UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNERSHIP PROGRAMES IN PROMOTING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

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Signed ………………………………….

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THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNERSHIP PROGRAMES IN PROMOTING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT

With the introduction in South Africa of the Skills Development Act (1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act (1999), employer organisations are obliged to set aside a portion of their annual payroll for the internal training and development of their workplace. Since 1998, the Learnership model of workplace training has been promoted in South Africa as a creative vehicle for addressing high unemployment rates and a serious skills shortage. This is achieved through fast tracking the acquisition of skills and increasing a learner's chance of employment. However because learnerships are a recent innovation, the body of applied knowledge is small.

The study was conducted to provide a comprehensive insight to the effectiveness of learneship in promoting skills development. The research study was based on the explorative research method to clearly understand the dilemma and challenges facing learnership learners. A well structured questionnaire was found to be the most suitable method to collect data that was essential to the study.

A key finding concerns how learnerships are managed: the effective delivery of a learnership programme and of its outcomes requires the involvement of key stakeholders from the outset. The study reveals that the SETAs are not doing what they are supposed to be doing in terms of ensuring support with regards to the implementation of learnerships. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations are made to assist SETAs and organisations with regards to learnership objectives that may not easily be achieved if they are only identified through SETA structures.

The study concludes with the implications for learnership training and maps the way for future research.

Table of Contents

CHAPTER THREE

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1   Introduction

4~~4~~2

4.2   Reliability Test (Cronbach's alpha test)

4~~4~~2

List of Figures

List of Tables

CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION, OVERVIEW AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

There are many businesses which believe in investing in their people and improving productivity and many others which do not. Some businesses feel no need to change their staff and see nothing new to learn. The study was conducted at Smiths Manufacturing which is an automotive company based in Pinetown, part of Durban. The company has learnership programmes which have been outsourced to Production Management Institute (PMI) to administer.

1.1   INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s the government did make a significant contribution to the funding of training through the tax concession scheme for approved training, but the scheme was phased out in 1990. During the nineties the government's financial contribution to training was mainly in the areas of training of unemployed persons and the subsidisation of trade tests. The SA skills revolution began with the skills legislation of 1998 – 1999, where the then Department of Labour and Education intended a seamless, integrated approach to rapid skills development (Bisschoff & Govender, 2007). Based on a survey of performance by the Department of Education 11 major families of occupation are currently experiencing shortage of skilled people. The Growing Association of unemployed graduates is becoming increasingly unemployable.

Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono and Schultz (2008:432) confirm by saying that "South Africa has a poor skills profile as a result of the inferior quality of general education for the majority of South Africans, the low relevance of much publicly funded training, and the low level of investment by companies, new investment prospects, and employability of the young and unemployed". To rectify the enormous shortage of skilled manpower with the limited budgets available, the South African government has embarked on a number of innovative and resourceful programmes. Nel et al (2008:432) assert that the Skills Development Act "seeks to encourage employers to use

the workplace as an active learning environment, and to provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience".

Most people in South Africa want education to provide a base for a productive life in a fast changing technological age. Learnerships in an organisation go a long way in addressing the skills shortage. Instead of pursuing the broad and sometimes ephemeral goal of becoming a learning organisation, one instead pursues the development and facilitation of "learnership" in every person in the business, top to bottom (Cooksey 2003: 204). For many writers (e.g. Argyris, 1999 and Gerber, 1998), making a learning organisation a reality requires, among other things,

- genuine empowerment and teamwork
- self and team efficacy (for learning)
- pursuit of collective as well as individual competence
- effective leadership
- shared mental models and vision
- continuous open and critical dialogue
- systemic thinking
- high levels of trust within and between all levels
- resources and opportunities for learning and creating
- a willingness to critically question one's own behaviours
- attitudes and capabilities
- a culture that values both learning and risk taking without fear of failure
- all channel communication networks (where shadow side activity is either minimal or explicitly tapped into and attended to)
- high tolerance for uncertainty and failure (where failure is interpreted as an opportunity to learn).

Organisations are finding difficulty in filling some positions because of the high skills gap and this needs to be bridged. A learning organistion is the answer to that problem. The government has introduced the National Skills Development Strategy with an aim to bridge the skills gaps that have been

identified (Kraak 2008). Many people in South Africa lack skills and therefore become less productive in their job performance.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Training is a huge help in many cases. When preferred or required procedures exist and can serve as a basis for training, when government regulations must be understood and followed, when skills need to be developed, training is a very useful tool to improve peformance. In the past, it was sufficient to plan training at company level because most companies in South Africa competed locally, not internationally. This is no longer true with the coming of age of the global economy, e-commerce and free trade across borders. The Skills Development Act was developed with the sphere of manpower development as a goal. Kraak (2008:1) states that the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 has been the primary legislative instrument used to introduce the new system and at its heart rests a new institutional architecture comprising 23 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs).

The training and development of previously disadvantaged groups for entry into the job market, as well as their training for progression through managerial ranks, is a great challenge facing South Africa. Effective training and development requires line management and staff to work closely together on all phases of the training and development process, and for both parties to understand and recognise their shared responsibilities. McGrath, Badroodien, Kraak and Unwin (2004:106) believe that the combination of racial segmentation in the labour market and racial discrimination in education and training produced a racially-defined low skills model. Skills development through education and training has therefore always been "the most powerful lever for improving both individual opportunity and institutional competitiveness in countries and companies worldwide" (Nel et al 2008: 412). The government has realised the role and importance of having a skilled and knowledgeable workforce in order to secure competitive advantage in national and international workforce.

However Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield (2002:10) argue that "the biggest challenge facing South Africa in the new millennium is that of building the economy". This process can only be successful if companies raise performance and productivity standards through skill enhancement and development. Nel et al (2008:418) argue that the "demand for labour in South Africa is currently lower than in earlier years, which implies that not enough jobs are being created for those entering the labour market for the first time". Barker (2007) contends that the factors influencing the demand for labour revolve mainly around insufficient economic growth and the cost of labour. It is amazing that the training authorities have been under criticism since they were established in 2000 over their failure to address necessary skills development among the unemployed and workers. One has to remember that Learnership training (previously termed apprenticeship training) dates back to biblical times and takes place on and off the job. Grobler et al (2002:326) raise an interesting argument saying that "the old system had lost its effectiveness and as a result our economy now suffers a drastic shortage of people with practical workplace or employment-creating skills".

1.3   MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

The motivation or inspiration for this study comes from the concerns that very few organisations have learnership training and there are still scarce skills within different SETAs. South Africa has a very limited number of artisans for instance. Things have changed and there is now a need to research, design and plan education and training at industry level and here is where SETAs come into place. On the 7 February 2000 the Department of Labour published regulations aimed at the implementation of the Skills Development Act and the Skills Development Levies Act (DoL, 2001). McGrath et al (2004:98) agree with that statement by saying that "the problem facing South Africa is very different from that found in the older industrial countries also added that rather than being faced with a loss of low skilled jobs, the situation in the South African economy is one of no jobs for a substantial proportion of the population".

The biggest challenge facing South Africa in the new millennium is that of rebuilding the economy. This process can only be successful if companies raise performance and productivity standards through skill enhancement and development. In order to take large groups out of poverty and transform them into productive workers "the resources must be created for the necessary improvement in the skills infrastructure" (McGrath et al 2004:114).

Kraak (2008) believes that the South Africa's past training regime failed very badly at providing training for the three key categories of learners in the labour market: the pre-employed; the currently-employed; and the unemployed. Take for an example, technical colleges which provided poor pre-employment training with very low placement rates. Cooksey (2003) argues that Learnerships move beyond the traditional conceptions of leadership, which even today remain "top-down" in focus, locating leadership qualities and behaviours in the hands of relatively few organisational members. It is clear that South Africa is not yet equipped with the skills that its citizens need to establish and position the country as an effective competitor in the global economy.

1.4   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Nel et al, (2008:432) state that the Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998 seeks to encourage employers to use the workplace as an active learning environment, and to provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience.

Mosley et al (2001:461) argue that not only must new workers be trained in the details of the new job but "current employees must be trained and their skills updated to meet rapidly changing environments and job requirements".

There are 23 SETAs but very few companies with learnership training, which is a big concern. To remedy the situation, companies must help employees to acquire the tools of development, which will also satisfy the need to improve production and offer the skills necessary to meet the demands of the economy at large.

The paper will attempt to offer answers to the following research questions:

- How has the performance of employees changed that have been on the learnership programme?
- Are there any instruments used to test if the programme is beneficial to organisations?
- Is the learnership training accessible to society?
- Who benefits from skills development?
- Does the organisation benefit from having a learnership programme?

1.5   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In order to drive skills development nationally, various pieces of legislation have been promulgated. These include The Skills Development Act, the Skills Development Levies Act, and the South African Qualifications Authority Act. The skills development legislation makes provision for the promotion and development of various institutions and methods of educational and vocational upliftment. The Banking Sector Education and Training Authority is one such institution.

The purpose of the paper is to:

- Determine whether organisations benefit from the programme.
- Determine whether the programme is able to bridge the training and labour market gap.
- Identifying whether learnership concepts have resulted in employment.
- Assess whether the organization has benefited (directly or indirectly)

1.6   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How will skills development impact on organizational development?
- Are skills learned being applied in practice?
- Is the learnership programme accessible to the society?

1.7   THE VALUE OF THE STUDY

This study will determine whether learnership programmes have a positive impact on the organizations or not.

1.8   DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

Erasmus, Loedolff, Mda and Nel (2006:2) define the key concepts as follows:

Training

"Is the way in which an enterprise uses a systematic process to modify the knowledge, skills and behaviour of employees to enable it to achieve it's objectives. It is task oriented because if focuses on the work performed in an enterprise based on job or task descriptions".

Education

"Includes the learning activities that occur in an enterprise, specially those that managers and both skilled and unskilled workers require".

Development

"It refers generally to the development of employees as a group within an enterprise rather than that of the individual".

Learnership

"It consists of a structured learning components that includes practical work experience of a specified nature and durations".

1.9   LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review entails consulting written sources and collecting items of information which relate to the topic. The researcher studied other materials which have some bearing on the topic under investigation. Use was made of secondary sources such as internet, magazines, journals and books. The intention in using a literature review is to obtain perceptions about the significant impact of learnership in terms of skills development.

An in-depth review of literature related to the role and effectiveness of learnership in skills development is provided.

The intention of using a literature review is to obtain perceptions about the significance and impact of learnership programmes on skills development.

1.10   POPULATION FOR THE STUDY

This study is limited geographically to the Durban region of KwaZulu-Natal, which is one of the nine provinces of the Republic of South Africa. The study was conducted in an organisation called Smiths Manufacturing which is based in Pinetown, part of Durban because of its accessibility to the researcher.

The census conducted by Statistics SA in 2001 reveals the following demographic profile of the general population.

Table 1.1 National and provincial demographics

AREA	AFRICAN	COLOURED	INDIAN	WHITE
SA	73%	10%	3%	14%
KZN	83%	1%	9%	7%

1.11   RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study is descriptive in nature, meaning that it describes the status of learnership programmes within the organisation. This enabled the researcher to get more information on the topic under investigation. The goal of a descriptive study is to describe relevant aspects of the phenomena of interest to the researcher from an individual, organisational, industry or other perspective (Sekaran 1992: 97).

This study gathered data from employees of Smiths Manufacturing. Sekaran (1992) believes that the descriptive studies present data in a meaningful form thus help to:

- Understand the characteristics of a group in a situation of interest
- Aid in thinking systematically about aspects in a given situation
- Offer ideas for further probing and research and
- Help make certain simple decisions.

Sampling Procedure

Jankowicz (2005:202) defines sampling as the "deliberate choice of a number of units like companies, departments, and people". This is considered in the discussion in chapter three in specific relation to this study.

Research Instrument

Questionnaire

Questionnaires are low in cost because they can be sent out in different ways, for example by means of email or web. Questionnaires were used as an instrument to elicit data on different experiences in the Learnership programme as a means of skills development. The researcher obtained permission from Smiths Manufacturing to conduct the study. An international standard quantitative statistical software called Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 15 was used to analyse the data.

1.12   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study was only conducted within the Province of KwaZulu Natal.
- Some of the employees could did not fill in the questionnaires as they were too busy to participate in the study.
- Budget constraints as the researcher did not have enough funds to continue smoothly with the study
- Limited time to finish the project, as the researcher is a student as well as an employee.

1.13 THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

CHAPTER ONE - ORIENTATION, OVERVIEW AND PROBLEM FORMULATION

This chapter consists of the introduction and background to the study. It includes a motivation for the study, statement of the problem, purpose of study, research questions, delimitations of the study and limitations of the study and envisaged research methodology.

CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents an in-depth and comprehensive literature review on the subject area of learnership and skills development. The literature review which focuses on the theory of learnership training in relation to skills development forms the basis for understanding the effectiveness of learnership programmes. This chapter will further more look into the theoretical framework of skills development in South Africa.

CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the research design and methodology of the study. It includes detail of the collection of data, selection of subjects and a plan for organising and analysing the data.

CHAPTER FOUR – PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

Chapter four focuses on the analysis and interpretation of data. The main findings of the study are presented and summarised in this chapter. The findings will justify the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of learnership in skills development.

CHAPTER FIVE – DISCUSSIONS

Chapter five presents limitations the researcher encountered during the study and discusses what has been presented. The findings are linked to the objectives.

CHAPTER SIX – RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This last chapter of the study presents recommendations and conclusions based on the findings and propose future research.

1.13 SUMMARY

This chapter has introduced an overview of the research on the effectiveness of learnership in promoting skills development. One has to bear in mind that the concept of learnership can be applied to any profession, so that people may one day qualify to practice as HR practitioners, attorneys by virtue of having successfully completed a learnership programme rather than a university course.

The next chapter presents an overview of learnership and skills development.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

_____

2.1   Introduction

This chapter highlights the legal and political environment that the organisation operates within in order to fulfil training and development functions.

Davies and Farquharson (2004) indicate that a new National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) was introduced in South Africa and its elements can be considered at three levels:

- Policy making
- The framework for developing skills
- Improving skills in the workplace.

If one looks back at skills development in South Africa it has not been smooth sailing. Kraak (2008) highlights very important points when he said that some of the challenges facing skills development in South Africa are the following: (i) a lack of political will to ensure the success of the integrated approach to education and training formally adopted in South Africa after 1994; (ii) severe governance problems with regards to the management of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), including financial mismanagement and fraud and lastly, a multitude of operational problems, making the rollout of the NSDS an extremely difficult and complex task.

