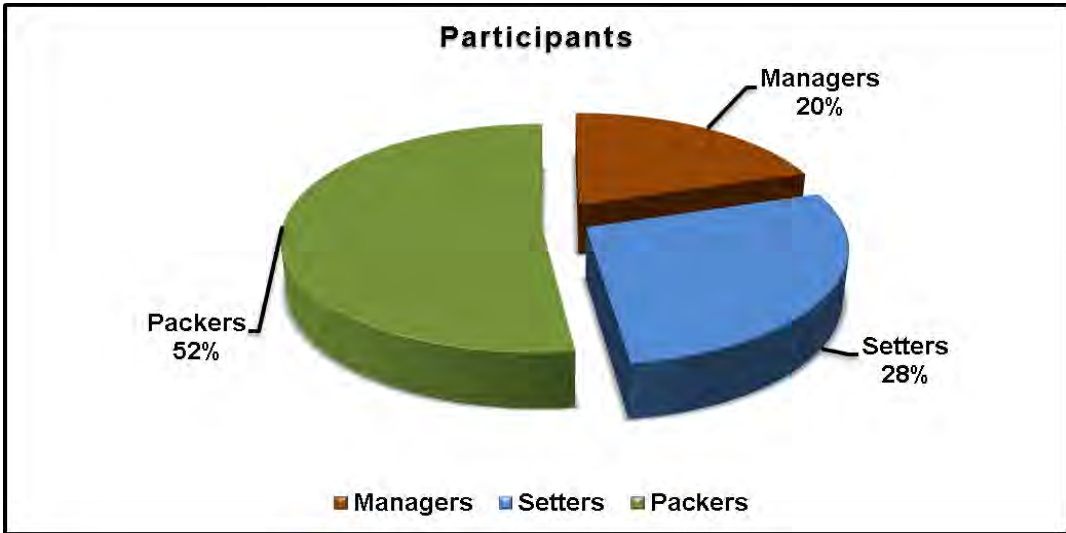


Figure 4.1: The distribution of study participants.

The figure depicts the number of study participants and the positions they hold in the organisation. For the purpose of the study, it is important that a good representation of the participants' different job levels is maintained. The majority are production packers (13 of the 25 participants), while 7 out of 25 participants are production setters and 5 of the 25 participants are managers (2 of the 5 managers are female managers).

The participants' gender is presented in the Figure 4.2 below showing male dominance in the production environment and the reason for not having equal representation by gender.

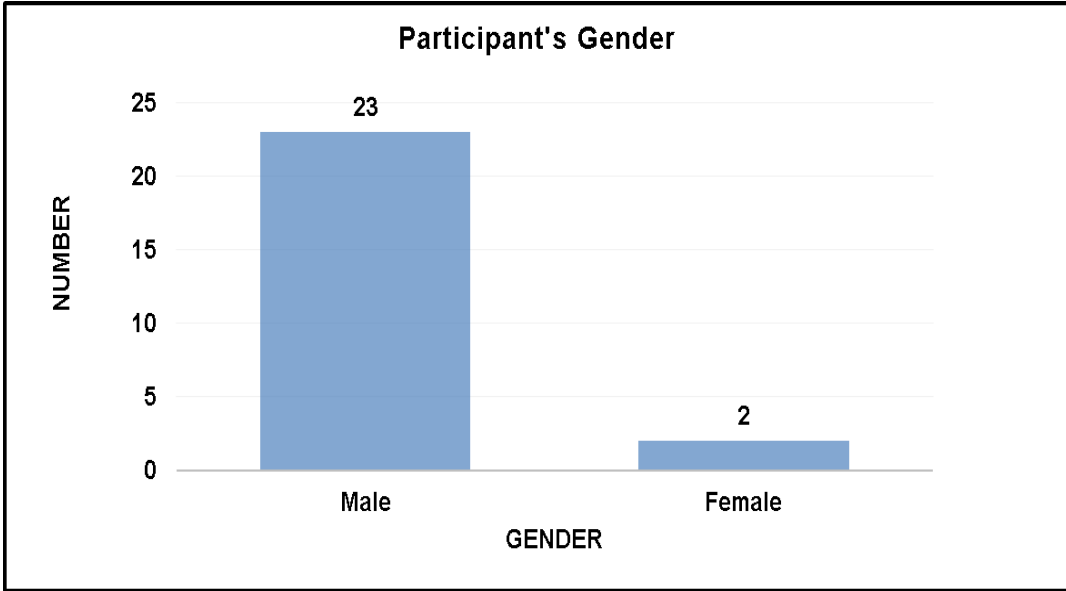


Figure 4.2: The participants' gender distribution.

Production business units are male dominant, and as a result, the majority of study participants are male. Although this study is investigating corporate culture in training, it is reasonable to highlight this component for the context of this research.

Figure 4.3 shows the study sample participants by race.

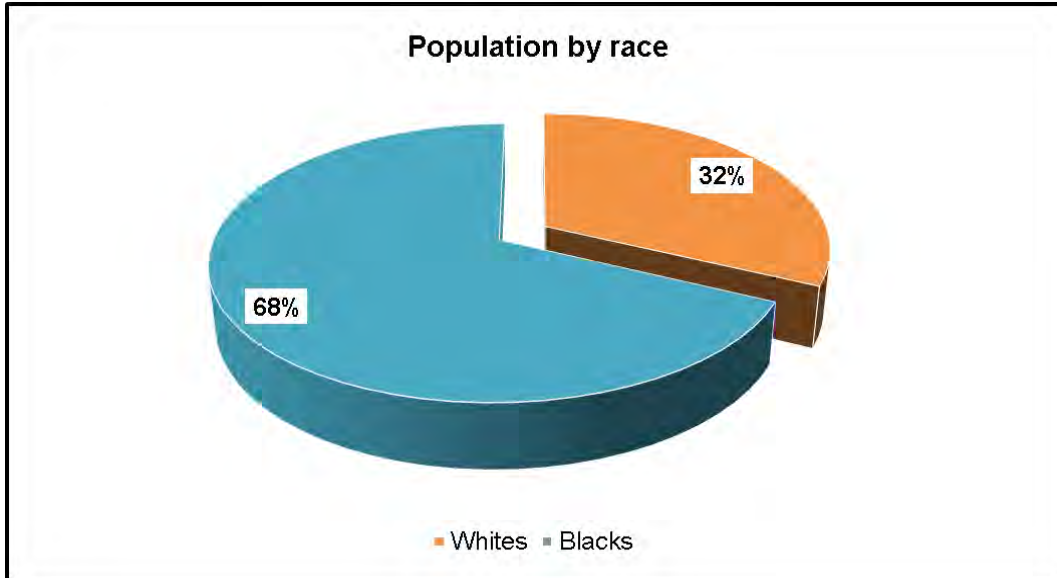


Figure 4.3: Population sample by race.

The population in South Africa is diverse, and as a result, the research study indicates the composition by race as represented within the research study area (Figure 4.3). It also highlights that the production environment in Polyoak Pinetown is male dominant resulting in disproportion in gender equity.

Figure 4.4: participants that have attended training programmes in Business School.

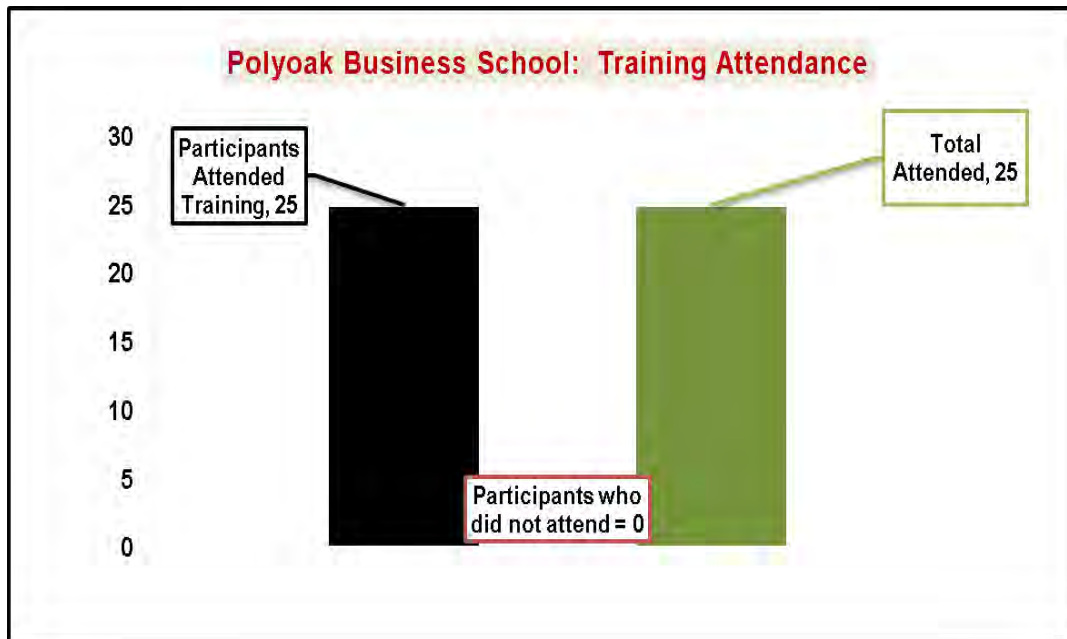


Figure 4.4: Training attendance.

This study is based on a qualitative purposive sampling approach, and the research focus is on people who had attended the skills training programmes offered by Polyoak Packaging through Business School in order to get relevant, rich, and indispensable information. The participants' offers meaningful and crucial information on whether they have applied skills they have learned in their daily activities and therefore participants' responses to the study questionnaire are vital and relevant. The participants are also in a position to provide their perceptions in relation to corporate culture and the training and development component.

4.4 Research Findings

The study findings are presented in sections based on the managers' responses and the setters/ packers' responses, in order to respond appropriately to the study objectives. In this manner, the author aimed to simplify the presentation to be able to draw themes and make comparisons based on views and perceptions from the study findings.

4.4.1.1 Objective one / Theme one: Managers perception on employees' receptiveness to training and development

Question 1: How did you become aware of the training and development needs in your division?

Determining training and development needs is the responsibility of department managers to ensure that employees receive important skills in order to be able to perform smarter in their areas. The respondents stated they use employees' performance results and monitoring to establish whether training for certain skills is required in a department.

The study reveals that 2 out of 5 managers use performance as an indicator of training needs. As one manager who used this approach explained: *"When I see that staff is making the same mistakes over and over it means that skills training is needed to help staff to perform better"* (Respondent (R2)). 2 out of 5 managers depend on external communication to establish whether training and development is needed. 1 out of 5 use internal communication. One Manager (R1) stated: *"One-on-one sessions with peers, Training Matrix and operator skill determined their weakness and areas of development."*

Question 2: How does corporate culture impact on the company attitude to training and development?

The culture at Polyoak Packaging is driven from top management to share knowledge and motivate all employees to continue to develop themselves. The organisation has embarked on planned yearly training schedules for both non-accredited and Merseta (Manufacturing Engineering and Related Services Sector Skills Education Training Authority) accredited skills programmes. All employees have the opportunity to attend training programmes to grow in the job they do.

The study revealed that 2 out of 5 believe that a culture of knowledge sharing is important in the organisation, and in support of this view, the manager (R1) stated: *"We at Polyoak believe in sharing our knowledge. We encourage employees to make use of all training e.g. (Jetstart, internal and external training, and on-the-job training)."*

Another 2 out of 5 managers believe that management culture-driven training impacts on the company attitude to training and development and that employees will respond positively, hence taking training very seriously. 1 out of 5 is of the view that employee motivation plays a crucial role to maintain the right attitude in their departments, and believe that staff development is impacted by corporate culture in that both managers and employees share the same sentiment in taking their skills to new levels.

Question 3: How does corporate culture impact on the company attitude to transfer of training?

The attitudes of management and employees are directly influenced by the organisational culture; the manner in which things are done and communicated impacts on training and transfer of skills on the floor.

In total, 3 out of 5 managers appear to believe that culture influences positively on transfer of training experience. As one respondent (R4) indicated: *"We build relationship with our learners and bond. This way we are to identify weaknesses and build on them."*

The 2 out of 5 think there is sometimes a lack of support from the managers to ensure that skills learned from the Business School are properly transferred to practical application. As one manager (R3) stated: *"In some instances when the employee returns back to normal work he is required to continue from where he left off, rather than being encouraged and coached back in the job and supported on what learning he/she could apply to the job they are doing."*

1 out of 5 managers believe that trainability of employees affects the application of skills to the work they do, and thinks that lack of employees' support is affected by company culture.

Question 4: Additional information: Is there any valuable information or tools that you would like to share that would help in assessing the impact of Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown corporate culture on training and development?

None of the respondents had given additional information.

4.4.1.2 Objective one / Theme one: Production Setters'/Packers perception on receptiveness to training and development

Question 1: Are you aware of your skills training needs?

Internal communication plays a crucial role in ensuring that managers and employees share information timeously. Managers have a mandate to disseminate important information with regard to running of departments and planning for employees to attend training and development programmes, as they understand the need.

Setters' responses: All Setters, 7 out of 7 of them agreed that they are aware of their skills needs to help them do a better job.

Packers' responses: All Packers, 13 out of 13 of them indicated that they know about their needs for skills training to develop themselves.

Comparative comment: Both subgroups agreed that they are aware of the skills they need to work better and develop themselves in the workplace.

Question 2: Do you believe you need to improve your skills level?

When employees are aware of training they need to up their skills, they will be willing and motivated to attend Business School programmes.

Setters' responses: 6 out of 7 indicated that they believe they need to improve their skills level, while 1 out of 7 did not believe there is a need to improve their skills.

Packers' responses: All packers indicated; they need to improve their skills level.

Comparative comment: The majority of Setters agreed, with Packers that they need to improve their skills except for one Setter who thought he has adequate skills to be able to carry out his daily duties.

Question 3: Does Polyoak Packaging believe in training its people?

The culture of the organisation must be aligned with training and development and motivate employees to accept learning as part of their responsibility to improve skills levels.

Setters' responses: All the respondents indicated that the company believes in training and developing its people.

Packers' responses: All the respondents indicated that the company believes in training and developing its people.

Comparative comment: Both subgroups agreed that the organisation believes in training and development of its people.

Question 4: Does the company know if you are using what you have learnt in class?

The organisation should be up-to-date with the level of employee's knowledge and understand whether employees use what they learned on Business School programmes.

Setters' responses: 5 out of 7 respondents are 'not sure' whether the company is aware if they use what they have learned, while 2 out of 7 believe the company knows they use what they have learned. No respondents indicated that the company does not know.

Packers' responses: 10 out of 13 respondents indicated that the company is aware that they use what they have learned, and 2 out of 13 indicated that they are 'not sure' and 1 out of 13 believes that the company does not know.

Comparative comment: The subgroups differed in their opinion. The majority of Setters have no idea whether the organisation is aware if they use new skills or not whereas the majority of Packers have indicated that, the organisation is aware.

Observation

The managers continue to monitor skills gap amongst their employees using performance, internal communication, and external communication as indicators to drive training and impart new skills to encourage all employees to attend training and develop themselves. Managers use knowledge sharing, a culture of learning and motivation.

The perception difference from setters and packers could be the indication of poor communication between management and setter/packers in production or the workplace. The setters/packers are aware of their skills need and shortage and are willing to improve themselves through training and development programmes. The perception among the setters/packers is that the organisation wants to make them fully skilled; however, there is minimal effort from managers to maintain communication after training has been conducted to monitor how they progress.

4.4.2.1 Objective two/Theme two: Managers' views on training and development

Question 1: Are trainees responding positively to training?

There is expectation that all employees should be willing to attend training programmes at the Business School to improve their skills level at work.

The majority of 4 out of 5 managers agreed that trainees respond positively to training. One respondent (R3) stated: *"Most learners are keen for training; the quality of the courses is worthwhile. The only problem is that some of them feel they are repeating same training at times."* On the other extreme, 1 out of 5 indicated that employees are not responding positively. In support of this statement, the manager (R2) stated: *"Not all of them, we struggle mostly with the wage staff."*

Question 2: Are employees willing to use what they have learnt when they perform their duties?

Trained employees on the skills they need to know to do the work and are allowed to apply new skills increase performance by working smarter. The organisation expects the application of new skills and knowledge in their daily duties hence improvement of performance and attainment of good results. There is expectation that management communicate with employees before and after training has been conducted to ensure that application does take place.

The majority of 3 out of 5 managers indicated that most of the employees are willing to use the newly acquired skills. One manager (R1) stated: *"Yes, one of our setters went on a basic pneumatic course last year. Upon his return he started fixing air leaks around the plant."* However, 2 out of 5 believe that employees are not willing to use the skills, because they do not come and discuss challenges they encounter when they apply their skills.

Question 3: What would be a good method to monitor the implementation of new skills in the workplace?

The design or selection of a reasonable method for monitoring is indispensable. Management at all levels should come up with or decide on a way forward that would best suit their environment to monitor implementation of new skills.

Of the respondents, 1 out of 5 is of the view that internal communication is important, and 1 out of 5 indicated that there should be a planned, formal assessment that should be followed and complied with. One manager (R3) suggested as follows: *“A formal review process involving a discussion and documenting progress with employee on the job, e.g. three planned reviews and then sign off as competent.”* This could be possible by doing practical observation and written assessment to check whether implementation is possible. Another manager, 1 out of 5 suggested that there should be a formal review process after training in which a trainee will be interviewed and observed how they perform in their duties and keep records for future reference and monitoring. The last 1 out of 5 indicated that performance is a key criterion, and lastly one manager was not sure which method could be used to monitor implementation of new skills.

4.4.2.2 Objective two / Theme two: Production Setters’ and Packers’ views on training and development.

Question 1: Do you use the lessons you learned in class when you get back into the workplace?

Once the training programme is conducted, trainees are advised by facilitators in the Business School to go and implement what they have learned and improve the way they do things.

Setters’ responses: All the respondents said they use what they have learned, back at the workplace.

Packers’ responses: All the respondents said they use what they have learned, back at the workplace

Comparative comment: Both subgroups agreed that they use what they have learned when they are back at their workstations.

Question 2: How could the company measure (see) if you are using the lessons learnt in the classroom, when back at work?

In this question, the respondents were asked, to suggest what or how the company could follow up and confirm that they can use new skills back at work.

Setters' responses: 2 out of 7 respondents are of the view that the company should carry out practical observations to assess participants during their shifts, while another 2 out of 7 suggested that problem solving should highlight the level of application and understanding. Said R11: *"If I can attend and solve the problem quicker that would mean that I have learned and am able to use what I have learned."* Another 2 out of 7 were not sure how the company could measure participants, and 1 out of 7 Setters believe formal internal communication should be used to give both managers and employees a chance to apply what they have learned and to continue to improve where they are lacking.

Packers' responses: 5 of the 13 respondents suggested practical assessment could help management to know whether they use what they have learned. One packer (R18) stated: *"They could time and time again assess us to see whether we are following the correct steps they were taught in the class."* A further 3 out of 7 indicated that level of improvement should be used as an indicator, another 3 out of 7 respondents were not sure how the company should measure them. 1 out of 13 respondents agreed that monitoring should be used as a measure, and another respondent, 1 out of 13 thought they should be measured using performance targets.

Comparative comment: Both subgroups agreed that they would like to be measured or assessed using a practical observational approach and the ability to solve problems as a guide. Although the minority from subgroups had nothing to suggest, they all agreed that the organisation should take action to know how they perform.

Question 3: What do you believe would be the best way to implement what you have learnt?

The implementation of newly learned skills is crucial. When there is lack of skills implementation, it means the Business School is not fulfilling its main objectives in people development strategy and, as a result, the money spent on training is wasted.

Setters' responses: The majority, 4 out of 7 respondents agreed that constant practice of skills in daily duties should effect implementation; said R7: *"We can achieve it by practicing*

what we have learnt every day and having discussions or refresher training from time to time.” 2 out of 7 support knowledge sharing as a key component for implementation, while 1 out of 7 respondents believe implementation could be achieved by teamwork. The setters’ responses depicted in Figure 4.5.

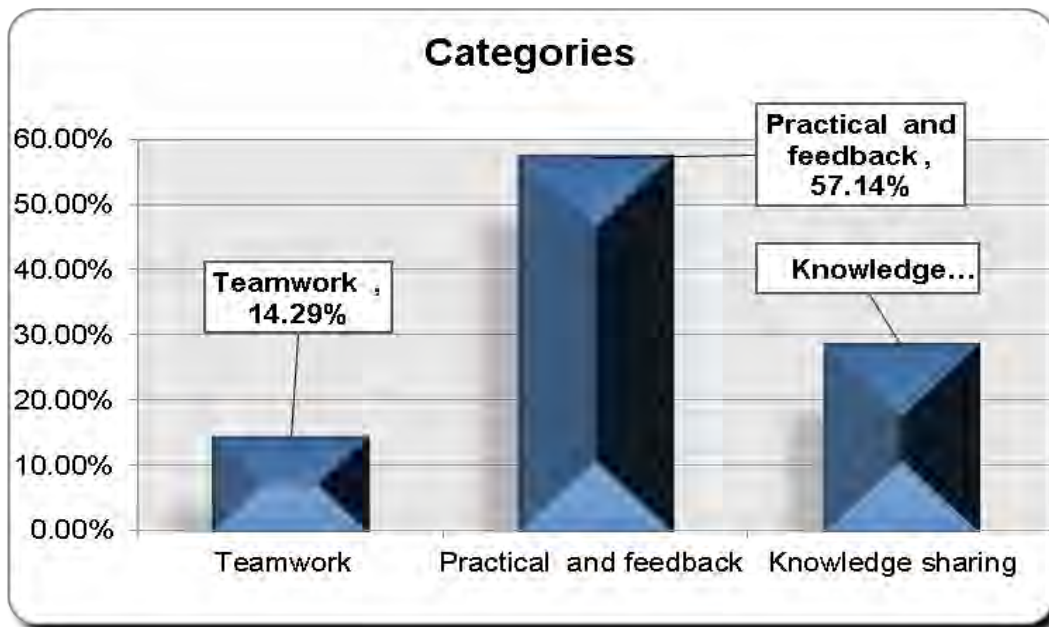


Figure 4.5: Setters’ view of the best way to ensure skills implementation.