The following acts are essential to the understanding of the nature and scope of the systematic change being undertaken:

- South African Qualifications Authorities Act (No. 58 of 1995)
- National Education Policy Act (No. 27 of 1996)
- South African Schools Act (No. 84 of 1996)
- Higher Education Act (No. 101 of 1997) with subsequent amendments
- Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998)
- Skills Development levies Act (No. 99 of 1999)

- Further Education and Training Act (No. 98 of 1998)

2.2   The Structure of Skills Development Legislation

In February 2001, the Minister of Labour launched a National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS). The NSDS is built on the legislation that was promulgated to advance the process of skills development in South Africa. NSDS is a long-term strategic plan of the Department of Labour aimed at improving the skills and productivity of the nation while redressing past imbalances in education, training and employment (Griffin 2006, p. 53).

The Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998, is the act that replaced the Manpower Training Act, the Guidance and Placement Act and the Local Government Training Act. It attempts "to co-ordinate industrial training in a more structured and purposeful manner' (Bendix 2006:139). The Act came into effect on 1 February 1999, replacing the Manpower Act as well as the Guidance and Placement Act.

2.2.1   The National Skills Development Strategy

The NSDS has the following objectives:

- Developing a culture of high quality lifelong learning
- Fostering skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employability
- Stimulating and supporting skills development in small business
- Promoting skills development, employability and sustainable livelihood through social development initiatives
- Assisting new entrants into employment (SAQA Bulletin 2003, p. 6)

The Skills Development Amendment Act No 37 of 2008 which provides amendments should be seen as supportive of the Employment Equity Act in that it wishes to encourage employers to develop persons who were previously disadvantaged and to see skills development being practiced in organisations. The amended act replaces the word training provider to skills development provider as referred to section 7(b) (p12).

The purposes of the Skills Development Act are, according to Section 2 (2), to be achieved through:

- An institutional and financial framework comprising: the National Skills Authority, the National Skills Fund; a skills development levy-grant scheme as stipulated in the Skills Development Levies Act; Sector Educational and Training Authorities (SETAs); labour centres of the Department and provincial offices of the Department;
- By encouraging partnership between the public and private sectors of the economy to provide learning in and for the workplace;
- By cooperating with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

The Department of Labour (DoL, 2001) with a focus on skills development introduced a framework for a compulsory training levy and a network of SETAs. The levy was introduced on 1 April 2000 and is collected monthly through taxation by the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

The Skills Development Act proposes a very ambitious new framework aimed at impacting on each of the learner constituencies through the creation of a new institutional regime with strong links forged between learners, employers, government and the new intermediary training bodies, SETAs (McGrath et al 2004:120). In terms of the Skills Development Levies Act all organisations in South Africa with a payroll exceeding R500,000 per annum must pay a 1% Skills Development Tax on their payroll. This tax is fully contributed by the employer as part of its general statutory taxes calculated on the EMP 201 SARS form. The reimbursement is paid from the levy scheme (McGrath et al 2004).

The Skills Development Act provides for the establishment of various structures to advise on and regulate industrial training (Bendix 2006:136). According to Bendix (2006) Figure 2.1 highlights the structures that are involved in skills development.

NATIONAL SKILLS FUND	NATIONAL SKILLS AUTHORITY	SETA	Quality Assurance	Accreditation of Education and Training Providers
		SETA	Learnerships	
			Skills Programmes	National Qualifications Framework
DIRECTOR GENERAL			Workplace	
Skills Development Planning Unit		SETA		Registration of unit standards and qualifications
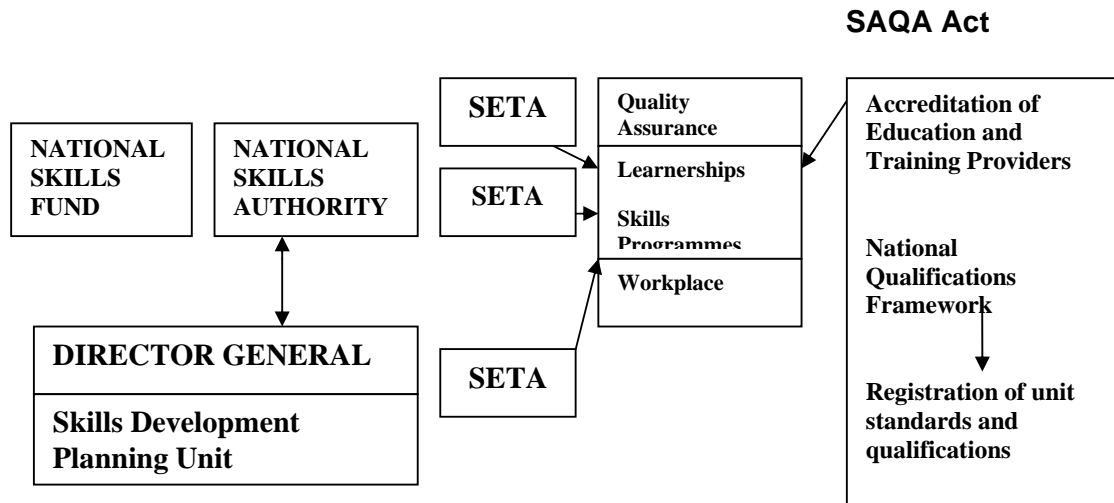
Figure: 2.1 Skills Development Structure
(Adapted from Bendix, 2006: 136).

The learnership and skills programmes are the cornerstone of the National Skills Development Strategy. These are underpinned and supported by:

- The qualifications and standards registered by South Africa Quality Authorities (SAQA) on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF)
- The quality assurance processes of the Educations and Training Quality Assurers (ETQAs)
- Learner data and achievement captured on the learner record database (NLRD)

Barker (2003:8) asserts that in the past South Africa has neglected the development of its human resources. The education, particularly that of Africans, was seriously neglected, and the country is today experiencing the consequences thereof. Webster and Von Holdt (2005) indicate that the essence of the Skills Development Act (1998) is to involve all stakeholders, including employees and unions, in developing a Skills Plan. Furthermore, the Skills Levy Act (1999) taxes businesses in order to generate resources for training and it encourages employers to make use of the workplace as a learning environment. To learn on the job is very motivating and gives an

individual a feeling of belonging and to know that the organisation cares about the development of its staff.

The skills development system has made provision for what is known as 'Recognition of Prior Learning' or (RPL). Basically this entails testing a person's ability to do a specific job and awarding that person either a qualification or credits towards a qualification, based on their current knowledge and ability to perform the required task.

This means that if a person has been working as a plumber for the last 12 years this person may request a training institution to perform an RPL exam, to assess his capability and award him with a qualification based on his experience. It is therefore possible for him to receive a plumbing qualification based on his experience, without having served a recognized apprenticeship or learnership.

This new training methodology, also created what is now known as the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) system, which allows educational levels from different industries to be ranked in parallel on a single system.

This makes it possible to draw a parallel between the qualification of a secretary and a salesperson or a chartered accountant and a medical doctor. The NQF system consists of eight different levels namely-

NQF level 1 - General Education and Training (GET) levels - primary training and development up to grade 8 and 9 and Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) 4.

NQF 2 to 4 - Further Education and Training (FET) level - secondary education including certificates and qualifications up to grade 12 or N5.

NQF 5 to 8 - Higher Education and Training (HET) levels - higher education such as university degrees, doctorates and further research.

This framework allows education and training to take place within a formal structure that can be monitored and controlled by Government. Kraak (2005)

advocates that the NQF is viewed by government as playing a critical role in unifying the previously divided general, further and higher education and training sector through the creation of a laddered qualification structure.

2.2.2   The National Qualifications Framework

The South African Qualifications Authority Act laid the foundations for the transformation of the South African education and training system and established the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF.

In 1998, regulations under the SAQA Act made provision for the registration of National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) in 12 organising fields of learning, and for the accreditation of Education and Training Quality Assurance (ETQA) bodies (Kraak 2003).

By September 2000, 276 learnerships had been registered by the Department of Labour (Griffin 2003:55). The South African NQF with its commitment to outcome based education (OBE) seeks to transform the education and training system as well as the learning outcome within this system.

Table 2.1 illustrates the current position of intermediate qualifications on the National Qualifications Framework. Intermediate are those located in the middle education and training bands.

TABLE 2.1 Intermediate skill levels on the National Qualifications Framework. (Adapted from Kraak, 2003)

NQF Level	Skills Band
1	Low skills
2	
3	(Pre-matriculation)
4	Intermediate skills (equivalent to matriculation, and matric plus diploma)
5	
6	
7	
8	

The South African NQF with its commitment to outcomes based education (OBE) seeks to transform the education and training system as well as the learning outcomes within this system (Griffin 2003: 55). Killen as cited by Griffin (2003:55) notes:

> *Because the critical outcomes are broad and long-term, they provide only general guidelines… More specific guidelines for teaching are developed by looking at the critical outcomes in the context of a particular learning area (or field) … This produces the specific outcomes that describe what students will be able to do at each level of learning in each learning area.*

2.3   The Learnership Programme

The term 'learnership' describes a particular model of workplace training that is used in South Africa. Simply defined, a learnership is "a route to a nationally recognised qualification that relates to an occupation and consists of a structured learning component and practical work experience" (de Jager, Hattingh & Huster 2002:21).

Two types of learnerships can be distinguished:

- *Employed learners*: "this term is used for full time internal employees of the business being placed on a learnership", and
- *Unemployed learners*: "this term represents unemployed individuals who are employed for the period and the purpose of the learnership" (Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert and Hatfield, 2006:339).

One of the methods of skills development contemplated in the legislation is the 'Learnership'. One may ask when learning occurs. Pickford (2003) claims that learning occurs when individuals, teams and organisations generate and generalize good ideas; when ideas from one setting or time are applied to another; or when theory becomes reality.

What "learnership" really implies is a fundamental shift from leaders "facilitating", "mentoring" and "empowering" learners to learners evolving to become leaders in their own right (Cooksey 2003, p. 6).

What makes something a Learnership is the fact that the learning is experienced in accordance with a contractual relationship between three parties, the learner, the provider and the employer, which makes it necessary for the learner to be employed by the employer for the duration of the contract. Learnerships must consist of workplace components as well as academic components.

Learnerships must culminate in qualifications registered on the National Qualifications Framework. Barker (2003:260) defines Learnership as "a new era para-professional and vocational education and training programme" that incorporates and also builds and improves on traditional apprenticeships. Davies and Farquharson (2004:183) add to the definition, "it is a route to a nationally recognized qualification that relates to an occupation and consists of a structured learning component and practical work experience". Kraak (2003) describes it as a training mechanism designed to overcome the limited impact of the previous training regime by widening the net of beneficiaries more effectively. Learnerships are intended at all levels of the National

Qualifications Framework (NQF) and are not restricted to the intermediate levels as has been the case with apprenticeship (McGrath et al 2004:120).

The legislation stipulates that a learnership must culminate in a specific qualification – a certificate as contemplated in the SAQA Act.

Learnerships in the South African context are implemented in a highly-regulated environment. This is evident in the three core criteria for quality training and learning practices in the workplace, to which all learnership programmes are required to adhere:

- *Applied competence:* "the ability to put into practice in the relevant context the learning outcomes acquired in obtaining a qualification".
- *Integrated assessment:* "assessment that permits the learner to demonstrate applied competence, which uses a range of formative (interim) and summative (overall) assessment methods".
- *A qualification:* "a planned combination of learning outcomes that has a defined purpose or purposes, which is intended to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning" (Vorwerk 2002:14).

2.3.1. How learnership works

The organisation needs to financially carry the trainee for the duration of the training period which is usually 12 months. The organisation also needs to have mentors as well as the equipment available for training and therefore it is best left to organisations with well-developed infrastructures and deep wallets.

Badroodien and Kraak (2006) observe that the curriculum development of Learnerships is often outsourced to private curriculum consultants and companies with dire consequences for the Further Education and Training (FET) colleges in the long run. Outsourcing occurs because the process of delivering learnerships in the colleges is generally regarded as too time consuming and challenging (Badroodien, Azeem & Kraak, 2006).

The BANKSETA has identified the following key priority areas for learnerships and skills programmes:

- information technology-related skills development
- management and leadership skills development
- customer interface-related skills development
- specialist financial skill development
- legislative compliance related skills development (BANKSETA).

In terms of the Skills Development Levies Act, organisations not paying Skills Development Levies (SDL) tax may not claim the grants; they may however offer learnership and claim learnership grants. The actual claim that the organisation has to submit to activate the claim procedure is called an annual training report and workplace skills plan (ATR & WSP).

This document consists of two parts. The first part is the annual training report. The annual training report does exactly what it says; it basically tells the SETA what training has taken place in the organisation in the previous 12 months, and which employees received training. It also contains information to the type, cost and delivery method of the training and goes further to assess whether the training that the employees received is in line with the planned training for the organisation, industry and critical skills identified by the SETA.

The second part of the document is the workplace skills plan. This part of the document provides the SETA with information on what training the organisation will provide to the employees in the next 12 months, based on the operational requirements of the organisation, its industry and the critical skills identified by the SETA.

Table 2.2 indicates the number and percentage of learneship programmes by NQF levels as identified by Kraak (2003),

TABLE 2.2   Registered learnership programmes by NQF level, March 2002. Adapted from Kraak (2003), HRD and Skills Crisis

NQF Level	Number of registered learnership programmes	Percentage of registered learnership programmes	Skills Band
1	7	3	Low skills (pre-matriculation
2	37	14	
3	58	22	
4	79	30	Intermediate skills (equivalent to matriculation and matric plus diploma)
5	46	17	
6	28	11	
7	7	3	
8	0	0	

This document is thus a check and balance system to the SETA, allowing it to gather valuable statistical information with regards to skills shortages, critical skills in organisations and development requirements within the particular industry. It also allows Government to project skills needs and to make this information available to training institutions such as universities and technical training institutions. According to du Toit (2009), without this information the Government would not be able to plan learnership training courses and provide for skills shortages.

2.3.2 The role of the SETAs

The SETAs bring together the industry and the unions, and are entirely funded via the employer levy. The key roles of the SETAs are to:

- organise and administer the levy funds and grants, 80% of which are passed on to then after the payment of 20%the national fund;
- develop a sector skills development plan and strategy for the sector
- develop, register, promote and monitor learnerships, ensuring access to quality training within the National Qualifications Framework;

- help companies develop their workplace skills training and development plans and practices; and
- provide information about current and future skills needs in the sector;
- act as agents for NSF strategic projects (eg bursaries, funding training places, etc.) (Raddon and Sung 2006: 8).

According to Grawitzky (2006) the SETAs have the mechanisms in place to fund learnerships and allow employers to claim back much of the cost associated with learnerships.

An important determinant is the role played by the SETA in accrediting learnerships whilst encouraging and monitoring training interventions. By developing its human resources the organisation will gain the competitive edge to meet current and future person power needs.

The SETA learnership co-ordinators are encouraged to evaluate the work placement formally, in conjunction with the work place supervisor. According to section 3 of the Skills Development Act, every employer must pay a skills development levy and the South African Revenue Services is the national collection agency. The levy from 1 April 2000 was 0.5% of the employer's payroll and from 1 April it increased to 1% (Grobler et al 2006:337).

Figure 2.2 highlights the flow of funds in the levy system.
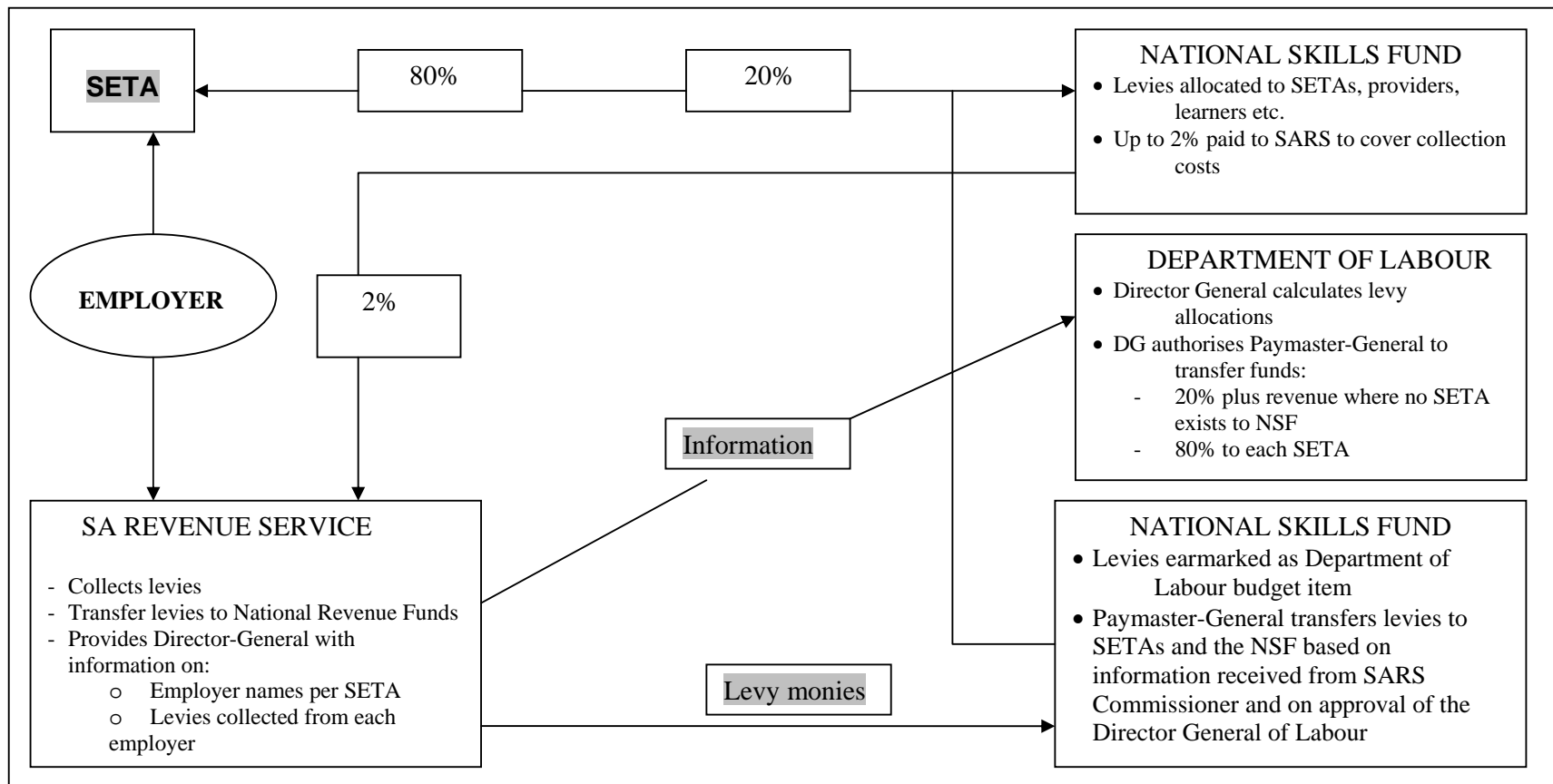
Figure 2.2: Flow of funds in the levy system (Adapted from Gobler et al, 2006).

2.3.3 The role of the employer

Grobler et al (2006) identify the following as the roles of the employer with regards to learnership:

- Enter into a fixed contract with learners
- Manage the learnerships in joint responsibility with the training provider
- Comply with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act
- Provide supervision and coaching to learners
- Provide the required facilities ad equipment required for performing the job
- Release learners for training
- Conduct on the job assessments throughout the learnership.

The employer makes the final decision about taking unemployed learners into a learnership, signs the employment contract with the learner and provides the work experience part of the learnership.

2.4 The difference between Learnership programme and Apprenticeship programme

South Africa reinvented the notion of apprenticeship during the mid 1990s and in countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), Australia, Norway, German and New Zealand, the retooled apprenticeships became known as "Modern Apprenticeships" whilst in South Africa they became known as Learnerships (Smiths, Jennings and Solanki 2005:538).

The word Apprenticeship is defined by Smith et al (2005:539) as "the training that blends the learning of theory in the classroom with actual practice, on the job, in the techniques of the job". A combination of on-and-away from the job training.

Apprentice training is "widely used in the skilled trades, such as barbering, carpentry, printing, welding and plumbing" (Carrell, Elbert, Hatfield, Grobler, Marx & van der Schyf, 1998:320). There is a difference between learnership and apprenticeship, as Kraak (2005) notes that apprenticeship had very loose

requirements regarding the linkage between theoretical training and work experience.

The learnership agreements need to be drawn up between the employer, education and training (ET) provider and learner to specify the conditions of employment and practical work experience, and when the learner will be released to attend training classes.

Although the learnership programme is modelled from the apprenticeship tradition, there are some important differences (Davies & Farquharson 2004:184).

According to McGrath et al (2004:121) the following are the differences between Learnerships and Apprenticeships:
Learnerships have three-fold purposes:

- "They are aimed at providing workplace learning in a more structured and systematic form.
- Learnerships seek to link structured learning to multiple sites of work experience.
- All training and practical work experience must culminate in a nationally-recognised qualification".

Most often in the past, "apprentices would undergo a minimal level of theoretical training at a technical college, which were often unrelated to their practical training with little supervision and unstructured induction into skilled work at their places of employment" (McGrath et al 2004: 121).

Vorwerk (2002), as cited in Davies and Farquharson (2004:184), concludes that in the South African context learnerships are "much more" than the old apprenticeship system and that "some of the early learnerships registered by the Department of Labour are at the level of degrees and professional articles".

The learnership training system has been promoted in South Africa as a creative vehicle for addressing high levels of unemployment and a serious skills shortage. Learnership on the Further Education and Training band (equivalent to the last 3 years of secondary school and NQF level 2-4) will "develop both general and specific competencies, preparing learners for intermediate level employment" (Kraak 2005:437). Training is a learning experience in that it seeks a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve his ability to perform a job (Nel; Swanepoel; Kirsten, Erasmus & Tsabadi 2005: 320).

Table 2.3 Apprenticeship system vs. Learnership system
         (Adapted from Grobler et al, 2002)

Apprenticeship System	Learnership System
There was too much emphasis on getting certification through exams and not enough on actually learning the required skill in a practical way.	The practical work experience and the training are structured to lead up logically to a nationally recognised qualification.
The exams tested the learners ability to talk about the skill rather than their ability to exercise the skill	The learner receives quality support and mediation in relating the work experience to the training versa versa.
There was not enough input from coaches, mentors or experts in the learning process.	The learner develops key learning skills such as problem solving, teamwork, collecting and analysing information.
Learners were relegated to being of little importance in the company where the apprenticeship took place and there was little accountability of the company to an outside quality assurance policy.	The learner learns to apply the skill with what is called 'foundational competence'.

The amended Skills Development Act of 2008 combines the two, by highlighting that the learning programme includes a learnership, an apprenticeship, a skills programme and any other prescribed learning programme which includes a structured work experience component as per section 1(b) (p4). One must not be confused by learnership and apprenticeship. A basic explanation is that apprenticeship applies to selected trades and learnerships apply to any occupation.

There are cost implications and obligations, related to learnership programmes, which may arise including relocation costs, providing residential

accommodation, obtaining work permits and dealing with personal income tax issues.

The apprenticeship training is a combination of on and off-the-job training. Apprenticeship programmes require a minimum number of hours of classroom instruction per year, together with the on-the-job experience of working with a skilled worker. The programmes can last from two to five years, depending on the complexity of the skill being taught. Skilled trades that are usually learnt through apprenticeship include bricklaying, sheet-metal work, carpentry, plumbing and electrical trades.

2.5   Problems with the Learnership Programmes

Learnership programmes are time consuming and are not easy to administer and implement. "The rollout of learnerships has been an enormous task from an operational point of view" (Kraak 2008:15). According to Webster and Holdt (2005), SETAs are there to drive the programme but very few have been successful in implementation. Most organisations do not have the right materials and lack coaches and mentors to facilitate the programme. All of this takes a long time and "is very resource intensive, both financially and to have the right expert personnel" (Grawitzky 2006:31). This means that learnership is only practical to organisations with enough cash at hand because the benefits are only received at the end of the programme once the learners are qualified at which time they claim grants.

Grawitzky (2006:33) argues that either way, "the system of training has not had the desired effect of increasing the level skills at the intermediate to the high level of the spectrum". One of the major reasons why learnerships fail is because the workplace learning component is neglected. Kraak (2003) advocates that a large number of learnership programmes have been registered but only about half are being utilised because stakeholders do not have the required curriculum and learning materials, which have yet to be developed. Kraak (2008) is of the opinion that design and registration of a Learnership programme can take anything between two to three years to complete. In order to overcome this accredited training providers then need to be sourced, and if not accredited, they would then need to be accredited by

an ETQA. All of this "takes a long time and is very resource-intensive, both financially and in terms of expert personnel" (Grawitzky 2006: 31). Kraak (2008) highlights that employers have prioritised lower-end Learnerships, the reasons for which are not yet clear. He is of the view that it could be related to government's push "to train large numbers of unemployed youth resulting in training that has largely taken place at the lower end" (Kraak 2008:15).

2.6 The Impact of Learnership Programme

One of the central obligations, which the Skills Development Act requires SETAs to fulfil, is "the promotion and establishment of learnerships. Learnerships are spread over a number of NQF levels ranging from levels in further education to levels in higher education" (Cooksey 2003:210). SETAs are required to broker a learnership agreement between the learner/s, the employers and the training provider.

Structured learning takes place at a training institution whereas work experience takes place either in an industry, business or project. SETAs play a very important role in implementing learnerships and in making them a success. SETAs have mechanisms in place to fund learnerships and enable organisations to claim back for embarking on such a programme. Clark (2007) as cited in Human Capital Management 2006/7 suggests that while there have been numerous problems with some of the SETAs, learnership training has managed to place a focus on learning and succeeded in developing many South Africans.

Hattingh (2006:63) claims that "the success of learnerships largely depends on the quality of work place of learning as the major part of learnership (between 60% and 70%) must happen in the work place". Leanerships automatically transform the organisation. There are various stakeholders that are involved in the implementation, and coaches and mentors have a vital role in ensuring the quality and relevance of learnerships. Learnerships, like any other instrument "do not automatically translate into organisational improvement" (Hattingh 2006: 63). Similarly Grawitzky (2006) points out that the bulk of Learnerships offered have been at NQF level 1 & 2 (entry level

skills), and most of these beneficiaries have not found sustainable employment.

The skill strategy document proposes that 85% of beneficiaries from learnerships and other skills development programs should be Black and that 54% of them be women. It further suggests that 4% of those trained in the four years should be disabled (DoL, 2009).

Recognition of the importance of skills training has been further influenced by the increase of international competition and the success of economies like those of Japan, China and Germany. The study conducted by Kraak (2008:7) reveals that "the total of 88,410 Learnerships amongst unemployed workers in the four year period of the First Phase of the NSDS exceeds the target set of 80,000, and counted together with the indentured Apprenticeship enrolments of 21,237 during the same four year period, gives a grand total of 109,647 learners at the intermediate skill level".

2.7. The Benefits of Learnerships

Learnership programmes provide benefits to both the employer and the employee. Griffin (2006) indicates the following as the benefits for the employer, employee and as well as the relevant SETAs

2.7.1 Benefits for the employer

- Improved skills in the workplace
- The workplace training logbook facilitates the identification of training gaps and opportunities
- Training is standardised and subject to quality assurance
- There are financial benefits - tax rebates for signing of Learnership agreements with trainees (learners), and there may be grants that can be accessed from the relevant SETA.

2.7.2 Benefits for the employee

- Access through the training modules to the latest practices in the profession.
- The facility to earn while you learn

-   Wider knowledge of internal audit processes and improves skills.
-   Obtaining a professionally recognised qualification

2.7.3 Benefits for the relevant SETA

-   Structured learnership to add to the SETA's workplace skills plan.
-   An opportunity for the SETA to cater for a cross-sectoral discipline that is often overlooked as it is not sector specific.

From the launch of the National Skills Development Strategy I in February 2001 until the middle of NSDS Phase II at the end of May 2007, an impressive total of 243 729 South Africans registered for learnership programmes (HSRC Review, 2008). The survey conducted by the HSRC indicates that across the learnership system, 51% of those enrolled were women, 81% of the total were black learners, 75% were youth between the ages of 15 and 34 (HSRC Review, 2008).

2.8 Steps to follow in the Learnership Programme

The criteria for a learnership are set out in the Skills Development Act. The Act also highlights that Learnerships require, on-going mentorship and coaching as well as assessment in order to fully support the learner. Learnerships need to be registered with the Department of Labour through the SETA. In order for the learnership to be successful the steps are as follows.

-   **Liaise with the relevant SETA**. The SETA will usually provide the quality assurance function and may also offer financial assistance or incentives.
-   **Support structures.** The employer must be able to provide exposure as required by the training logbook (TLB), enable and encourage the learner to attend the training modules, and provide internal logistical support.
-   **Mentors and Assessors**. These must be identified and if need be, undergo training for these workplace roles.