Packers’ responses: 5 out of 13 agreed that the best way to implement the skills is to work as a team, 3 out of 13 believe that knowledge sharing will motivate them to implement skills, illustrated by R14 who said: *“The best way to implement is to pass all that I have learnt to my fellow co-workers.”* Of the respondents 1 out of 13 believe suggestions for improvements will ensure skills implementation, 1 out of 13 indicated that a comprehensive plan is required to ensure that all trainees are given an opportunity to implement what they have learned, and 1 out of 13 agreed that acceptance of more responsibility will enforce implementation. 1 out of 13 respondents believe that old habits need to be replaced more quickly by new skills after training, and the last 1 out of 13 respondents is of the view that if managers improved internal communication it would help them to discuss obstacles and solve the problem of slow/lack of implementation in their areas.

Figure 4.6 below depicts Packers' responses.

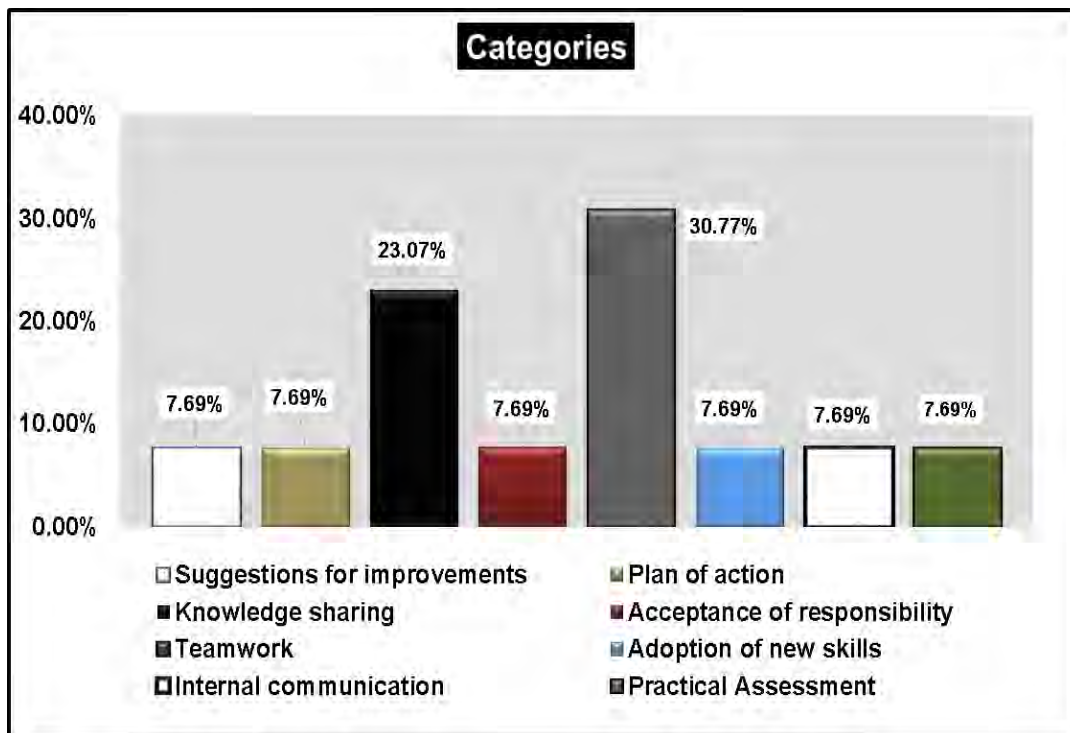


Figure 4.6: Packers' view of the best way to ensure skills implementation.

Comparative comment: Both subgroups comparative difference are presented in figure 4.5 (Setters) and figure 4.6 (Packers) above. Both subgroups agreed these are the best ways to implement what they have learned which highlight willingness to use their knowledge for both themselves and the organisation.

Observation

The managers have revealed that employees' response to training is viewed by observing positive attitudes towards training and continued willingness to use new skills in the workplace. It was also indicated that communication and assessment is vital to support employees to implement newly learned skills.

The setters / packers agreed that they use what they have learned, however assessment is lacking from management. New skills must be implemented through teamwork, knowledge or skills sharing and most importantly the acceptance of new or additional responsibilities.

4.4.3.1 Objective three / Theme three: Manager's perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace.

Question 1: What guidelines could be used to measure receptiveness to training and development?

The organisation should prepare and implement guidelines when it comes to employees' receptiveness to training and development. In this way, the organisation will maintain training acceptance and ensure that continual and cohesive feedback is taking place.

Out of 5 managers 3 of them recognise the positive response of employees after training as a measure of receptiveness. One manager (R3) stated: *"A brief meeting that the manager could have with the trainee after he/she has been trained whereby they agree a few points/things that he/she could apply back onto the job/workplace when he/she resume for duty shift."*

There is 1 out of the 5 respondents who concur that feedback questionnaires should be used to collect important information from employees regarding implementation of new skills. 1 out of 5 indicated internal communication with the manager, and another manager is of the view that employee overall improvement should be sufficient as management guidelines, to monitor implementation.

Question 2: Are employees receiving sufficient support to be able to use what they have learned?

Management support is key to any HR aspects, which is equally true in the training of people. Managers and supervisors must be seen to be exercising their support.

The majority of 3 out of 5 managers agreed that there is adequate support for employees to be able to use new skills in their daily work. 1 out of 5 indicated that sometimes they get support, and in some cases don't get it depending on the priorities of the day, and another 1 out of 5 believe that it does not happen all the time. One manager (R4) pointed out as follows: *"Not always as production managers are under pressure most of the time and therefore don't have the sufficient time to give the required attention and support"*.

Managers are required to deliver and meet different targets and training of employees is one of them. Managers have a responsibility to support employees to apply new skills to improve overall production output.

Question 3: Are employees able to implement what they have learned?

(If your answer is NO, what do you think could be the reason?)

When the managers of the organisation have awareness and skills to support their subordinates with a view to taking their departments to another level of efficiency, they should make it their utmost responsibility and priority to encourage and monitor their people to implement what they have learned in Business School.

All of respondents agreed that employees are able to implement what they have learned in their work environment. There was no reason to comment, as the question only required the respondent to elaborate when the answer was negative.

Question 4: How do you monitor the implementation of your employees' newly acquired knowledge?

Managers and supervisors should ensure that they monitor implementation of new knowledge. This could allow the organisation to improve the manner in which things get done and continue to compete better in the market with good-quality products and services.

Most of the respondents, 3 out of 5 use on the job observation as a tool; a manager (R2) who supports this approach stated: *"By seeing how they approach their work differently after training."* 1 out of 5 managers rely on performance improvement to monitor implementation, 1 out of 5 agreed they do not carry out monitoring of implementation, and stated they have not done it or planned to do it.

Question 5: Is the monitoring of newly acquired knowledge communicated with employees?

The organisation has a responsibility to communicate with employees to ensure there is implementation of new skills. When there is breakdown or no communication-taking place,

the organisation is open to or will experience non-application, and the investment in training and development would not add value to the daily operations of the business.

All of the respondents agreed that communication takes place between managers and employees regarding new skills, to ensure that employees are aware of their progress. A manager (R5) who stated his views indicated as follows: *“Yes, both the improvements as well as the shortcomings are communicated.”*

Question 6: What measures are in place at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown to assess the impact of corporate culture on training and development?

There should be a way in which culture is assessed and measured so that management becomes aware of how it impacts training and development.

Of the managers, 3 out of 5 indicated a lack of awareness on their part that it was important to measure corporate culture in relation to training and development. The other 2 out of 5 respondents (R2 and R3) stated *“I am not aware of any measures.”* and confirmed that there are no measures in place to assess the impact of corporate culture.

4.4.3.2 Objective three / Theme three: Production Setters / Packers perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace.

Question 1: Are you able to use the training you have learnt once you get back to work?

The trainees’ ability to use what they have learned depends on the environment in which they work. Managers should prepare and maintain a conducive environment that motivates learners to use the skills learned.

Setters’ responses: 3 out of 7 respondents indicated that they are able to use what they have learned in their areas: 1 out of 7 noted ‘Always’, 1 out of 7 agreed ‘Most cases’ and 1 out of 7 indicated ‘Sometimes I use it’. Another 1 out of 7 said they only use a little of what

they have learned. Said R8: *“Yes we use it, but not always,”* while R12 stated: *“I think 80% of the time is no, my job is very practical but most of the training is theoretical.”*

Packers’ responses: All the respondents indicated that they use training in their areas; R14 stated: *“Yes I have used it and it has been very interesting.”*

Comparative comment: The majority from both subgroups agreed that they use what they have learned. Some Setters have indicated that they do not always use new skills because of the nature of work which sometimes require experience which they cannot learn from skills and development programmes. In contrast, packers are all motivated and find it very interesting, and want to learn more to develop their skills.

Question 2: Does your manager or supervisor show an interest in what you learnt when you were trained? (How does he/she show interest?)

It is the responsibility of managers to show an interest in support of both the Business School and their subordinates and to maintain motivation in the workplace.

Setters’ responses: Of the respondents 5 out of 7 indicated ‘Yes’ to this question, with R10 stating, *“Yes, he (my manager) challenges me to tasks?”* The remaining 2 out of 7 stated that their manager or supervisor had shown no interest.

Packers’ responses: Of the respondents the majority of 11 out of 13 indicated ‘Yes’, with R21 stating *“Yes he does by asking me questions about what I learned trying to see if I learned and gained something.”* A further 1 out of 13 indicated that they are not much aware of the manager’s interest, and another 1 out of 13 respondent that he was not sure.

Comparative comment: Both subgroups agreed that their manager or supervisor shows interest in what they have learned. Few respondents believe their managers have shown no interest.

Question 3: Are the people that work with you happy for you when you attend training?

Any employee in the workplace needs support from peers and managers. Teamwork is important to keep the team progressing and achieving good results.

Setters’ responses: 4 out of 7 respondents believe there is no support, with one Setter (R7) indicating *“No they don’t seem to be happy.”* 3 out of 7 respondents agreed that other employees are happy for them to improve their skills.

Packers' responses: All the respondents agreed that other people are happy when they attend training programmes at Polyoak Packaging Business School.

Comparative comment: The majority of Setters believe there is no support from other team members whereas the majority of the Packers agreed they support one another.

Question 4: Should the company expect you to work better after you have received your training?

When employees have received training, quality and production efficiencies should improve at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown. As an indication of continuous improvement, fewer customer complaints should be received.

Setters' responses: The majority of respondents, 6 out of 7 believe that the company should expect them to work better; said R9: *"We need to be the best that we can be in what we do"*. 1 out of 7 did not believe that the company should expect them to work better.

Packers' responses: All the respondents indicated that they believe that the company should expect them to work better; one packer (R8) responded: *"Yes, training has made me a better person at work and I am more confident at making the correct decisions and suggestions to my fellow employees."*

Comparative comment: Both subgroups agreed that the company should expect them to work better after they have received training. One Setter felt that the company should not expect them to work better. The Setter indicated that lack of support from management is the reason for expressing his illogicality.

Question 5: Are you willing to make any suggestions to improve productivity in your area?

Operational related suggestions help to keep employees engaged and thinking of ways to improve and work smarter in their dedicated areas.

Setters' responses: All the respondents are willing to make suggestions for continuous improvement; one (R6) stated *"Teamwork is key to improve productivity in our work area,"* and another (R7) expanded on this: *"The company and management should ensure that staff morale is maintained all the time and by so doing, suggestions would flow in."*

Packers' responses: All the respondents were willing to suggest improvements; said R19: *“Yes, learning opportunity promotes positive self-esteem and we would be happy to suggest improvements.”*

Comparative comment: Both subgroups agreed that suggestions are important and are willing to work with management to witness the application of their suggestions in the workplace.

Observation

Manager's perception on implementation of newly learned skills is that their subordinates are able to implement the skills they have acquired. On the job observation helps the managers to know exactly how the employee performs and where he needs support after training, however this is not properly communicated to employees.

Setter/Packers are able to implement and use what they have learned and the perception is that management have shown interest in what they do and how they do it. The setters believe there is no support from other setters, which makes it difficult to work as a team and help one another. Setters / Packers are aware that the organisation expects them to work better after training is received.

4.4.4.1 Objective four / Theme four: Managers' experiences on the impact corporate culture on training and development in relation to productivity.

Question 1: What criteria do you believe could be used to influence the training and development needs of your employees?

Management should continue to influence their subordinates to attend training to improve the way they perform their duties. There was un-biasness in answering this question.

Figure 4.7 below summarises the categories identified by managers.

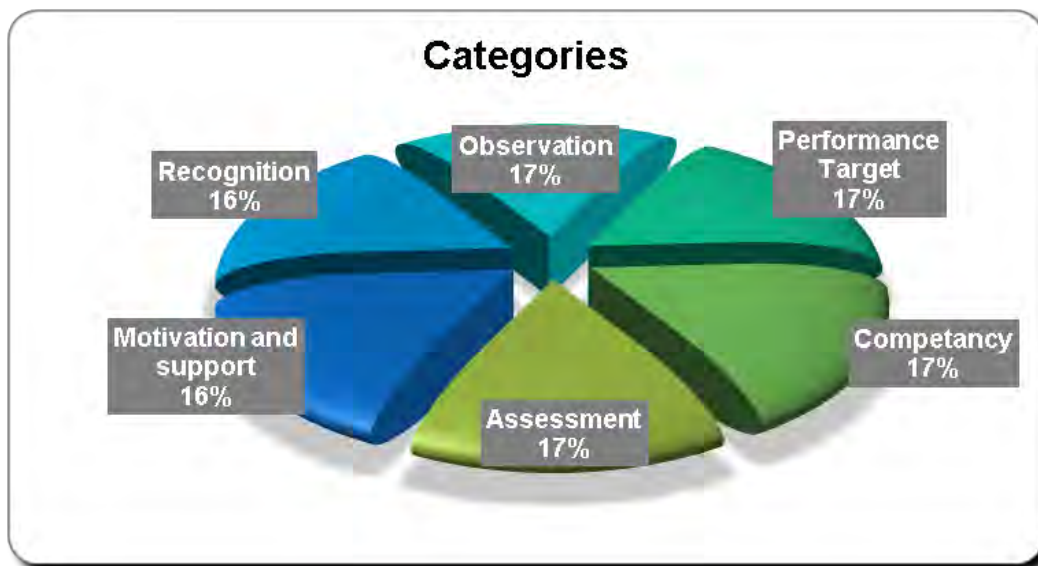


Figure 4.7: Criteria used to influence training.

All of the 5 managers had different views and responded differently. 1 out of 5 indicated that motivation and support are required to influence employees. One manager (R2) supporting this viewpoint asserted, *“Time spent with my team and noting what they are struggling with at work will influence what training and development needs are needed.”* One manager thought that recognition of employees’ is vital and could influence good performance, 1 out of 5 is of the view that employees’ observation while doing their jobs could also help to influence training. 1 out of 5 of managers would prefer to use performance targets to drive and influence their subordinates, another 1 out of 5 indicated that criteria should be based on competency, and believe that employee assessment of competency is required.

Question 2: What is the impact of training and development on productivity improvements?

Productivity is the important part of the organisation. The drive to improve production and other service efficiencies requires management to understand the extent to which corporate culture has an effect. Training should affect productivity in a positive way when the transfer and implementation of newly acquired skills exist in the organisation.

The study revealed that 2 out of 5 managers believe there is a definite impact of corporate culture on the organisation's production efficiencies. A manager (R3) who supports this view indicated, *"Productivity is very good where corporate culture has positive impact, successfully implemented, understood, and monitored."* 1 out of 5 respondents believe there are improvements in productivity in some areas of the business, 1 out of 5 indicated that there is a positive change in employees' competency levels, and lastly, 1 out of 5 thought the impact is not that great as yet.

Question 3: What would be your best way to assess the impact of corporate culture on training and development?

Excellent organisations encourage management and employees to come up with ideas that would help improve performance and lead to great results. In order to achieve this in the organisation, management is responsible for ensuring that the culture in the organisation is conducive and it would allow accurate assessment as employees would not be sceptical to divulge critical information.

The managers' responses revealed that 2 out of 5 managers believe that trainees should be surveyed at planned intervals to maintain feedback and communication. One manager (R4) stated: *"I suggest by doing a quarterly survey to assess our corporate culture."* 1 out of 5 respondents thought that a management survey is required at planned intervals to capture suggestions that are specific to training and development. 1 out of 5 is of the view that interviews should be conducted to assess corporate culture in the organisation, and another 1 out of 5 indicated that they don't know how it could be assessed.

Question 4: What would be your best way to assess the impact of corporate culture on productivity improvements?

Recommendations for assessment of corporate culture are vital for a healthy organisation. Management want to see a successful organisation capable of delivering consistent and great quality products. This is achievable when employees perceive organisational culture as an enabler to improve performance and productivity.

Manager's responses revealed 2 out of 5 thought that production efficiency trends are an indication in production units that could be used to assess productivity in relation to impact of culture. 1 out of 5 managers indicated that management's attitude is the critical component in the assessment of the impact of culture on productivity improvements, Another 1 out of 5 believe that the organisation would be able to assess its culture by doing a survey on trainees. One out of 5 managers is not sure how to carry out assessments of this nature. One manager (R3) suggested: *"Survey employees on how they perceive the corporate culture and their levels of motivation"*.

Question 5: Are there any factors at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown that prevent productivity improvements after employees receive training and development?

When the organisation does not eliminate obstacles to allow employees to execute their skills, this could continue to hinder progress and the ability to compete effectively in the market.

There is 2 out of 5 managers who opined that there are no factors that they are aware of that prevent productivity, while another 2 out of 5 acquiesced that there are factors that prevent productivity improvements, 1 out of 5 stated that there isn't sufficient support for trained employees in the workplace and could prevent improvements. A manager (R4) who supports this sentiment claimed: *"Managers being stretched in their duties – our factories could prevent improvements because focus is limited."*

4.4.4.2 Objective four / Theme four: Production Setters'/Packers' experiences on the impact corporate culture has on training and development in relation to productivity.

Question 1: Why should a company send you on training?

Organisations commit themselves to train employees to keep up with global and local competition. Technology and skills must be compatible with one another.

Setters' responses: 4 out of 7 respondents thought they should become the best at what they do and ultimately get recognition and rewards. As R12 stated: *"So you can grow as a*

person and employee and add value to your company.” 2 out of 7 indicated that they will be competent and perform better in what they do, and 1 out of 7 believe they would grow as an individual.

Packers’ responses: 7 out of 13 indicated that training will make them competent, with R15 asserting “Training an employee helps to equip them in their job as this will add value to the company.” 4 out of 13 believe they would be both competent and perform better, 1 out of 13 thought they would grow in what they do, and 1 out of 13 thought they would become the best at what they do and be rewarded by the company.

Comparative comment: The Setters and Packers are both in agreement that the company should train them so they can continue to grow in what they do at work.

Question 2: How would Polyoak Packaging know if the training they sent you on has helped to improve your skills?

Organisations invest in training to upgrade skills and knowledge, and as a result expect that training programmes add value to their operations and improve the way things are done. In order to achieve this, communication and employee engagement are critical.

Figure 4.8 below, shows the setters’ responses.