- **Registration**. The employer must sign an Operational agreement with the Institute, and the learner should enter into a learnership agreement with the employer and training provider
- **Workplace training logbook**. It is recommended that the issuing of this to every learner be done in a group session which includes mentors/internal assessors.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** Previous relevant experience is recognized in fulfilling the training requirements - this should be recorded in the TLB upon commencement of the program.
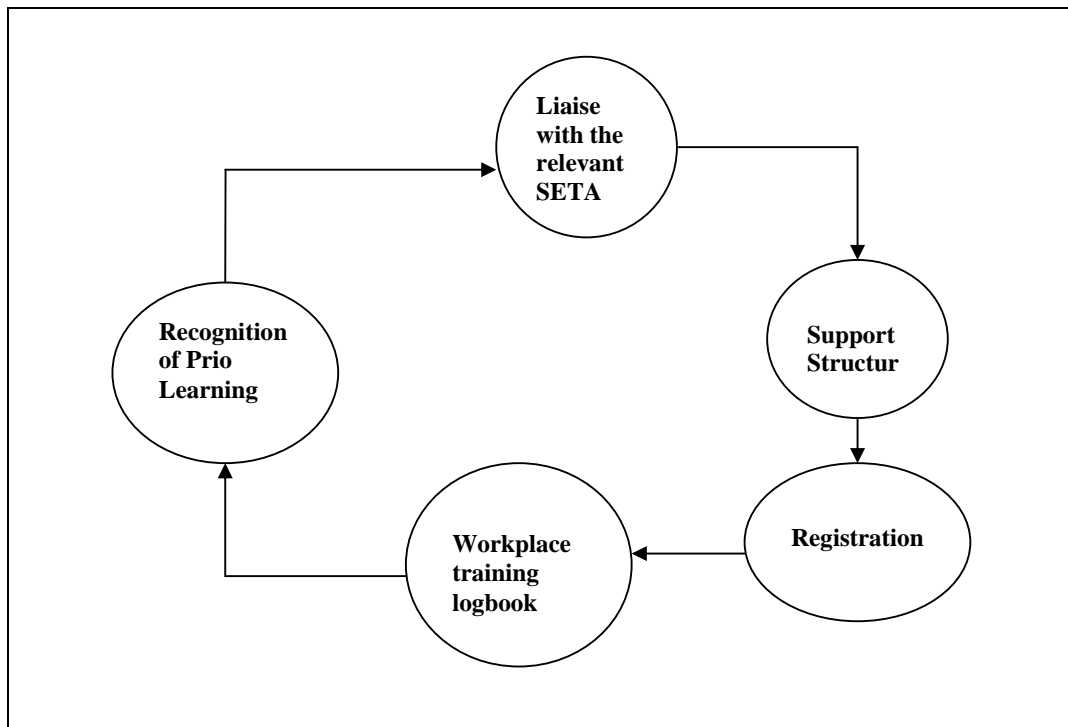
Figure 2.3:   Steps to follow in learnership programme

2.9   Strategic Training and Development

Strategic Human Resources Development (SHRD) as discussed by Erasmus and van Dyk (2003: 69) means the "process of changing an organisation, stakeholders outside it, groups inside it, and people employed by it through planned learning so that they possess the knowledge and skills needed in the future".

A training program with effective and evaluation techniques enables employees to reach the required performance level in their jobs in a relatively short time. Jinabhai (2005:90) contends that training and development objectives help determine which methods are appropriate by focusing on the areas of employee performance requiring change.

Jinabhai (2005) asserts further that well-formulated written training and development objectives should focus on three considerations:
- A statement of outcome behaviour - what the employee will be able to do on the completion of training.
- A description of the conditions under which the outcome behaviour is expected to occur.
- A statement of the minimum level of achievement that will be accepted as evidence that the employee has accomplished what was expected.

According to Armstrong (1993:23) training means investing in people to "enable them to perform better and to empower them to make the best use of their natural abilities". He advocates the following training objectives:
- To develop the competencies of employees and improve their performance
- To help people grow within the organisation in order to meet its future needs for human resources from within.
- Te reduce the learning time for employees starting new jobs on appointment, transfer or promotion, and ensure that they become fully competent as quickly and economically as possible (Armstrong (1993).

2.10   Summary

Milkovich and Boudreau (1988: 78) contend that "assessing needs is important because other decisions hinge on it". McKenna and Beach (1995) assert that training delivery is concerned with improving the skills of employees and enhancing their ability to cope with the demands of the work environment.   On going and vigorous training and development is very important in order to enhance global economic competitiveness of South

Africa. The next chapter provides research methodology used to analyse data.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

Cooper and Schindler (2006:71) describe research design as a "blueprint for fulfilling objectives and answering questions". Research design is a framework for the collection and analysis of data (Bryman & Bell 2007: 40). Bryman and Bell (2007: 39) further elaborate that "research design relates to the criteria that are employed when evaluating business research and it is, therefore, a framework for the generation of evidence that is suited both to a certain set of criteria and to the research question in which the investigator is interested".

This chapter reflects the research methodology used to capture the necessary data for analysis to answer the following research questions:

- How will skills development impact on organizational development?
- What hinders the organization from conducting learnership programmes successfully?
- Are skills learned being applied in practice?
- How long does it take to see the results from the programme?
- Is the learnership programme accessible to the society?

3.2   Defining Population

Cooper and Schindler (2006:.434) define a population as "the total collection of elements about which we wish to make some inferences". A population element is the individual participant or object on which the measurement is taken. According to Bryman and Bell (2007:182) population "has a broader meaning than everyday use of the term, whereby it tends to be associated with a nation's entire population".

For the purpose of this study the target population is chosen from employees of the automotive industry. The study was geographically confined to KwaZulu-Natal, in particular as a case study of one organisation due to the fact that it was easier to work with a smaller more manageable sample.

3.3 Sampling Technique and Description of Sample

The final test of a sample design is how well it represents the characteristics of the population it purports to represent. Wegner (2002:70) defines sampling as "the process of selecting a representative subset of observations from a population to determine the characteristics of the random variable under study". The basic idea of sampling is that by selecting some of the elements in a population, conclusions may be drawn about the entire population (Cooper & Schindler 2006:402). Bryman and Bell (2007:192) believe that "probability sampling is such an important procedure in social survey research because it is possible to make inferences from information about a random sample". In layman's term its means findings can be generalised when derived from a sample of the population.

Wegner (2002:170) identified two basic methods of sampling:

- *Non-probability* sampling methods
- *Probability* sampling methods

A non-probability sample is "a sample that has not been selected using random selection method" (Bryman & Bell 2007:182). A probability sample is "a sample that has been selected using random selection so that each unit in the population has a known chance of being selected" (Bryman & Bell 2007:182). The researcher uses nonprobability sampling as it is the only feasible alternative, having considered the view of Coopers and Schindler (2006:455), who claim that "carefully controlled nonprobability sampling often seems to give acceptable results".

3.3.1 The Sample

A measure found "from analysing sample data is called s*tatistic",* while a measure describing "a population attribute is called *parameter"* (Wegner 2002:169). Cooper and Schindler (2006:436) point out that validity of a sample depends on two considerations, accuracy which is the degree to which bias is absent from the sample and precision which results from a good sample design.

Wegner (2002:169) believes that sampling is generally preferred to census and the reasons are as follows:

- *"Cost*- it is generally cheaper to gather sample data
- *Timeliness*- decisions generally have time limits
- *Destructive testing*- data on certain random variables may well only generated by using or destroying the sampling unit. A census is not appropriate under such data gathering requirements.
- *Accuracy*—better control can usually be exercised over the data collection process in a sample than in a census. As a result, more accurate data may well be produced from a sample".

For this study, the sample was selected from those in the learnership programme at Smiths Manufacturing. The population was thus the 45 learners in this programme. A convenience sample was applied, wherein those who agreed to participate were the 24 respondents.

3.3.2 Sample Size

According to Bryman and Bell (2007:194) invariably decisions about sample size represent "a compromise between the constraints of time and cost, and the need for precision". This compromise of time and cost constraints is relevant to this study.

Cooper and Schindler (2006: 409) emphasise that there are several questions to be answered in securing a sample:

- "What is the target population?
- What are the parameters of interest?
- What is the sampling frame?
- What is the appropriate sampling method?
- What size sample is needed?"

The bigger the sample "the more representative it is likely to be, regardless of the size of the population from which it is drawn" (Bryman& Bell 2007:195).

The estimated sample in this study was 60. However, only 30 indicated that they were keen to take part in the study. The researcher only received 24 completed questionnaires, after these questionnaires were personally administered and these respondents were assured that in terms of the ethical standards, the results were to be utilised for the purpose of the study. This represents an 80% response rate.

3.4   Data Collection

Cooper and Schindler (2006: 89) describe data as "information collected from participants, by observation, or from secondary data". Cooper and Schindler (2006:89) maintain a point that "gathering data may range from a single observation at one location to a grandiose survey of multinational corporations at sites in different parts of the world". "Data may further be characterised by their abstractness, verifiability, elusiveness, and closeness to the phenomenon" (Cooper &Schindler 2006:89).

Wagner (2002:14) states that "there are three approaches to gathering data for statistical analyses:

- Direct observation
- Interview methods
- Experimentation".

On the other side Cooper and Schindler (2006:89) identify two types of data collection, first, "data originally collected to address a problem other than the one that requires the researcher's attention at the moment and second, primary data, the data the researcher collects to address the specific problem at hand".

As Bryman and Bell (2007: 204) succinctly put it, "there is an error that is connected with the implementation of the research process and it is called *data collection error.* This source of error includes such factors as: poor question wording in self-completion questionnaires or structured interviews; poor Interviewing techniques; and flaws in the administration of research instrument".

It is with the above in mind that the researcher chose a well structured questionnaire as the most suitable way to collect data that is essential to this study.

3.5   Questionnaire

Wegner (2002:17) defines questionnaire as "the data collection instrument used to gather data in all interview situations" and Bedward (1999:64) adds that "all respondents are asked the same questions, in the same words, in the same order". Cooper and Schindler (2006:391) emphasise that based on the desired analysis plan, "the researcher will need to know what type of scale is needed before a single question can be drafted".

The questionnaire, Appendix B, for this study was devised bearing the above discussion in mind. Apart from the demographic question, all other questions in the instrument used the Likert Scale.

3.5.1 Description and Purpose

A questionnaire is "a set of questions asked in a specific order" (Bedward 1999:64). Bedward (1999:65) raises a concern that "often questionnaires are put together without sufficient thought about their construction and the result is dubious data leading to dubious results".

According to Wegner (2002:18) a questionnaire should consist of three sections:

- The administrative section is used: to record the identity of the respondent and the interviewer by name, date and address, and where the interview was conducted".
- The demographic section describes "the respondent by a number of demographic characteristics which generally include age, gender, residential location, marital status, language, qualifications, etc".

- The information sought section "makes up the major portion of the questionnaire and consists of all the questions which will extract data from respondents to address the research objectives".

Bedward (1999:19) submits that questionnaire design requires that attention be paid to "(i) the type of question to include, (ii) the order of the questions, and (iii) the structure and wording of questions".

The main aim of the study was to achieve the research objectives. Therefore, the questionnaire was compiled with the design specifications to ensure that all relevant data was systematically collected and analysed to realise the research objectives.

The Likert Scale used in the questionnaire utilises the anchor of strongly disagree (i), disagree (ii), neutral (iii), agree (iv), strongly agree (v). The respondents indicate the extent to which they disagree or agree to a variety of statement by placing an X in the appropriate answer. In addition the anchor of key involvement, moderate involvement, low involvement, no involvement and not sure was also utilised.

The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Part one of the questionnaire gives the demographic profile of the respondents. Part two looks at how appropriate, efficient and beneficial the learnership programme is, as part of skills development. It looks at the perceptions of the respondents in respect of improvement of job performance; support from the organisation and the support from the SETA in promoting Learnership. The questionnaire compromises of 25 questions.

3.5.2 Administration of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed personally to individuals. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a covering letter describing the nature and objectives of the study and assuring the respondents of the utmost confidentiality. It enabled the researcher to introduce the questionnaire and

offer clarification sought by the respondents on the spot and allowed for immediate collection of the questionnaire.

The completed questionnaires were then statistically analysed.

3.6   Pilot Testing

Bryman and Bell (2007:273) claim that it is "always desirable, if at all possible to conduct a pilot study before administering a self-completion questionnaire or structured interview schedule to your sample".

A pilot test is conducted to detect weaknesses in research methodology and in the data collection instrument, as well as to provide proxy data for selection of a probability sample. It should therefore "draw subjects from the target population and simulate the procedures and protocols that have been designated for data collection" (Cooper & Schindler 2006:88). The desirability of piloting instruments is not solely to do with trying to ensure that survey questions operate well; piloting also has "a role in ensuring that the research instrument as a whole functions well" (Bryman & Bell 2007:273). It was not considered necessary to conduct a pilot study for this research.

3.7   Psychometric Properties of the Questionnaire

Validity is concerned with the integrity of the conclusions that are generated from a piece of research (Bryman & Bell 2007) and it is a characteristic of measurement concerned with the extent that a test measures what the researcher actually wishes to measure; and that "differences found with a measurement tool reflect true differences among participants drawn from a population" (Cooper & Schindler 2006:765).

The questionnaire utilised in this study was created to measure the theories and concepts it was designed to assess.

Reliability is "a characteristic of measurement concerned with accuracy, precisions, and consistency; a necessary but not sufficient condition for validity" (Cooper & Schindler 2006:761). In a layman's term if the

measurement is not reliable, it cannot be valid. Reliability is concerned with the question of "whether the results of a study are repeatable" (Bryman & Bell 2007: 41).

3.7.1 Reliability – Cronbach Co-efficient Alpha

Cronbach is commonly used to test internal reliability. It measures the degree to which instrument items are homogeneous and reflect the same underlying constructs. It will vary between one which denotes perfect internal reliability and 0 which denotes no internal reliability. The results of this test for this research is shown in Chapter Four.

3.8 Analysis of Data

The researcher used exploratory data analysis (EDA) because of the flexibility to respond to the patterns in the analysis of data. Exploratory data analysis is both "a data analysis perspective and a set of techniques" (Cooper & Schindler 2006:514).

A computerised international quantitative statistical software called SPSS which stands for Statistical Package for Social Sciences, was used to capture the data from completed questionnaires. Data was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics using Cronbach's co-efficient of alpha.

The standard deviation is a statistical measure which "expresses the average deviation about the mean in the original units of the random variable" (Wegner 2002:92). Standard deviation is also a measure of dispersion.

Bryman and Bell (2007:359) believe that measurement of central tendency "encapsulates in one figure a value that is typical for a distribution of values". Wegner (2002:54) defines measurement of central location as "a statistical measure which quantifies where the majority of observations are concentrated". The data was analysed using the following measures of central tendency and dispersion:
- *Mean*- the mean refers to the sum of all the values in a distribution and divided by the number of values.

- ***Mode***- The mode refers to the value that occurs most frequently in a distribution.

- ***Median***- The median is the mid-point in the distribution of values. Half the observations will fall below this median value and the other half above it.

- ***Variance***- The variance can be referred to as the squared deviation scores from the data distribution's mean.

- ***Standard Deviation***- The standard deviation is referred to as the positive square root for the variance.

- ***Range***- The range is a very rough measure of spread of a dispersion. It is referred to as the difference between the largest and smallest scores in the data distribution.

3.9   Inferential Statistics

Wegner (2002: 5). defines *inferential statistics* as "the area of statistics which extends the information extracted from a sample to the actual environment in which the problem arises". It includes the estimation of population values and the testing of statistical hypotheses (Cooper & Schindler 2006:756).   This study did not utilise hypothesis testing and descriptive statistics were considered more appropriate to analyse the responses from the Likert Scale.

3.10   Ethical Standards

Ethical standards were maintained whilst conducting this research project. The researcher put in much time and effort in explaining and clarifying the benefits of the study to the respondents and management. The reason for this was to develop an environment of trust, to management and as well as the respondents, in order to get full cooperation and ensuring that questionnaires are completed honestly.

The aim of the project is to understand whether learnership programmes have any contribution to the organisation and as having any important role in promoting skills development and to identify any areas for improvement.

Ethical Clearance was obtained from the University prior to conducting the study. This appears as Appendix C.

3.11   Summary

This chapter discusses the research methodology and statistical methods used to analyse the data obtained from the questionnaire. This research project was undertaken as an exploratory exercise, because at this point very few learnership programmes are taking place and it is not clear as to the reasons that hinder it. The question remains "is learnership effective in skills development?"

The next chapter presents the results of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1   Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of results and provides an analysis of the findings. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed using Descriptive Statistical methods. The presentation of results was obtained from the computerised and international standard quantitative statistical software called Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 15.

4.2   Reliability Test (Cronbach's alpha test)

Cronbach's alpha is a commonly used test for internal reliability. The reliability of the questionnaire was ascertained by means of statistical computations, which reveals that the Cronbach's co-efficient alpha indicates a high reliability of:

Alpha = .7325

The rule of thumb states that if alpha value is >0.7, there is internal consistency and reliability, thus as 0.7325 it is considered to be efficient (Bryman & Bell 2007:164). The reliability analysis for the questionnaire's variables reveal that the Cronbach's alpha value is 0.7325. This is above 0.7 and indicates that this research instrument's (questionnaire) continuous study variables has complete internal consistency and reliability.

4.3   Biographical Data of Respondents

The biographical data of respondents is discussed in this section.

4.3.1 Gender

The gender data of respondents is shown in Table 4.1. There were 83.3% male respondents and 12.5% female respondents as indicated in Table 4.1. This is an indication that the Manufacturing Industry is very much male dominated thus leading to the majority of males being part of the training programme. This supports the perception that has ruled individual's minds that automotive work is a male dominated career.

Table 4.1   Gender of Respondents

	Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Male	20	83.3	83.3
	Female	3	12.5	95.8
Missing		1	4.2	100.0
Total		**24**	**100.0**	

Figure 4.1 shows the number of respondents in graphical from.
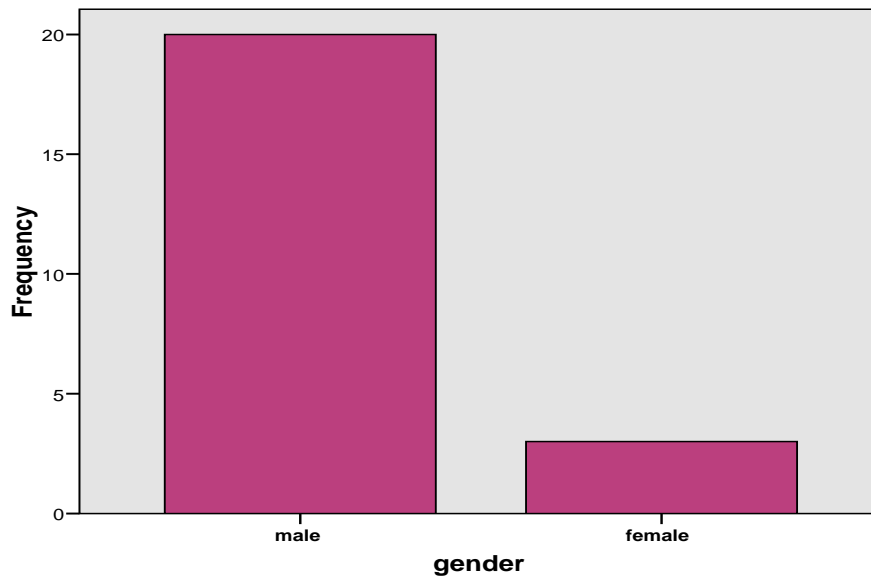
Figure 4.1   Gender of respondents

4.3.2. Age Structure

Table 4.2 indicates the age group of respondents in the Learnership Programme at Smiths Manufacturing, 25.% are between the ages of 20-25 years, 29.% are between the ages 26-30 years, 29.2% are between the ages of 31-35 years, 4.2% are between the age of 36-40 years and 8.3% are above the age of 45. Only 83.4% of the respondents are above the age of 35 years but below age of 40 years. The data reveals that even mature individuals are

part of the training programme and shows the skills development is being implemented.

Table 4.2   Ages of Respondents

	Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	20-25 years	6	25.0	25.0
	26-30 years	7	29.2	54.2
	31-35 years	7	29.2	83.4
	36-40 years	1	4.2	87.6
	+45	2	8.3	95.9
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

Figure 4.2 indicates graphical representation of age groups. The majority of the respondents are between the age of 26-35 years.
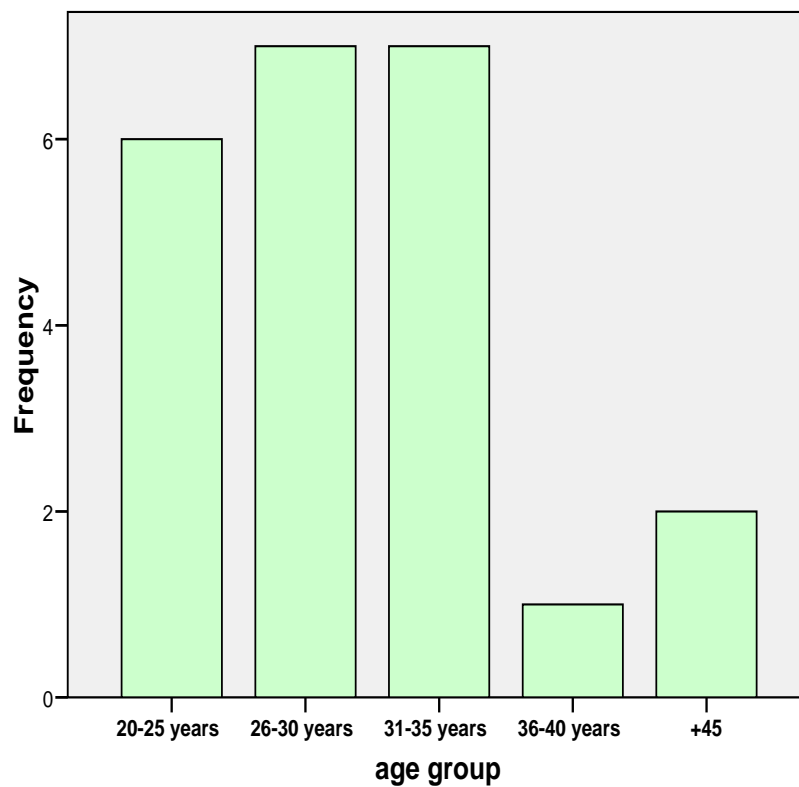
Figure 4.2   Age Structure of respondents

4.3.3 Ethnic Group

Table 4.3 indicates that 20.8% of the respondents were Asians and 75,%
were Black respondents. This reflects that there is no diversity and it does not
correspond with the demographics of KwaZulu-Natal province.

Table 4.3   Ethnic Group

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Asian	5	20.8	20.8
	Black	18	75.0	95.8
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

Figure 4.3 indicates graphical representation of race groups. It is clear that not
all race groups are represented in the study.
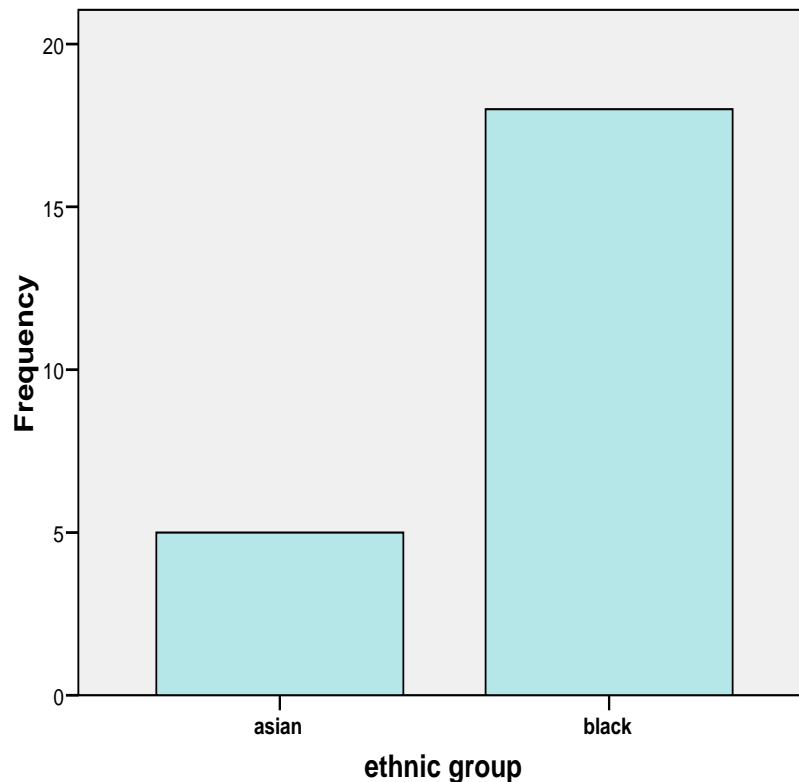
Figure 4.3 Ethnic Group of respondents

4.3.4 Educational Qualification

Table 4.4 Indicates that 50% of the respondents have matric, 8.3% have a diploma and 37.5% have national certificates. The study reveals that 95.8% of the respondents have matric or formal qualifications, therefore 4.2% do not have matric. These qualifications were given as their highest qualifications, indicating that the participants in the Learnership Training programme do not possess tertiary qualification which might be a huge benefit to gain more skills and knowledge.

Table 4.4   Educational Qualification

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Matric	12	50.0	50.0
	Diploma	2	8.3	58.3
	Certificate	9	37.5	95.8
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

Figure 4.4 represents graphical representation of educational qualifications.
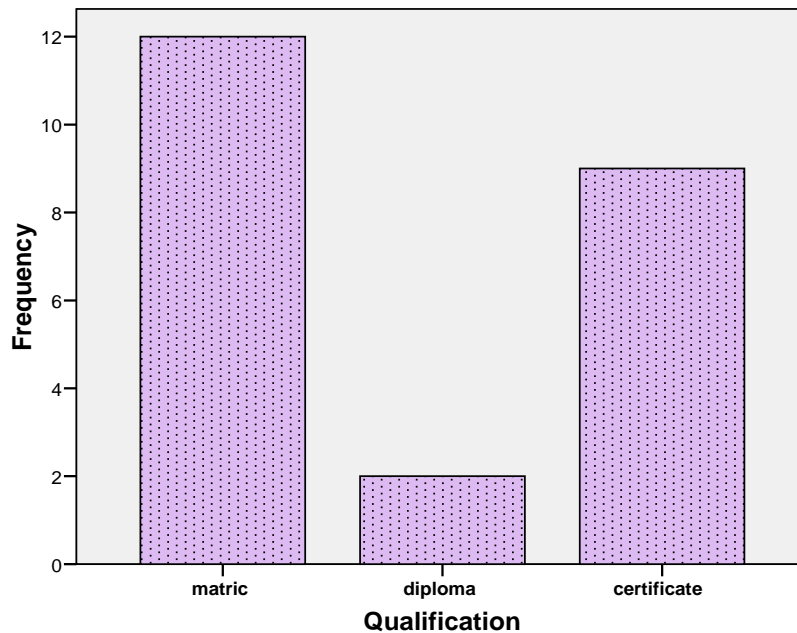
Figure 4.4   Educational Qualification of respondents

4.4   Training and Development

4.4.1 Skills Development

Table 4.5 reveals that 4.2% of the respondents believe that 0-25% of skills development is delivered through learnership, 16.7% of the respondents believe that 25-50% of skills development if delivered through learnership programme, 25% of the respondents believe that 50-75% of skills development is delivered through learnership, 29.2% of the respondents believe that 75% or more of skills development is delivered through learnership training and 20.8% of the respondents were not sure. The data indicates that 75.1% of the participants in the training programme have an idea of how skills in the workplace are developed through learnership programmes and the balance of 24.9% respondents have no clue about learnership programmes to promote skills development.

Table 4.5   Skills Development

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-25%	1	4.2	4.2
	25%-50%	4	16.7	20.9
	50%-75%	6	25.0	45.9
	75% or more	7	29.2	75.1
	not sure	5	20.8	95.8
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

Figure 4.5 indicates graphical representation of learnership knowledge as a model to promote skills development.
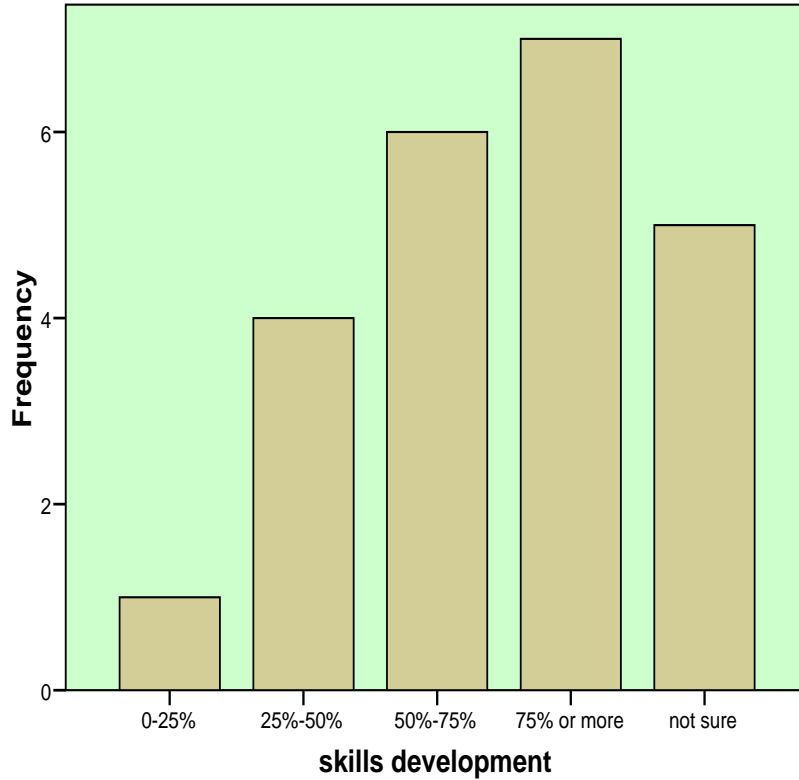
Figure 4.5 Skills Development

4.4.2 Training Budget

From Table 4.6 shows, 4.2% of the respondents indicated that 0-25% of the training budget is spent on skills development, 16.7% of the respondents indicated that 25-50% of training budget if spent on skills development, 20.8% of the respondents indicated that 50-75% of the training budget is spent on skills development, 4.3% of the respondents indicated that 75% or more of the training budget is spent on skills development and 50% on the respondents are not sure. Only 50% of the respondents indicated that they are not sure of the training budget being spent on skills development.