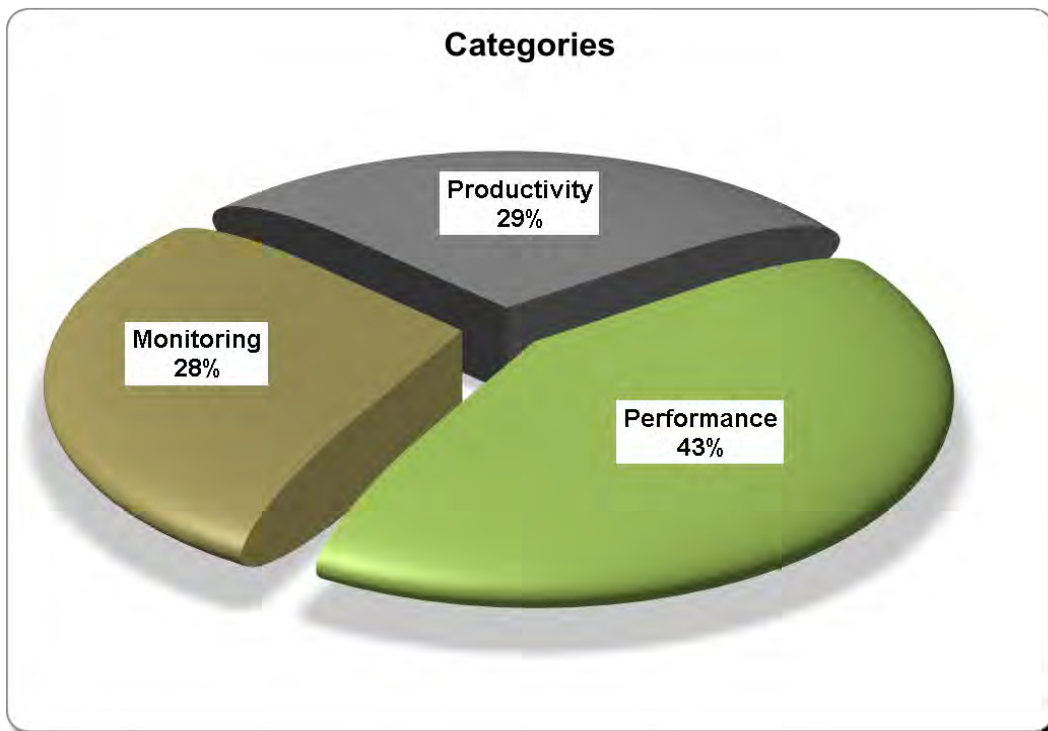


Figure 4.8: How results of training should become evident – setters.

Setters' responses: 3 out of 7 respondents are of the view that performance should improve as a result of skills improvement, and hence the organisation will see evidence thereof. One setter (R12) stated: *“Through my daily application of skills, and when I still encounter the same problem as before, then I didn't benefit from the training.”* 2 out of 7 agreed that the company should monitor employee progress, and another 2 out of 7 agreed that productivity should improve as evidence of skills improvement.

Figure 4.9 shows the packers' responses.

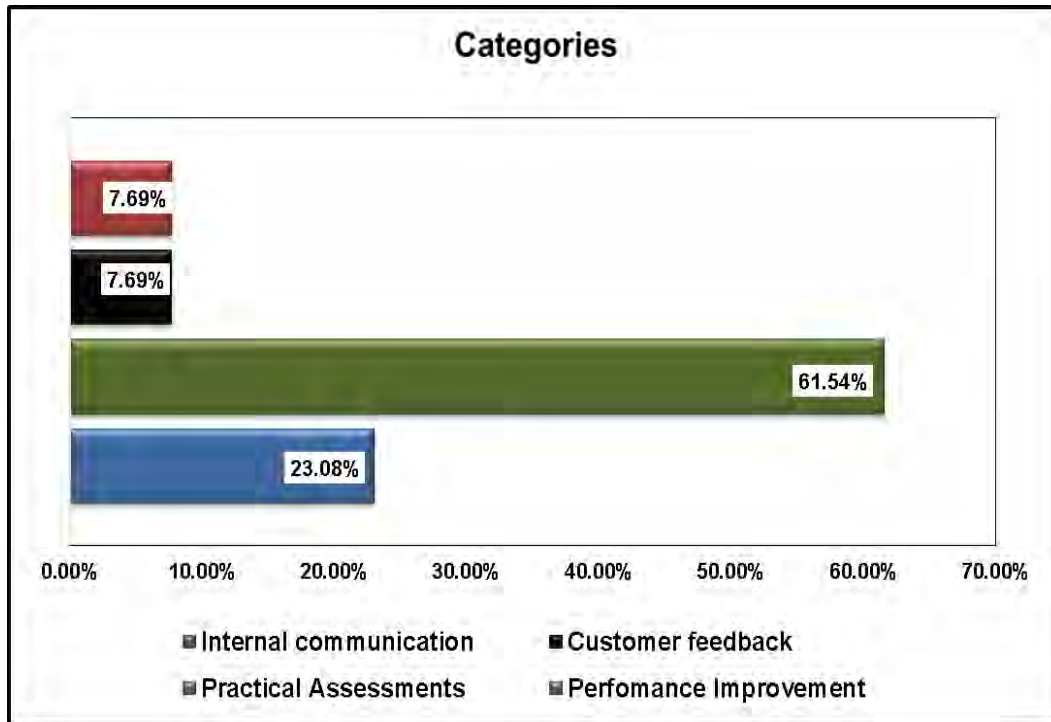


Figure 4.9: How results of training should become evident – packers.

Packers' responses: The majority, 8 out of 13 respondents believe that on the job practical assessments should give reasonable feedback to the organisation (Figure 4.9). Stated R19: *“If company can do follow-up and help us to implement what we have learned by assessing us practically.”* 3 out of 13 respondents agreed that performance improvement should be a yardstick, 1 out of 13 respondents feel customer feedback is an important component when looking at skills level and whether it improves, and another 1 out of 13 indicated that internal communication is important to give feedback and help to improve individual performance.

Comparative comment: The subgroups agreed that the organisation should know whether training has helped them by observing performance, monitoring, and customer feedback among other things. Figures 4.8 and 4.9 above have explicitly highlighted the suggested categories.

Question 3: Would you like Polyoak Packaging to assess how you use newly learned skills?

Employees with a positive attitude and willingness to progress should be expected to interact with the organisation both formally and informally. Skills assessment will play an integral part in bridging the skills gap.

Setters' responses: The majority, 6 out of 7 respondents said they would like to be assessed by the organisation on newly acquired skills they use and 1 out of 7 was not willing to be assessed on new skills.

Packers' responses: All the respondents said they would like to be assessed by the organisation on newly acquired skills.

Comparative comment: The majority on both subgroups agreed that they would like to be assessed by the organisation. One of the Setters could not recommend any individual assessment.

Question 4: Do you believe training improves productivity in your work area?

One of the fundamental reasons that people are sent to skills programmes is to improve their knowledge and hence improve productivity in the areas in which they work.

Setters' responses: 6 out of 7 respondents agreed and indicated that training improves productivity in their areas of responsibility whereas 1 out of 7 respondents indicated the opposite –'No'. The respondent thought that training has not made a difference yet.

Packers' responses: 12 out of 13 respondents indicated that training improves productivity, while 1 out of 13 respondents did not agree and thought there is no improvement in productivity.

Comparative comment: The overwhelming majority from both subgroups believed that training improve productivity.

Observation:

Management is of the view that there is an impact of corporate culture on training and development in relation to productivity in the organisation. However, management have

recommended the following categories or criteria that could affect the impact of corporate culture on training hence productivity improvement;

- Practical observation on daily duties, this must be formalised and communicated properly.
- Recognition of good performance and individual or group performance against predetermined performance target.
- Monitor employee competency at well-planned intervals.

The managers further expressed that the impact of corporate culture on training is evident in the output e.g. production efficiencies and is heavily dependent on management attitude. All setters/packers expect to be better in their work and believe that results be viewed as a reasonable yardstick for the impact of corporate culture on training and development and productivity. Operational targets e.g. production efficiencies, customer complaints/feedback should be monitored, accepted and qualified as vital measures of corporate culture including the manner in which managers and employees behave and disseminate knowledge and skills.

4.5 The relationship between corporate culture and training and development

It is imperative for managers and their subordinates to understand organisational culture in the context of training and development. This would guide both managers and employees when they go for skills training and enable individual managers to tackle issues with employees before and after training has been provided.

4.5.1 Managers perspective

The managers perceive Polyoak's corporate culture on training and development as supportive, knowledge sharing, encouraging employees to learn to improve their skills levels and improve performance standards. All managers believe that the organisational culture is conducive to training and development and is driven from the top management with the belief in the importance of all people working for the organisation.

Managers however are of the view that failure to enforce and maintain employees support after training does not take training to the next level. Managers have pointed out that with production pressures, they are not giving outstanding support to employees in their divisions, (R4) asserted: *“Managers being stretched in their duties – our factories could prevent improvements because focus is limited.”* All the managers are keen that corporate culture is positive and plays a pivotal role in training and development.

4.5.1.1 Managers views (Females):

The managers shared the sentiment that corporate culture currently applies a top down approach. The executive team is keen to give people the best skills training they can get to make them better employees hence improve performance in the organisation. The organisation always strives to employ the best managers and selected the best facilitators to run the Polyoak Business School skills training programmes.

Contradictions: Both managers revealed that some of the employees’ attitudes towards training, suggests that managers issue instruction without the buy-in from employees to attend programmes. *“The top down approach to training which often result in the attitude of the people saying; I was told to be here rather than I want to be here”* (R3).

“In most instances, employees return to work and are expected to continue from where they left off rather than being encouraged, coached and supported on what learning he or she could apply on the job” (R3).

They concurred with other managers that a brief meeting between managers and employees on training should be held to look at the progress and performance records of the division.

4.5.2 Setters perspective

All setters agreed that training and development is one of the organisation’s primary objectives. The culture of training is excellent however, an inadequacy or lack of organisation support at middle management, and more critically at first line management level results in minimal or no follow up on training. Observation and continual assessment in progress in the application of new skills hinders organisation objectives to develop its employees with the best skills needed for the job.

4.5.3 Packers perspective

All packers perceive the organisation's culture as reasonable and relevant for training and development. At Polyoak, managers show support and willingness to develop employees with the exception that no follow up is evident to discuss progress and areas of further personal development required to work better and smarter.

- **Observation of relationship between subgroups**

The managers view the culture of the organisation as conducive and relevant to skills training and employee encouragement to develop themselves. Female manager's point of view differs in that they believe that in some cases, training is not considered as important and seen as a priority by managers to engage employees appropriately; instead, instructions are issued which could create resistance and unwillingness to attend the training facility.

The general perception is that the company culture if properly adhered to could lead to great success and always improving performance standards because of skills application in all areas of the business. People would like to see better and improved engagement and monitoring of new skills to ensure that employees are not stagnant in old behaviours. They all agree that there is direct correlation between the corporate culture and training and development, the latter being a dependent component.

The study revealed that perceptions on all three subgroups about corporate culture have little variation in terms of acceptance. However, the implementation and application differs between managers and setter/packers as the latter reveals there is no support. The managers further revealed that when employees report to work, the managers has no dedicated time to discuss how implementation should take place. This suggests lack or poor application of new skills on the production floors.

4.6 Summary

Chapter four presented and analysed the qualitative research findings for managers and production setters and packers. The qualitative findings were analysed in line with

appropriate study objectives or themes to answer the research questions. The comparative comments and discussion of observations are included for the benefit of the study.

The impact of corporate culture on training and development is imperative for the organisation to enhance employees' performance, ensure, and maintain the competitive edge in the market in which it operates, and hence improve customer satisfaction. The nature of training programmes aims at empowering employees through provision of learning opportunities to increase individual growth.

Fundamental to an organisation's success is effective training and development, and monitoring of the impact of culture to ensure attainment of organisational goals for employees' skills development. This chapter looks at the situation at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown, with regard to the impact of corporate culture on training and development. The findings presented in this chapter reveal the potential for integration of theory and practice.

Chapter five presents discussion of qualitative findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The literature and empirical substantiation have demonstrated that the impact of corporate culture on training and development is an inevitable factor in the success or failure of an organisation. Positive culture plays an essential role in an organisation's success and may improve business performance and increase productivity.

Employee training and development programmes are an important priority for South African businesses. Countries with strong economies who are major partners with South Africa spend in a region of 10% of budget on training and development because this component is seen as a key factor to meet strategic business operational goals and keep up with international competition as well as technological changes, and social and economic realities, (Grobler *et al.*, 2011).

This chapter discusses the findings derived from the qualitative analysis of participants' responses from managers, production setters and packers of Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown. The research questions that structure the discussion are:

1. What is the perception on receptiveness of training and development?
2. What are the views on employee training?
3. What is the perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace?
4. What is the impact of corporate culture on training and development and on productivity improvements?

The research aimed to determine the impact of corporate culture on training and development programmes of the representative organisation. The experience of managers, who are also facilitators in the Business School, helps to provide a balanced view.

The respondents commented on the following elements upon which this chapter is structured as follows:

- Performance

- Productivity
- Knowledge sharing
- Culture-driven training
- Trainee support
- Criteria to influence training and development
- Internal communication, (Wick *et al.*, 2010)

The study research findings emanating from respondents' answers and relevant literatures are presented and discussed in the following section.

5.2 Discussion

5.2.1 Managers' experiences of employees' receptiveness to training and development

This section discusses the first research question: whether indices are used to measure receptiveness of training and development. The respondents gave their views on their awareness about training and development and their understanding of how it is important for themselves and the organisation to ensure that training programmes improve skills of all employees. Top management support the skills development and individual growth to meet future organisational growth in technical and intellectual capacity.

Internal and external communication is fundamental to engage employees at all levels of an organisation. 2 out of 5 managers use performance as an indicator in their respective departments to determine whether training is required in a particular task. It was explained that, when mistakes and failure to solve problems are experienced, employees are sent for training or training is requested to upgrade skills. A further 2 out of 5 depend on external communication to establish whether training and development is needed in their departments, and 1 out of 5 emphasised internal communication as an important tool to ensure that performance and other indicators (e.g. the company training matrix) are dealt with properly.

The company's attitude towards training is critical. Culture-driven training becomes the company lifeblood, in that managers and employees depend heavily on the way things are done. Sharing of knowledge and motivation of all employees becomes the business norm, and employees are expected to attend training programmes uncompelled.

The study revealed that 2 out of 5 managers believe that a culture of knowledge sharing plays a vital part in their areas of responsibility, while the other 2 out of 5 managers believe that management culture-driven training impacts on the company's attitude to training and development, which helps to maintain momentum in the organisation. Only 1 out of 5 maintain that employee motivation and teamwork have an important role to play.

With respect to the organisations' attitude towards transfer of learning, Noe (2002) argues that trainees' attitude, interest, values and expectations can influence the effectiveness of training in business, and these attitudes are influenced by the culture of the organisation. This argues well, since 3 out of 5 respondents appear to believe that culture impacts positively on transfer of training experience. Two out of 5 think that the culture must be supportive, which is not always the case in their respective departments. The respondents are of the view that culture is a key factor in employees' support for training and development.

5.2.3 Production setters'/packers' experiences of trainees' receptiveness to training and development

The importance of training to improve setters and packers' skills is communicated to all employees. All of the setters and packers agreed that they are aware of their skills requirements to be able to do a better job. This agrees with the views of managers, who claimed that communication and motivation are important.

With regards to skills improvement, most of the setters, 6 out of 7 said they believe they need to improve their skills level, while only 1 out of 7 Setters see no need to do so. All of the packers say they need to improve their skills level and would use any opportunity available to upgrade themselves.

In South Africa, a handful of the adult population is functionally illiterate and only a small portion of the South African population studies further and obtains a post-school qualification.

This results in the country suffering a serious skills shortage in almost all job fields, firstly because not enough people have had training, secondly because globalisation has made it possible for skilled people to work abroad, and thirdly because skills training in the past had no alignment to the skills requirements of the country (Robins *et al.*, 2009).

On the question of whether the organisation believes in training and developing its employees, all setters and packers agreed and are of the view that the organisation does believe in training and development, so that they can work better and smarter in their areas.

In responding on whether the organisation is aware whether they use what they have learned, 5 out of 7 setters are not sure whether the organisation is aware if they use what they learn, and only 2 out of 7 agreed the company knows that they use what they have learned.

The majority of the packers, 10 out of 13 believe the company is aware that they use what they have learned, while only 1 out of 13 packers is adamant that the company does not know.

There is some agreement between managers and trainees that organisational culture is significant in training and development and plays an important role in employee motivation and willingness to learn new skills. The setters' perception is that the organisation is not aware whether they apply what they have learned whereas packers thought that the company is aware that they apply new skills at work.

5.2.4 Managers' views on employees' response to training

Training and development is complex in that interventions require deliberate and persistent efforts to keep up with the changing technology and skills required helping the company to sustain itself in an ever-changing global market.

Noe (2002) asserts that training programmes are activities planned to increase required skills and knowledge, improve employees' behaviours and attitude, and align them with corporate goals.

Four out of 5 managers said that trainees are responding positively to training. One respondent (R3) stated: *“Most learners are keen for training; the quality of the courses is worthwhile, only problem is that some of them feel they are repeating same training at times”*. The minority of people who are not responding are production packers, who management continues to motivate.

It is evident that people are willing to learn and share their knowledge. Sattar (2011) argues that it is imperative for employees to share all the trained skills and knowledge with other employees after training has been attended, as this would enable transfer and creation of knowledge on a continuous basis. This strengthens arguments in the literature that support the promulgation of knowledge sharing in the workplace.

Three out of 5 managers understood that employees are willing to use their newly acquired skills. There are setters who really try their best to practice what they have learned from Business School training programmes.

The management must improve communication, and conduct a formal review process and give feedback to employees. Performance is used as a criterion to monitor whether new skills are used in the workplace. Gobbler *et al.*, (2011) explain that a learning organisation is one in which learning is open-ended. McKinsey (2006) and Enalga and Imran (2013) concur that trained employees in the organisation improve their capabilities, knowledge and skills, that prove to be a major source of competitive advantage in a global market.

Application of new skills is crucial, and management requires monitoring of trainees after training. Respondents suggest that application of internal communication, a planned and formal assessment, formal review process after training, and performance should be used for monitoring and assessment.

Human beings are motivated when they believe that performance, effort, and outcome are connected, and the stronger this belief then performance produces outstanding results (Wick *et al.*, 2010).

5.2.5 Setters /Packers' views on employees' response to training

The study revealed that all setters and packers believe they use what they have learned in the workplace. This shows a remarkable effort on their part, in the fulfilment of the organisation's strategic objectives in Human Resource training.

The setters agreed that there must be a means to monitor and assess them on a continual basis, with 2 out of 7 of the view that the company should carry out practical observation to assess them when carrying out their daily duties. Two out of 7 suggest that problem solving should be used as a measure to highlight individual skill level, 2 out of 7 are not sure of any measures used, and 1 out of 7 believe that formal internal communication should provide the organisation with a reliable measure.

Seven out of 13 packers agreed with the above sentiment, and further suggested the need for practical assessment as a measure, with 3 out of 13 believing that a level of improvement is an observable indicator. Other 3 out of 13 indicated that they are not sure whether the company should measure them – which may highlight a lack of support and motivation from managers.

The implementation of newly learned skills is crucial. If the skills implementation does not occur, it means that the Business School is not fulfilling its main objectives in people development and, as a result, the money spent is wasted.

Most setters, 4 out of 7 respondents believe that the best way to implement what the trainees learned is constant practice of newly learned skills in daily duties. Wick *et al.*, (2010) concur that deliberate practice is the prerequisite and source of great performance, as it makes you smarter and sharper in what you do. 2 out of 7 support knowledge sharing as a key component for implementation, and 1 out of 7 believes that implementation could be achieved by teamwork.

The packers concur, with setters, 4 out of 13 agreed that the best way to implement is to work as a team, while 3 out of 13 support knowledge sharing. 1 out of 13 believe suggestions for improvements will be reasonable and another 1 out of 13 believes that acceptance of more

responsibility will enforce implementation. This highlights the commitment to learn and apply the necessary skills in their daily duties.

It has been revealed that there is a positive response to training from both setters and packers point of view.

5.2.6 Managers' measures to maintain environmental readiness to implement new skills in the workplace

Training not only develops employee capability but also sharpens thinking ability and promotes creativity, hence allowing decisions to be made in a timeous and more productive manner (Enalga & Imran 2013). This view supports the managers' responses where 2 out of 5 managers who are interested in employees' receptiveness recognise the positive response of employees after training as a measure of receptiveness. 1 out of 5 respondents believe that feedback questionnaires must be used, and another 1 out of 5 proclaimed that internal communication with the manager is imperative. A further 1 out of 5 thought tangible improvements should be sufficient to serve as guidelines of receptiveness.

The majority of the managers, 3 out of 5 agreed there is support for employees to be able to use new skills in their daily work. This concurs with Baldwin and Ford's (1988) cited by Wick *et al.*, (2010) assertion that characteristics of the work environment may affect training transfer outcomes after training. The presence of situational constraints (e.g lack of support from supervisor and co-employees and of opportunity to apply one's knowledge and skills on the job) and impediments must be eliminated to ensure that the environment is conducive at all times. 1 out of 5 respondent indicated that sometimes they receive support and another 1 out of 5, also believes that they do not receive support all the time.

The entire respondents agreed that employees are able to implement what they have learned in their work environment. Managers are happy that they always try their utmost best to make training and skills work for their subordinates.

Sattar (2011) argues that self-efficacy is fundamental in performance and knowledge sharing, and is essential in measuring performance. Implementation of new skills requires a positive

attitude on the part of both managers and trainees. Of all the managers 2 out of 5 use job observation as a tool to monitor implementation, 1 out of 5 relies on performance improvement to monitor implementation, another 1 out of 5 do not carry out monitoring of implementation, and lastly, 1 out of 5 have not done it.

With regard to management communication with employees when monitoring new skills, all of the managers agree that reasonable communication takes place between managers and employees regarding progress of their skills application.