Table 4.6 Training Budget

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-25%	1	4.2	4.2
	25%-50%	4	16.7	20.9
	50%-75%	5	20.8	41.7
	75 or more	1	4.2	45.9
	not sure	12	50.0	95.8
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	
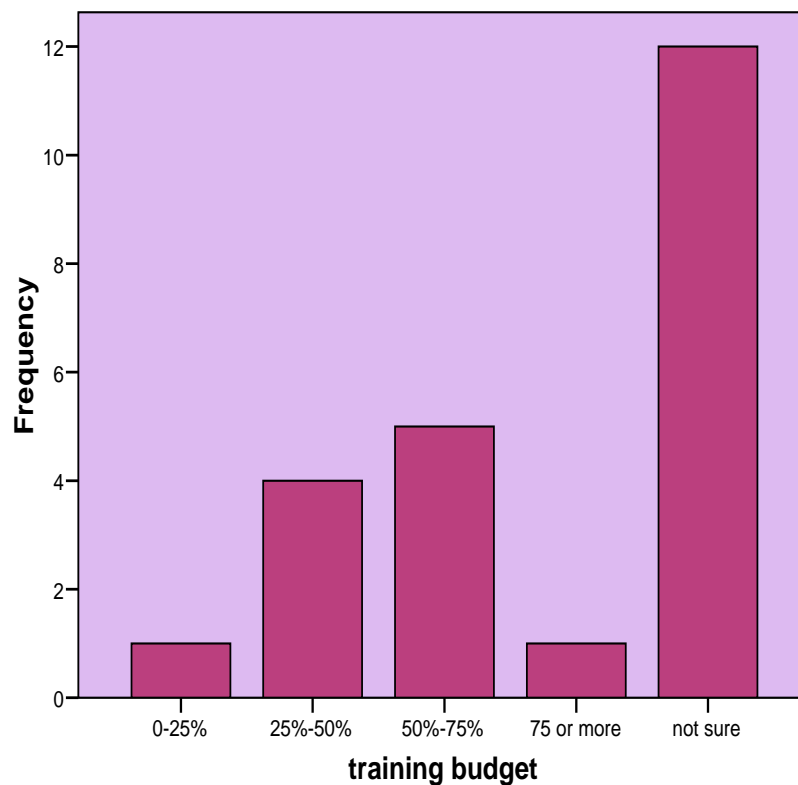
Figure 4.6   Training Budget

4.4.3 Degree of Support

Table 4.7 reveals the perceptions of the respondents in respect of learnership in the organisation. 25% of the respondents believe that it has a key involvement, 33.3% of the respondents believe that it has a moderate involvement, 20.8% of the respondents believe that it has a low involvement and 16.7% of the respondents are not sure. The data indicates that majority of the respondents are of the opinion that Learnership is very important in the organisation.

Table 4.7 Degree of Support

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	key involvement	6	25.0	25.0
	moderate involvement	8	33.3	58.3
	low involvement	5	20.8	79.1
	not sure	4	16.7	95.8
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

4.4.4   Organisational Benefit

The results in Table 4.8 reveal the perception of the respondent in respect of the organisation benefiting from the skills that the learners have acquired from the learnership programme. The results indicate that approximately 79% of the respondents are not confident that the skills that they have learnt will benefit the organisation. Only 21% of the respondents are confident that the skills that they have acquired from the learnership programme will benefit the organisation.

Table 4.8 Organisational Benefit

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly disagree	1	4.2	4.2
	disagree	18	75.0	79.2
	neutral	3	12.5	91.7
	agree	2	8.3	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

Figure 4.7 indicates graphical presentation of the perception of organisational benefit.
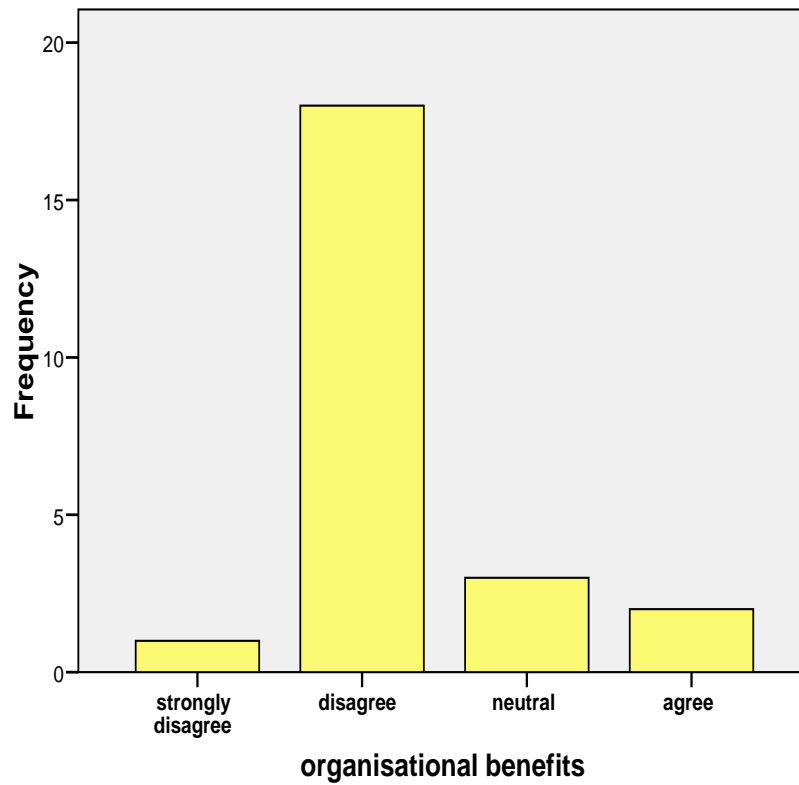
Figure 4.7   Organisational Benefit

4.4.5 Obstacles that limit training

The results in Table 4.9 reveal perceptions of the respondents in respect of the obstacles that limit learnership training. 45.8% of the respondents indicated that lack of funds limit the implementation of learnership programme in the organisation.

Table 4.9 Obstacles that limit training

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lack of supervisors	2	8.3	8.3
	Lack of funds	11	45.8	54.1
	Measuring returns on investment	4	16.7	70.8
	Too much administration	3	12.5	83.3
	Unknown	2	8.3	91.6
Missing	.00	2	8.3	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

Figure 4.8 indicates graphical representation of the obstacles that limit training and development.

Figure 4.8 Obstacles that limit training
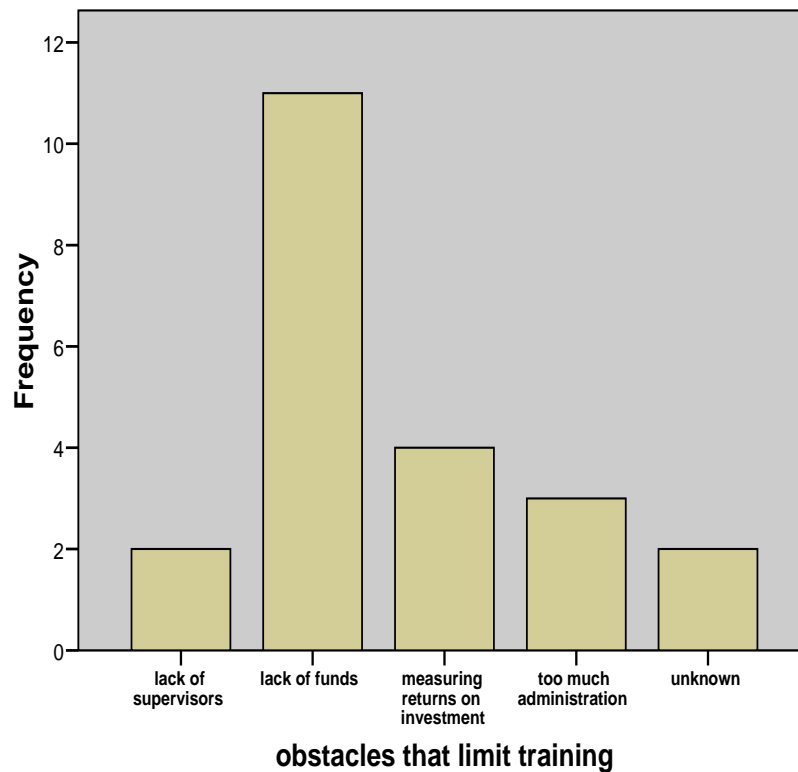
4.4.6 The Role of Learnership Programme

Table 4.10 The Role of Learnership Programme

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Leading role	13	54.2	54.2
	Supportive role	11	45.8	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

Table 4.10 indicates a belief of participants that learnerships will have a role to play. The results indicated that 54.2% of the respondent are of the view that Learnership will play a leading role in the near future and 45.8% of the respondents are of the view that learneship will play a supportive role in the next five years in an organisation. None of the respondents believe that it will play an isolated role.

Figure 4.9 indicates graphical presentation of the role of learnerships.
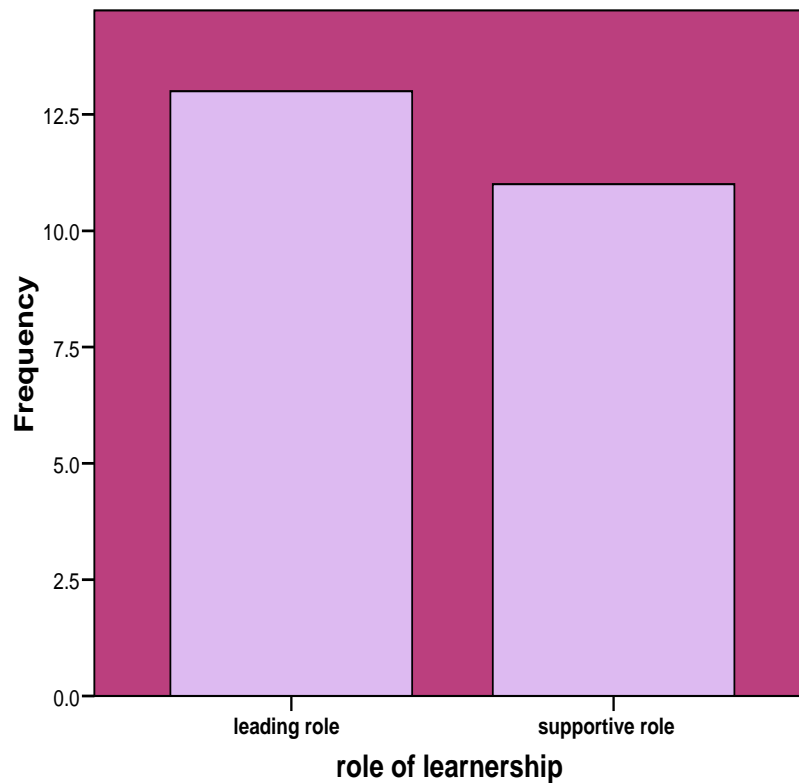
Figure 4.9 The Role of learnership Programme

4.4.7 Labour Market Gap

Table 4.11 reveals perceptions of respondents in respect of learnership being able to bridge the training and market gap. A majority of 75% disagree, minority of 8.3% agree and 12.5% remained neutral. The results indicate that the respondents clearly do not believe that learnership programmes will bridge the market gap.

Table 4.11 Training and Labour Market Gap

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	8.3	8.3
	Disagree	16	66.7	75.0
	Neutral	3	12.5	87.5
	Agree	2	8.3	95.8
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

4.4.8 Job Performance

Table 4.12 indicates that 70.8% of the respondents disagree that their job performance has improved as a result of being part of the learnership programme for skills development and 16,7% of the respondents are neutral and the minority of 12.5% responded positively.

Table 4.12 Job performance

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	17	70.8	70.8
	Neutral	4	16.7	87.5
	Agree	3	12.5	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

Table 4.13 indicates that the majority of respondents between the age of 26 and 35 years disagree that job performance will improve as a result of being part of the learnership programme.

Table 4.13 Age group vs Job performance Crosstabulation

		Job performance			Total
		Disagree	*Neutral*	*Agree*	*Disagree*
Age group	20-25 years	4	0	2	6
	26-30 years	4	2	1	7
	31-35 years	6	1	0	7
	36-40 years	1	0	0	1
	+45	1	1	0	2
Total		16	4	3	23

4.4.8 Accessibity to Society

Table 4.14 reveals that 54.2% of the respondents do not believe that learnership programmes are accessible to society and 16.7% of the respondents believe that learnership is accessible to society and 29.2% remained neutral. Learnership programmes should be accessible to society in order for 18.2 (unemployed) learners to benefit with the aim to create employment and work experience.

Table 4.14 Accessible to Society

	Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	25.0	25.0
	Disagree	7	29.2	54.2
	Neutral	7	29.2	83.4
	Agree	1	4.2	87.6
	strongly agree	3	12.5	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

4.4.9 Learnership Concept resulted in employment

Table 4.15 indicates that majority of the respondents do not believe that the concept of learnership has resulted in employment. 58.4% responded negatively, 29.2% of the respondents are neutral and the minority of 8.3% responded positively.

Table 4.15 Learnership Concept resulted in employment

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	4.2	4.2
	Disagree	13	54.2	54.2
	Neutral	7	29.2	83..4
	Agree	2	8.3	87.6
Missing	.000	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100	

Figure 4.10 indicates graphical presentation of whether learnership concept resulted in employment.
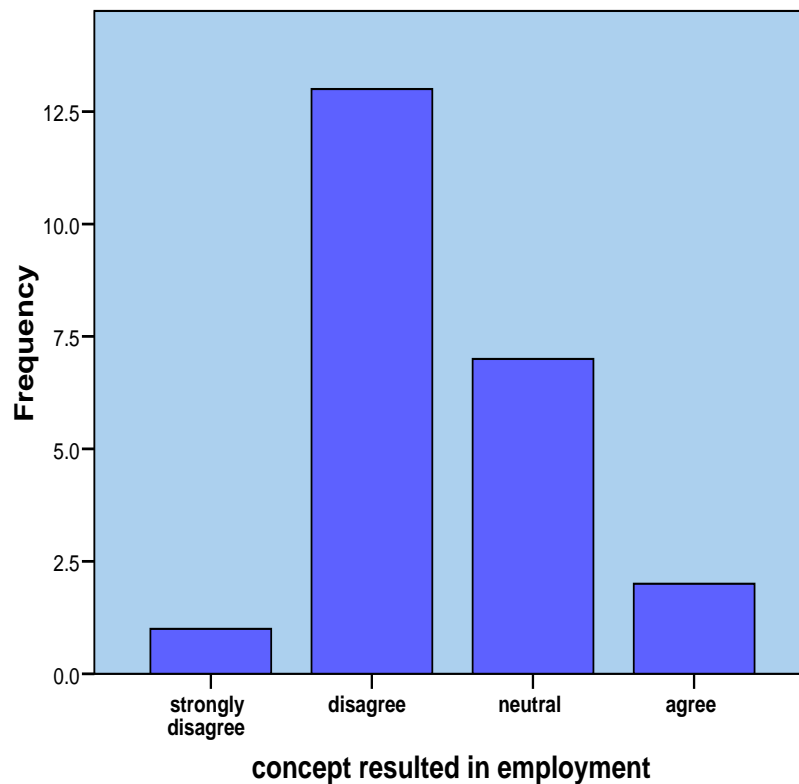
Figure 4.10 Learnership Concept Resulted in Employment

4.4.10 Reasons for Implementation of Learnerships

Table 4.16 indicates that 79.2% of the respondents believe that an organisation would implement learnership programmes to increase the skills base of the South African economy, to have more competent staff and to have

59

more motivated and happy staff. A happy and motivated staff is more productive in an organisation.