Most of the managers, 3 out of 5 revealed a lack of awareness that it was important to measure the impact of corporate culture in relation to training and development. Daft (2010) believes that amongst the manager's most important duties is the creation and influence of an adaptive culture which allows training and development to avail opportunities for employees in the organisation.

Management's lack of awareness may suggest that, there is no proper commitment to implement guidelines that will inform management whether their culture is appropriate or otherwise.

5.2.7 Packers'/setters' views on measures of environmental readiness to maintain new skills implementation

Setters and packers interpret the environment differently. Setters; 3 out of 7 are of the view that they are able to use what they have learned in their areas. This supports the managers' viewpoint as stated earlier. 1 out of 7 said they always use what they have learned when back in their workplace, while 1 out of 7 said they do it in most cases and another 1 out of 7 indicated that they sometimes or rarely do so.

On the other hand, all of the packers agree that they use training in their areas, this agrees with the managers' point of view on this element.

Sattar (2011) argues that it is imperative for employees to share all the trained skills and knowledge with other employees after training attendance, as this would enable transfer and

creation of knowledge on a continual basis. It is an essential element to note that promulgation of knowledge sharing in the workplace is crucial, and managers must show interest in their employees' skill development.

The majority of setters, 5 out of 7 submitted that their managers show interest, while 2 out of 7 setters, think no interest is shown by their manager or supervisor.

An overwhelming majority of packers, 11 out of 13 believes that managers show a lot of interest in their training, with 1 out of the 13 indicating that they are not aware or have not made that observation and lastly, 1 out of 13 not being sure.

Most of the setters, 4 out of 7 respondents believe there is no support for one another, while 3 out of 7 feel that other employees are happy for them to improve their skills.

All of the packers agreed that other people are happy about their progress.

Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) cited by Abdullahi, Ismail, Sakiru, & Abudallahi, (2013), argue that organisational support is a situation or condition that constrains or assists trained employees to apply the skills they have learned back on the job. Kraiger (2002) supports this; citing the work of Baldwin and Ford (1988) argued that transfer of training is the degree to which trained employees are able to apply skills, knowledge, and attitudes gained in a training context in their jobs. The literature supports the respondents' views that they need support and the majority believe that they get the support.

The total 6 out of 7 setters believe the organisation should expect them to work better. The other setter, 1 out of 7 says the company should not expect them to work better. All of the packers support the opinion that the company should expect them to work better and it disagrees with the notion that the organisation should not to expect them to improve the way they work.

In order for the organisation to understand and eliminate impediments that prohibit progress, employees must give suggestions to improve the manner of doing things in their areas of responsibility, (Wick *et al.*, 2010).

All of the setters and packers supported and agreed with this notions.

5.2.8 Managers' experiences of impact of corporate culture on training and development in relation to productivity

In all managers, 1 out of 5 indicated that motivation and support are required to influence employees. Stated R2: "*Time spent with my team and noting what they are struggling with at work will influence what training and development needs are needed.*" 1 out of 5 thought that recognition of employees for good performance is vital. 1 out of 5 is of the view that employee observation while doing their jobs will be sufficient and influential, 1 out of 5 prefer performance targets to drive and influence their subordinates, 1 out of 5 believe that competency-based criteria would give the required outcome and 1 out of 5 suggested interval assessments of employee's.

Lai and Lee (2007) assert that organisational culture influences the successful achievement of employees' knowledge sharing and morale, and hence changes in productivity become evident in meeting organisational objectives.

Productivity is the important part of the organisation. The drive to improve production and other service efficiencies requires management to understand the extent to which corporate culture has an effect. Of all the managers, 2 out of 5 believe there is an impact of culture on productivity in some areas. One out of 5 believe there is improvement in productivity in some areas of the business, 1 out of 5 agree there is a positive change in employees' level of competency and 1 out of 5 are of the view that the impact is not great in some areas.

The managers who do not see the real impact of corporate culture may be explained by the following literature. Bunch (2007) mentioned four forms of training failures which the organisation may experience: unskilled practitioners providing invalid training, skilled practitioners providing invalid training, skilled practitioners providing valid training and learning transfer but the perception is distorted and viewed as a failure, and lastly skilled practitioners provide valid training but learning does not transfer.

The majority of the managers, 3 out of 5 suggested that management must carry out surveys at certain time intervals to capture suggestions that are specific to training and development,

1 out of 5 support face-to-face interviews with employees, and 1 out of 5 indicated they do not know how these are supposed to be captured.

Two out of 5 managers think Polyoak Packaging's standards of measuring efficiency targets and their trends are an indication of a culture in production units that must be used to assess productivity continuously. Another 1 out of 5 is of the view that management attitude is pivotal to productivity improvements, 1 out of 5 would like to see a trainee survey being implemented and 1 out of 5 was not sure what to put forward as a suggestion.

Of the respondents, 2 out of 5 managers concurs that there are no factors that would impede productivity, while another 2 out of 5 acquiesced that there are factors that prevent productivity improvement, and lastly 1 out of 5 stated that they do not provide proper support, which could prevent improvements.

5.2.9 Production setters'/packers' experiences of impact of corporate culture on training and development in relation to productivity

When setters responded on the reasons, why the organisation should train them,

4 out of 7 revealed that the organisation and individuals would like to become the best at what they do, 2 out of 7 confirmed they will be more competent and produce better results and 1 out of 7 believe they will grow as individuals and that the company will then also grow.

The packers support this view; 7 out of 13 believe they will be competent, 4 out of 13 also believe they would be both competent and perform better. The 1 out of 13 think there will be personal growth as individuals, and 1 out of 13 packers think they achieve well when they carry out their normal duties.

Of the setters, respondents 3 out of 7 are of the opinion that performance should improve as a result of skills improvement, and hence the organisation should accept that as evidence of skills improvements. The 2 out of 7 opined that the company should monitor their progress, and 2 out of 7 are confident that productivity improvement should be a guide of skills application and future developments.

The majority of packers, 8 out of 13 believe that practical assessment on the job should be reasonable and acceptable feedback to the organisation. 3 out of 13 agreed that performance improvement should be a yardstick, 1 out of 13 thought that customer feedback is an important tool to highlight skills levels and another 1 out of 13 mentioned internal communication as an important aspect to discuss the current scenario and how to move forward.

The majority, 6 out of 7 of setter respondents would like to be assessed by the organisation on newly acquired skills, but 1 out of 7 setters was not keen to be assessed. Respondents not being keen to do so may indicate lack of management engagement and discussion of their progress with respect to training and development outcomes in the workplace. Schein (2010) views organisational culture as a vigorous force within the organisation, which is interactive and is shaped by employees and management movements, behaviours and attitudes. This suggests that managers should engage employees at all times and move together to the right direction.

All of the packers agreed that they would like the organisation to assess them.

De Grip and Sauermann (2013) argue that the manner in which training leads to higher productivity is rather obscure, in that it does not explain or reveal whether it is driven by skills levels, higher knowledge of motivated employees, or most particularly the organisation's loyalty. Respondents concurred with this assertion, as 6 out of 7 setters agree that training improves productivity; however, 1 out of 7 is of the view that it does not improve it all the time.

The majority of packers, 12 out of 13 support the argument that training improves productivity and only 1 out of 13 respondents did not share this sentiment.

The power of a positive climate for skills transfer remains the best tool that management should employ to maintain sustainability and productivity improvements (Wick *et al.*, 2010).

5.2.10 Comparison with previous research

Krietner (2013) argued that no matter how carefully job applicants are screened, typically a gap remains between what the employee does know and what they should know. If the

organisation wants to gain a competitive edge in the particular industry, it must provide effective training of its employees.

The findings of this research study mirrors the findings of the previous research carried out to date on the impact of corporate culture on training and development. It could be said that employees' experience on corporate culture and training and development is similar or close to that pertained previously or in the late 2000's. However, many changes and challenges have occurred in the organisation that to a certain extent strengthened the impact of corporate culture and improvement or increased perception on the individual.

The changes include the adoption of skills development as central to increasing performance and competitive advantage in the market and training opportunities available for individual self-advancement. The participants involved in this study suggested that organisational culture was fair and transparent. Having a conducive culture for training and development means excellent improvement and development of human capital.

Schein (2010) stated that culture is a pattern of shared basic assumptions that management and employees have learned as it solved organisational problems of external adaptation and internal integration and produced intended results to be considered valid.

The purpose of training and development programmes amongst others; are to improve performance, update employee skills, avoid managerial obsolescence, solve organisational problems, prepare for promotion and satisfy personal growth. An organisation's training and development is an important and comprehensive component that helps to deliberate on the skills, knowledge, and employees' attitudes which are necessary for competitive advantage, and to achieve organisational goals, (Grobler, *et al* ., 2011).

Effective training and development leads to more productive work and greater personal satisfaction and job enrichment, and makes employees feel that the organisation is interested in their advancement. It is therefore crucial for organisations to align their work environment and culture in order to influence positively on the transfer of training and employees' decision to apply what they learn at training interventions. The corporate culture, supervisor support, and peer support are dimensions that affect the transfer of skills in an organisation. The organisation must be ready with a conducive environment that permits its training interventions, (Nel *et al.*, 2012).

The findings of this research can concur with the individual perception that culture is central to employee motivation to train and develop themselves. On the other hand, employees should be ready to accept training and development in order for them to carry out their duties more efficiently and effectively. Overall however, findings of this study provide an

undersnding of perception in relation to corporate culture on training and development with Schein and Grobler theories.

5.2.11 Summary

This chapter shows that top management of the organisation is committed to training and development of all employees' at all different levels. The management is also aware of how the existing culture can influence employee perceptions and acceptance of training programmes offered by the organisation's Business School. The managers are therefore, as a result encouraged to engage with all employees in departmental meetings to ensure that employees understand and become part of the long-term vision that could present opportunities.

The training facility accommodates trainees and programme facilitators to ensure that trainees receive the best attention and motivation to return to the workplace and implement what they have learned – and hence make a difference. The managers are convinced that training programmes deliver what is intended to improve current operational requirements and to maintain and strive for desired high-level performance and productivity to attain best customer satisfaction.

The managers are of the view that Polyoak Packaging's corporate culture is conducive to training and development and all employees should be motivated to attend skills programmes presented to them. In another view, there is a perception that not all employees are motivated to attend training and these employees feel that they are not given a chance to understand the buy-in into company skills programmes; instead, they are given an instruction to attend training.

Production setters and packers reveal a remarkable outlook on training and development and the desire to receive more training and hence accept more responsibility for their growth.

Chapter 6 is the last chapter and it summarises the dissertation, taking into deliberation and perspective its benefits and limitations, as well as outlining the conclusions and recommendations of the study and further opportunities for research.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This dissertation explored the reality of corporate culture and the impact it has on training and development at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown. Training programmes provide managers and more especially the setters and packers who are under-qualified or lack needed skills the help to perform better and be able to grow with the organisation, as it continues to adjust to ever-changing global and local markets in both technology and knowledge.