Table 4.16 Reasons for Implementation of Learnership

Variable		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Increase skills base of the South African economy	1	4.2	4.2
	Have more competent staff	2	8.3	12.5
	More motivated and happy staff	1	4.2	16.7
	All of the above	19	79.2	95.9
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

Figure 4.11 reflects graphical presentation of reasons for implementing learnership programmes.

reasons for implementing learnership
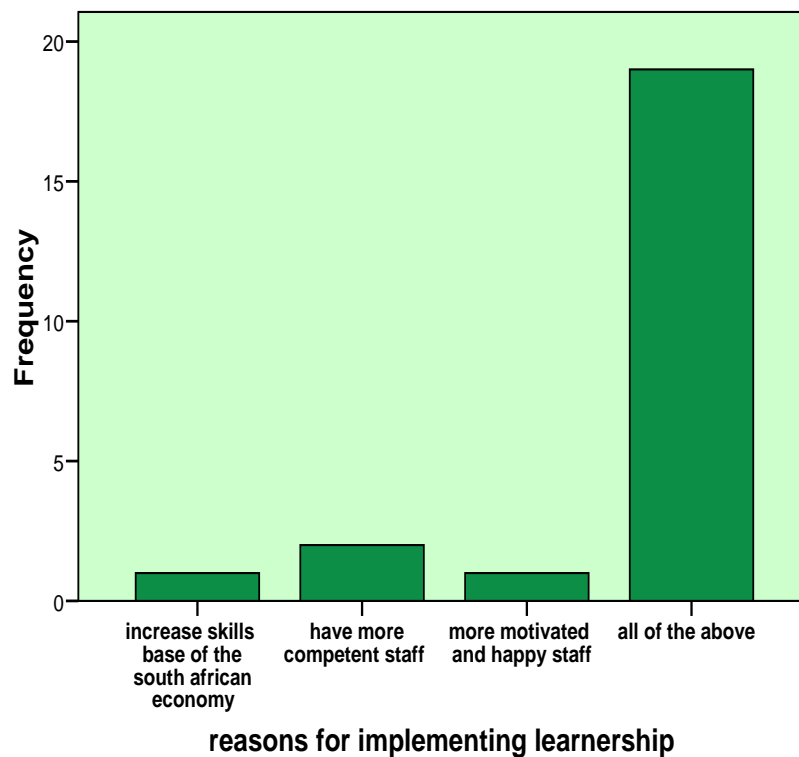
Figure 4.11 Reasons for Implementation of Learnership Programme

60

4.4.11 Information to Choose Learnership

Table 4.17 reveals the results indicate that 58.4% of the respondents disagree or strongly disagree that they had sufficient information to make an informed decision about which learnership to choose. Those that felt that they had adequate information to make an informed decision about Learnerships were 29.1% and 8.3% remained neutral.

Table 4.17 Information to choose Learnership

	Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	16.7	16.7
	Disagree	10	41.7	58.4
	Neutral	2	8.3	66.7
	Agree	2	8.3	75.0
	Strongly agree	5	20.8	95.8
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total			100.0	

Figure 4.12 represents graphical presentation of whether learners had enough information to make an informed decision on which learnership programme to choose.
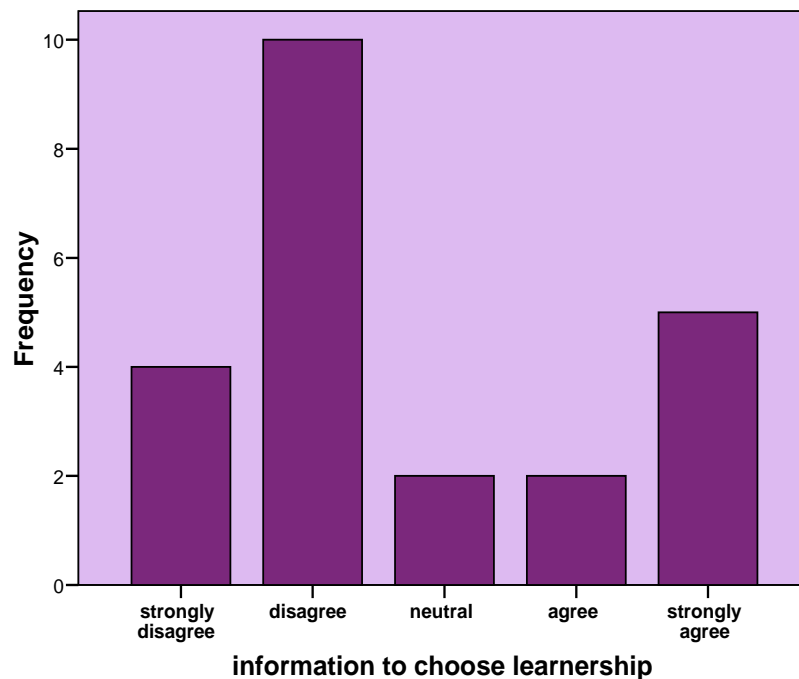
Figure 4.12 Information to choose Learnership

4.4.12 Information about Learnership Programmes

From Table 4.18, 62.5% of the respondents indicated that they heard about Learneships at work which is training for 18.1 learners (employed), 16.7% of the respondents indicated that the heard from the media about the learneships, 8.3% of the respondents heard from the education providers and the remainder of 4.2% heard from other sources.

Table 4.18 Information about Learnership Programmes

	Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Heard about it at work	15	62.5	62.5
	Family & friends	1	4.2	66.7
	Education providers	2	8.3	75.0
	Media	4	16.7	91.7
	Other	1	4.2	95.9
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

4.4.13 Reasons for Choosing a Learnership

The results from Table 4.19, show 13 of the respondents (54.2%) indicated that they chose a particular learneship programme because they needed a qualification. Only five respondents (20.8%) chose the particular learneship that best suited their career path, 16.7% of the respondents chose the learneship because they wanted to gain work experience and one out of 24 respondents chose a particular learnership because it sounded interesting.

Table 4.19 Reasons for Choosing a Learnership

	Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Career path	5	20.8	20.8
	Work experience	4	16.7	37.5
	Needed a qualification	13	54.2	91.7
	Sounded interesting	1	4.2	95.9
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

Figure 4.13 represents graphical presentation of learner's reasons for choosing learnership programme.
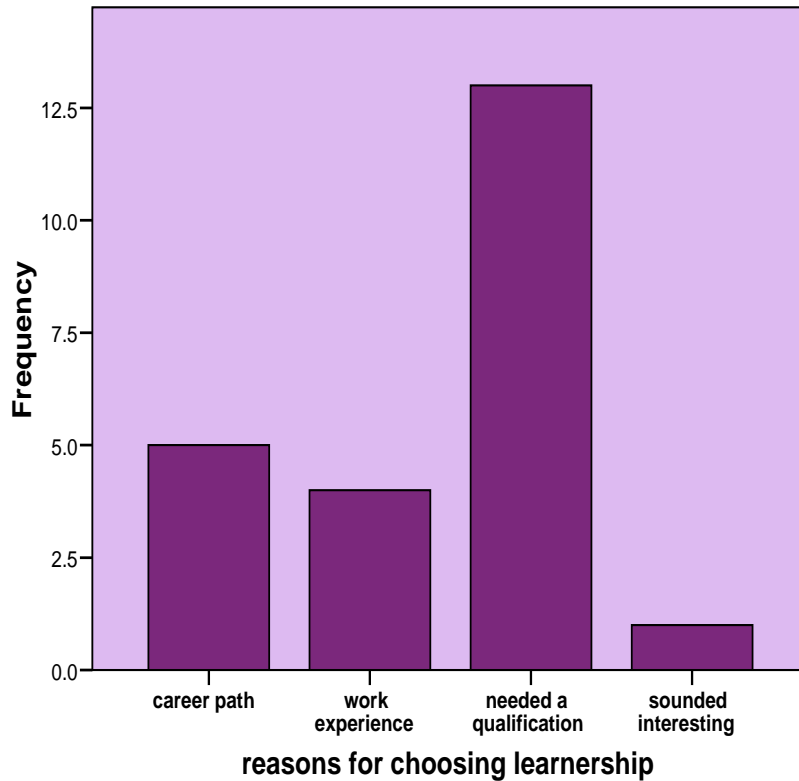
Figure 4.13 Reasons for choosing a Learnership

4.4.14 Support from the SETA

Table 4.20 reveals that 18 out of 24 respondents strongly disagree or disagree that SETA-MERSETA is providing necessary support to promote learnership programmes. Only 12.5% agree that MERSETA provides support to promote learnerships and 8.3% remained neutral. This raises a concern that it is the responsibility of the SETA to ensure that Learnerships are implemented within the organisations.

Table 4.20 Support from the SETA

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	8.3	8.3
	Disagree	16	66.7	75.0
	Neutral	2	8.3	83.3
	Agree	3	12.5	95.8
Missing	.00	1	4.2	100.0
Total		24	100.0	

Figure 4.14 represents graphical presentation of support provided by the SETA.
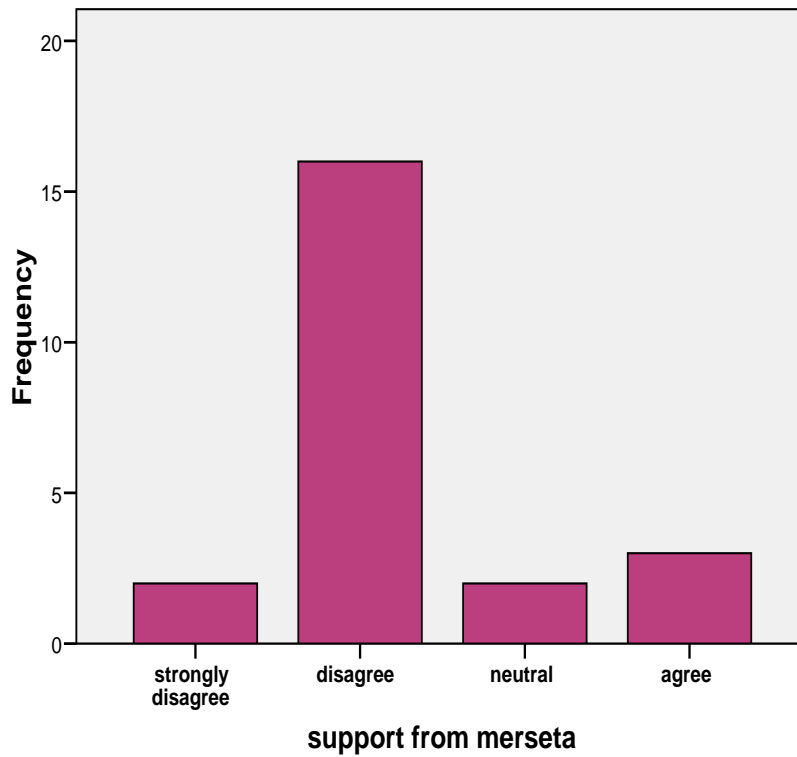
Figure 4.14 Support from the SETA

4.4.15 Learnerships offer Vocational Education and Training

From Table 4.21, 58.4% of respondents strongly disagree or disagree that learnerships offer vocational education and vocational training that is appropriate for scarce skills and economy contexts. Followed by 29.2% of respondents that were neutral and 12.5% responded positively.

Table 4.21 Leanerships offer Vocational Education and Training

	Vriable	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	4.2	4.2
	Disagree	13	54.2	58.4
	Neutral	7	29.2	87.6
	Agree	3	12.5	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

4.4.16 Occupational application

The results from Table 4.22 reveal that 83.3% of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree that learnership applies to any occupation; one out of 24 respondents agree that learnership applies any occupation and 4.2% remained neutral.

Table 4.22 Occupational Application

	Variable	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	12.5	12.5
	Disagree	17	70.8	83.3
	Neutral	3	12.5	95.8
	Agree	1	4.2	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

4.4.17 Contractual Agreement

Table 4.23 indicates the results that 16 out of 24 (66.7%) respondents strongly disagree or disagree that managing Learnership contractual agreement is an essential component for Quality Assurance. One respondent strongly agreed and 12.5% of the respondents remained neutral.

Table 4.23 Contractual Agreement

		Frequency	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	4.2	4.2
	Disagree	15	62.5	66.7
	Neutral	3	12.5	79.2
	Agree	4	16.7	95.8
	Strongly agree	1	4.2	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

4.4.18 Learnership Monitoring

Table 4.24 reveals that 20 out of 24 (83.3%) respondents strongly disagree or disagree that for learnership monitoring to be possible an effective administration system has to be in place. Followed by 12,5% of the respondents that believe in learnership monitoring. Only one respondent out of 24 remained neutral.

Table 4.24 Leanership Monitoring

|	*Variable*	*Frequency*	*Percent*	*Cumulative Percent*
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	8.3	8.3
	Disagree	18	75.0	83.3
	Neutral	1	4.2	87.5
	Agree	3	12.5	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

4.4.19 Opportunities for Practical Work

Table 4.25 reveals that among completed respondents 54.2% disagree that the organisation provides enough opportunities for practical work. Followed by 20.9% of the respondents that strongly agree or agree that the organisation provides enough practical work and only 25% remained neutral. Learnership includes both theory work and practical work. Organisations should allow enough time for the learner to apply what they have learned in practice.