6.2 Resolution of the problem

The purpose of the research was to investigate the impact of corporate culture on training and development, triggered by the following research objectives:

- To assess the receptiveness of managers and production employees to training and development
- To understand the management and employees' views on training and development
- To understand management and employees' perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace by setters and packers.
- To assess the impact of corporate culture on training and development and its impact on productivity improvements.

The research study has revealed the following areas of concern:

- **Communication:** Both internal and external communication is vital before and after training has taken place, to keep trainees up to date on whether they are doing well and to avoid them going back to old habits they have replaced with new training and skills.

- **Knowledge sharing and motivation:** Both managers and trainees agreed that knowledge sharing plays an indispensable role in ensuring that trained employees maintain the attitude and willingness to improve the way they do things.
- **Attitude:** Respondents understand that attitude is not consistent in all areas; as a result, employees do not receive timely information about the impending training to attend.
- **Importance of training:** It is unknown whether the organisation is aware if the trainees use what they have learned due to a lack of or inadequate follow-up a few months post-training.
- **Usage of skills:** The majority are willing to use newly acquired skills in the workplace, but require management to improve its communication by means of formal review, and formal assessment after a predetermined time to ensure correct application of new skills.
- **Observation:** The majority of trainees suggest observation at a practical level.
- **Managers' awareness:** They are all aware that corporate culture has an impact on training and development and it requires planned surveys to ensure that organisational culture is ideal and beneficial to the training component.
- **Managers' interest:** The respondents are of the view that management shows deliberate interest in what the setters and packers learn and apply in the workplace. A minority does not agree with this standpoint.
- **Recognition:** There is a general supposition that trainees, who have shown good work and improved performances after training, receive appropriate reward.
- **Productivity:** The research reveals that training programmes improve productivity; conversely, management's attitude is seen to be encouraging of trainees to work better and smarter. The majority of respondents agree that training allows them to develop and become competent in what they do.

6.3 Implications of this research

This research provides a better understanding of the impact of corporate culture on training and development at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown, for both commercial and academic purposes. Research evidence provides a platform for managers and employees to cultivate an organisational culture that seeks to encourage a conducive environment that allows open

knowledge sharing practices after training. This will ultimately benefit the organisation and employees once they have attended training programmes.

6.3.1 Implications for management

The implications of the research findings for management and business is that it is necessary to promote knowledge sharing, and engagement of employees to maintain momentum post-skills training, to drive continuous growth to meet organisational demands created by the market environment.

The research revealed the importance of the relationship between corporate culture and productivity, and the need for proper management of the transition from newly trained skills to implementation in the workplace to increase service and quality of outputs in all areas.

6.3.2 Implications for employees

The implications for employees are that management will address the shortcomings of and impediments to progress in the implementation of new skills, and introduce practical solutions for employees to work better and increase productivity.

The organisation will benefit from training and continue to grow and become competitive in the market.

6.3.3 Academic contributions

The research provides a research framework for those who wish to carry out related research studies. The proposed research model of Adeniji *et al.*, (2013) and the levels of culture, Schein (2010) used to study the effect of corporate culture on training and development.

This study provided reliable insight to use as a guide to study the impact of corporate culture on training and relate to performance and productivity.

The benefits of the study relates to its focus of exploring how culture affects training and development at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown.

6.4 Research Conclusions

This study sought to investigate the impact of corporate culture on training and development at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown. In terms of the findings and recommendations provided, Polyoak Packaging will need to take action to correct and going forward, improve on its activities related to training and development and ensure that processes are embraced.

6.4.1 The perception on training and development receptiveness

Employees recognised the need to have the correct attitude in order to grow and upgrade their skills on an individual basis. The management also recognises how important the culture is in relation to training and engagement of employees in their respective areas of responsibilities.

The perception among the managers and setter/employees revealed employees readiness and willingness to attend training and development programmes.

In contradiction to this view, other managers revealed that some employees regard the top down communication approach as an instruction rather than a communication process that intends to achieve conjoint agreement and buy in from employees.

The previous research has revealed that trainees' attitude, interest, values and expectations can influence the effectiveness of training in business, and these attitudes are influenced by the culture of the organisation, Noe (2002). In this organisation, there is a fair amount of buy-in from all employees, which suggests positive perception on receptiveness to the training and development component.

6.4.2 The views on employee training

The study respondents revealed there is a positive response and ambition for training and development of employees in the organisation. Managers would like to see formalised and robust review processes that involve discussion and documentation of employee progress and signing off as competent on the job after training provision.

Previous research confirmed that training is a learning experience, as it seeks permanent and ongoing transformation of an individual to improve his or her ability to do the job effectively and efficiently. It further confirmed that its deliberate intervention, task orientated and focus on the job and relevant tasks, (Nel *et al.*, 2012).

In this research study, respondents revealed that training and development is not adequate if employees are not positive and willing to learn more skills to embrace personal growth and progress. The perception of employees is conducive for the organisation to take training to the next level to fulfil company vision and goals.

6.4.3 The perception on implementation of newly learned skills in the workplace

The study findings revealed that Polyoak Packaging in Pinetown has a good training programme for its employees; however, the lack of transfer and implementation aspect is due to a lack of processes to provide a supportive environment and skills implementation.

One of the significant finding in this study is that there is significant willingness from both managers and employees to implement new skills. Training contributes to all employee development by making sure that they are equipped with the right skills and knowledge to carry out their functions effectively. An employee may have the right skills to do the work however, the ability to do so depends on the rate of training transfer. Previous study results revealed that transfer of learning requires a conducive and supportive environment in the work place. These studies identified a significant relationship between training and development, the skills transfer climate or environment and culture which impact heavily on employee perception and decision to apply new skills (Nel *et al.*, 2012).

The corporate culture, supervisor support, and peer support are dimensions that influence the transfer of skills in an organisation. The organisation must be ready with a conducive environment that permits its training interventions.

In this study, it is evident that corporate culture is favourable although the lack of support from divisional managers is rather poor or lacking and requires a formal approach to have better control.

6.4.4 The impact of corporate culture on training and development and on productivity improvements

The management is of the view that culture affects training and development and with this standpoint, the following criteria is suggested to influence training aspects within the organisation:

- Motivate and support employees before and after training
- Observe employees after training on how they execute duties and suggest improvements
- Recognise best performance
- Conduct formal assessments as part of monitoring and tracking
- Monitor competency and provide feedback on performance achievements on targets.

Setters and packers concurred on this point of view and further revealed the need for practical assessments on a continual basis.

Previous research identified that the manager's most important duties in an organisation is the creation and influence of an adaptive culture which allows training and development opportunities for employees. Management should be seen to allow employees to develop in their areas of responsibility, Daft (2010).

At Polyoak Packaging, as is evident from respondents' perceptions, the organisation has an enabling culture and provides a conducive environment for training and development.

There is a reasonable amount of management motivation and appropriate support which requires further formalities for continuous improvement and ultimately ever increasing productivity. In a nutshell, respondents views revealed that corporate culture affects the training and development component and will continue to play a fundamental and significant role in the organisation.

6.5 Recommendations resulting from this study

The following recommendations offer guidance for those working in or carrying out related research in the training and development field:

1. It is recommended that managers engage trainees after training. The feedback completed by trainees after the training programme is not adequate to monitor the actual transfer of newly learned skills into daily duties in the workplace.
2. It is recommended that there is a requirement to formalise knowledge sharing in the workplace with necessary follow-up to ensure that trained employees are not returning to old habits after some time.
3. Analysis of setters/packers' data in this study reveals that there is a need for a formal review process.
 - It is recommended that formal assessments and observations be documented to ensure that progress and employee development is monitored.
4. The analysis of data supported by literature review revealed a lack of support for trained employees.
 - It is therefore recommended that managers and line managers be trained to deal with skills transfer and application aspects in the workplace, and hence eliminate impediments to improved and increased productivity and growth.
5. The literature review revealed that the environment could hinder or allow the organisation to be productive.
 - It is recommended that guidelines be put in place to control and monitor skills implementation in the workplace; these should support the organisational culture that bolsters training and development for high performance.
6. Communication was revealed, as being one of the issues that requires attention.
 - It is recommended that training-related communications in the factories should have a separate area or notice board known as Business School Communications.
7. It is recommended that planned surveys should be implemented to assess corporate culture and its impact on training and application of new skills.

6.6 Recommendations and delimitations for future studies

This study places focus on the production units at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal and is homogeneous in nature. A truly representative sample would perhaps look at a heterogeneous sample that would comprise all production units and other departments within the organisation. It is also important to research office employees and find out whether they have a different perspective.

Due to limited scope of the research, these findings may not be relevant to other regions where the organisation operates.

All production units in this research were male dominant; as a result, there was no representation of female setters and packers.

A study of a sample from line, middle, and top management may generate different perception patterns and views on culture's influence on training and development.

Opportunities for further research directions highlighted below:

There were a number of areas this study was unable to investigate, however, future studies could consider the following topics that arose from this research study:

- Impact of communication on skills transfer and implementation
- Assessment of line managers' support for trainees
- Impact of organisational culture on employees' perceptions post-training
- Effect of employee perceptions on recognition before and after training has been conducted
- Effect on training, development, and transfer of skills on female setters/packers
- Culture measurement to predict the impact of increased employee-satisfaction on bottom-line results

6.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of corporate culture on training and development and provide appropriate recommendations to address identified shortcomings within Polyoak Packaging. In an in-depth literature review, there was a discussion of both constructs, along with the environment conducive to implementation of newly learned skills and effects on productivity in the organisation. The exploratory study can conclude that the respondents see organisation willingness and readiness to grow their skills to work efficiently and effectively with no difference between managers, setters, and packers regarding this view. This exploratory study has fulfilled its research objective of opening up this new branch of new knowledge in training and development for theoretical and empirical research.

Organisational culture is the way in which members share their perceived meanings and distinguish the company from other organisations. These beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts are conscious and unconscious, and are central to the way the organisation functions and maintains development of employees, (Robins *et al.*, 2009). This assertion, indeed puts the findings of this study into context although new changes in training and development may arise and new approaches adopted.

The findings of this study, makes a valuable contribution to the field of corporate culture, training and development, individual students, employers, and higher education institutions, and the study is deemed to have been successful.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Ethical Clearance



31 July 2015

Mr Phillip Mduduzi Zuma (212536716)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Zuma,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1476/014M

New project title: The impact of corporate culture in training and development at Polyoak Packaging, Pinetown

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 25 September 2014 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in Title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Mr Alec Bozas
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Muhammad Hoque
cc School Administrator: Ms Zarina Bullyraj

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