Table 4.25 Opportunities of Practical Work

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	13	54.2	54.2
	Neutral	6	25.0	79.2
	Agree	4	16.7	95.8
	Strongly agree	1	4.2	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

Figure 4.15 represents graphical presentation of learnership opportunities for practical work.
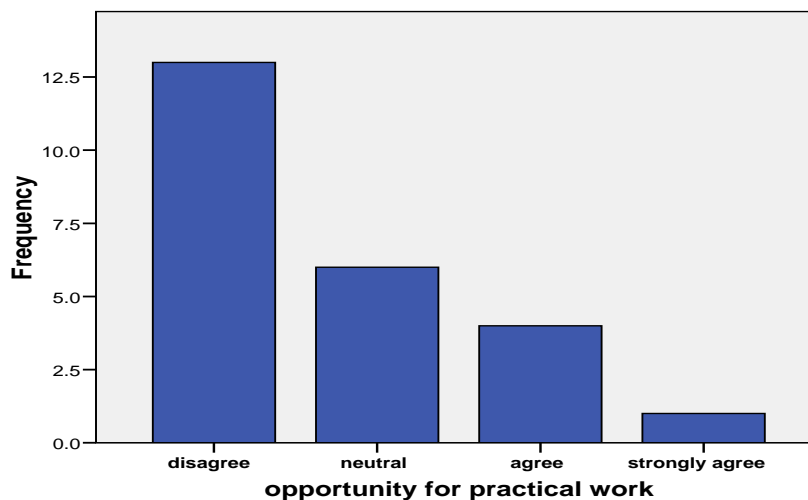

Figure 4.15 Opportunities for Practical Work

4.4.20 Learnership Contracts

From the Table 4.26, only 62.5% of the respondents had signed a learnership contract between four and six months, the results dropped to 33.3% of the respondents who signed a learneship contract between seven and nine months and only one out of 24 respondents indicated a contract between 10 – 12 months that were signed. The results indicate that learners in the Learnership Programme sign different contracts of agreement. In most organisations Learnership Programmes are between six and 12 months.

Table 4.26 Learnership Contract periods

	Variable	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Between 4 & 6 months	15	62.5	62.5
	Between 7 & 9 months	1	4.2	66.7
	Between 10 & 12 months	8	33.3	100.0
	Total	24	100.0	

Figure 4.16 represents graphical presentation of learnership contract periods.
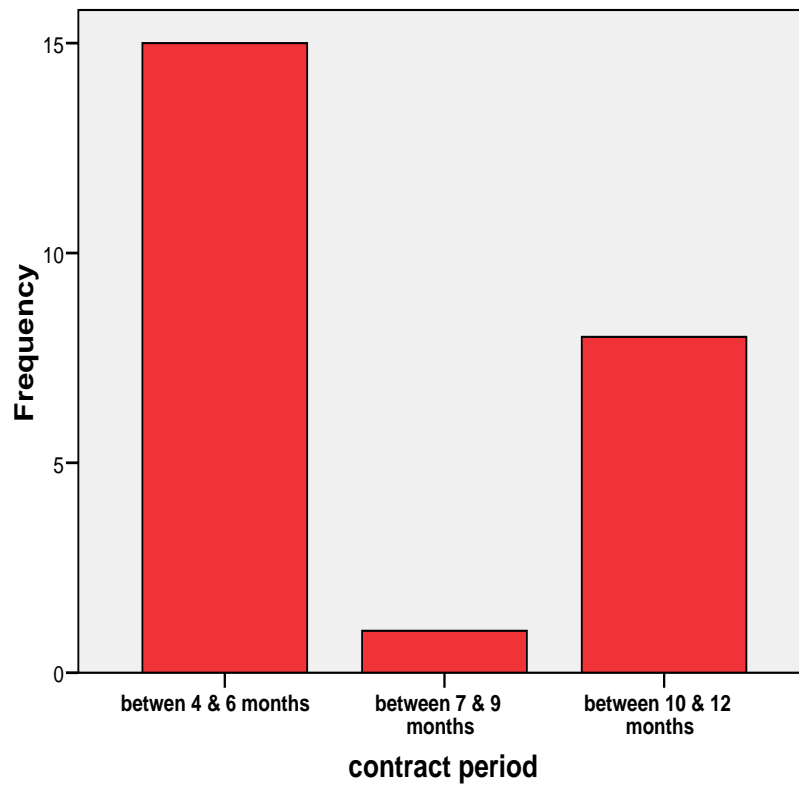
Figure 4.16 Learnership Contracts

4.5 Central Tendency Statistics

Table 4.27 Central Tendency Statistics

		Organisation al benefits	Vocational education and training	Job performance	Support from the SETA	Training and labour market gap
N	Valid	24	24	24	23	23
	Missing	0	0	0	1	1
Mean		2.00	3.000	2.00	2.00	2.00
Std. Deviation		.67566	.78019	.71728	.81002	.73587
Variance		.457	.609	.514	.656	.542
Range		3.00	3.00	2.00	3.00	3.00

4.5.1 Interpretation

The central tendency statistics reveal results for the different study variables namely; organisational benefit, vocational education and training, job performance, support from MERSETA and training and labour market gap.

The measurement scale utilised is: 1 = Strongly disagree

2 = disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

4.5.2   Mean

- The respondents have articulated an average perception of 2.00 for the following study variables namely; organisational benefit, job performance, training and labour market gap and support from MERSETA. The average perception according to the measurement scale is "disagree" implying that no significant benefits arise from these interventions.

- However respondents have indicated an average perception of almost 3 or neutral which is in respect of the study variables "vocational education and training" which appears to be of less significance to

learnership offering a vocational education and training. This may be viewed in a positive light in that the learners are will to be part of the learnership programme in order to gain the theory and practical experience.

4.5.3 The Standard Deviation

The four study variables namely; organisational benefit, vocational education and training, job performance, support from MERSETA and training and labour market gap have a standard deviation from 0.676 to 0.810. It indicates that these statements tested have variations in respect of the respondent's perception. The respondents felt open to indicate their opinion honestly. The respondents have indicated their views from the measurement scales of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree.

4.5.4 Variance

The above five variables have a variance from 0.457 to 0.656, which reveal that the respondents have indicated a difference in their perceptions.

4.5.5 Range

The study variables organisational benefit, vocational education and training, job performance, support from MERSETA and training and labour market gap have a range of three and two. This indicates that the respondents have expressed various opinions and perceptions towards these study questions.

Table 4.28   Central Tendency Statistics

		Skills development	*Training budget*
N	Valid	23	23
	Missing	1	1
Mean		3.00	3.00
Std. Deviation		1.16266	1.37021
Variance		1.352	1.877
Range		4.00	4.00

4.5.2.1   Interpretation

The above table reveals central tendency statistics for the study variables: skills development and training budget. The measurements scale utilised is

$$1 = 0\text{-}25\%$$
$$2 = 25\text{–}50\%$$
$$3 = 50\text{-}75\%$$
$$4 = 75\% \text{ or more}$$
$$5 = \text{Not sure}$$

4.5.2.2   Mean

The respondents have articulated an average perception of 3.00 for the following variables, skills development and training budget. This indicates that the learners that participated in the learnership programme have articulated a perception of 50-75% towards the two variables named above. This is positive due to the fact that the learners are confident that skills development is delivered through learnerships and also training budget is spent accordingly in terms of skills development.

4.5.2.3   Standard Deviation

The two variables have a standard deviation from 1.162 to 1.370; it reveals that the statements have variables in respondent's perception.

Table 4.29   Standard deviation

	Skills development	*Training Budget*
Std deviation	1.162	1.370

4.5.2.4   Variance

The above two variables have variance from 1.352 to 1.877, it reveals that the respondents have indicated a difference in their perceptions.

4.5.2.5   Range

The above two variables have range value of 4.00, it indicates these variables are constant in the respondents perception towards the study questions.

4.6   **Summary**

The data reveals that the majority of the respondents believe that the Learnership programme should receive more attention from the SETA which is MERSETA, as well as support from the organisation. Learners do not believe that learnership is effective enough in promoting skills development as well as improving their performance. Most importantly the study was conducted in order to determine the effectiveness of Learneship Programme in promoting skills development.

The data was processed, measured and presented by using a structured questionnaire and various statistical analyses. The next chapter provides conclusions and recommendations to be made for the purpose of the effective implementation of Leanership Programmes in promoting skills development.

5.1   Introduction

The study reveals high levels of dissatisfaction with learnership programmes for both the learners and the employers. An entirely new training regime has been introduced aimed primarily at up-skilling those Black South Africans previously excluded from training and education opportunities under apartheid (Kraak 2008:1).

5.2   Discussion

The learner's view is that the concept of learnership has not resulted in employment and also that learnership is not accessible to society. Therefore the unemployed learners are not targeted to promote employment. The study reveals that about 58.4% disagree that learnership offers vocational education and vocational training. On the other hand Davies and Farquharson (2004:200) believe that Learnerships provide "an alternative model of vocational education and training that is particularly appropriate for a high unemployment and low skills context".

The study conducted by Kraak (2008:1) indicated that "large numbers of Learneship programmes have been registered, but only about half are being utilised because stakeholders do not have the required curriculum and learning material". FASSET (Seta for Finance, Accounting, Management Consulting and other Financial Services) reported as shown in Table 5.1

Table 5.1   FASSET Learnership Statistics

|	
27 022	learners registered to date
12 929	are 18.1 learners (previously employed)
11 876	are 18.2 learners (previously unemployed)
2 220	have cancelled their learnership agreement
12 022	have completed their learnership agreement
12 780	are currently registered

(Statistics presented as at 31 March 2007)

The study further indicates that the SETAs do not provide sufficient support with regards to Learneships. Certain SETAs have been innovative in their leadership and have managed to meet the expectations put on them by participants and the Department of Labour alike. The National Economic Development and Labour Council in South Africa is on record as saying that the high number of Learnerships registered by businesses is due to companies being paid to do so without any regard to the quality and ultimately, the outcome of such Learnership (Bleby and Blaine, 2005).

There is a strong sense that Leanership programmes happen without much contribution from the SETAs, so much of the implementation of the Learnerships is in the hands of the employer and the training provider or the learners.

The study also brought to light that lack of funding limits the implementation of Learnership and also too much administration limits the implementation of Learnership. Once the required programme is established, employers can claim back much of their training expenses only on completion. Based on this only organisations with available funds can afford to implement Learnership and only claim later.

The study also revealed that Learnerships will not bridge the market gap. This is contrary to the survey conducted by HRSC in 2007 which indicated as follows:

- More than half (57%) of those who were unemployed at enrolment and completed the learnership found employment,
- Also 36% of those did not complete the programme were successful in obtaining employment.
- A similar trend was observed for those who were employed at enrolment (HRSC 2008).
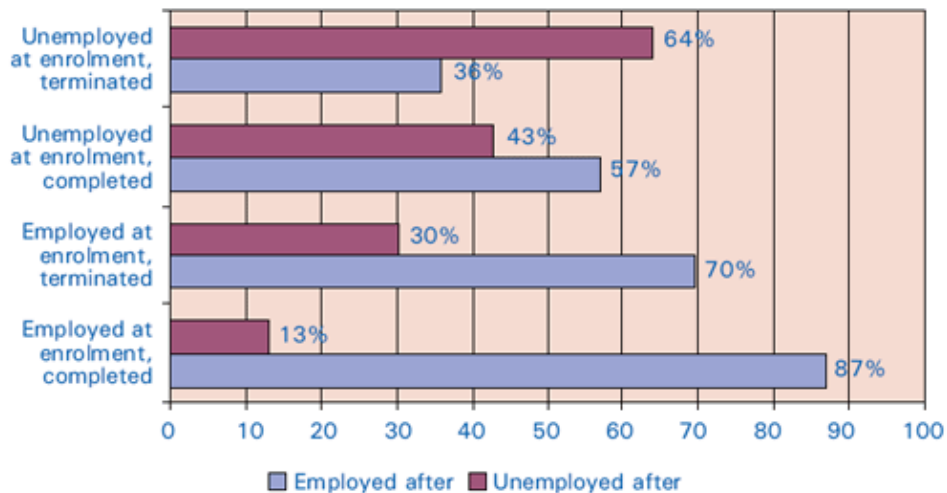
Figure 5.1   Labour market pathways of 18.1 and 18.2 learners
who completed or terminated. Source: Learnership survey, HSRC, 2007

The study indicates that Learnership had no impact on the learner's job performance. In other words the learners are not benefiting from the curriculum in order to be able to do their jobs better. A happy employee is a productive employee.   Hattingh (2006) suggests that it is the work based learning that must ensure practical application of the learning in the real world of work so that learning translates into applied competencies. This can be the only solution in order for the learners to see end results. Learneship like any other instruments, does not automatically convert to organisational improvements.

The study further highlighted the differences stated by the learners that the skills learnt will benefit the organisation. About 79% disagree and 21% agree that the skills learnt will benefit the organisation. The Learnership should be related to the industry or the organisation. The Institute of Internal Auditors, South Africa, claim the following are the benefit to the organisation from learnerships:

- Improved skills in the workplace
- The workplace training logbook facilitates the identification of training gaps and opportunities

- Training is standardized and subject to quality assurance
- There are financial benefits - the tax rebate for signing of Learnership agreements with trainees (learners), and there may be grants that can be accessed from the relevant SETA.

5.3   Summary

Learnerships require a lot of co-ordination and proper implementation in order to ensure co-operation from all stakeholders. The study indicates that there is a long way before the implementation and management of learnerships begins being effective. Learners do not receive the required mentoring in order to be effective and only 18.1 (employed) learners are benefiting, on the other side the 18.2 (unemployed) are left out. SETAs barely do what they are supposed to do in terms of providing support to the organisation with regards to implementation and ensuring that Learnerships are taking place.

Learnerships should be "flexible enough to accommodate and support local labour market conditions, special sector requirements, work opportunities and demands" (Davies and Farquharson 2004:20).   The next chapter provides conclusions and recommendations for the effective implementation of Learneship programmes.

CHAPTER SIX
RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1   Introduction

Within this study the researcher attempted to examine and understand how effective the current Learnership system in terms of promoting skills development in the organisation, using Smiths Manufacturing.

The importance of training and development in the light of the skills shortages experienced in South Africa, is accentuated by the trend evident in other industrialized countries where there is a large pool of skilled employees at the operating management level (Jinabhai 2005:95). The converse applies in South Africa, where there is a large undernourished low-level skilled personnel base.

According to Jinabhai (2005:95) "the national skills development strategy aims to encourage growth through investment in people and where human resources are seen to be the most valuable assets in organisations".

6.2   Implications of this Research

 Learnerships provide an alternative model of vocational education and training that is particularly appropriate for a high level of unemployment and low skills context, as in South Africa. However, they require intensive co-ordination and planning in order to manage the range of stakeholder inputs required for implementation. The study has confirmed the view that Learnerships are best viewed as projects, where implementation is not managed properly by the SETAs and as well as management.

A major issue still requiring debate is the question of learnership definition, and where and how learnerships 'fit' into the South African labour market scene. As Koch, Tandrup, Borroughs, Le Roux, Theron and Griffin (1999) ask: 'Are learnerships mainly to be seen as a tool for corporate employers to increase industrial productivity, or should they also be a tool for the

Department of Labour and others to activate unemployed persons through employment and self employment?'

The researcher was unable to find other research in South Africa as what this covered and shows how business research can provide valuable information in addressing real problems and issues. The study reveals that the respondents clearly do not believe that learnership programmes will bridge the market gap and this is of concern. The employers should ensure that once the learnership programme is complete, learners should be employed fulltime.

6.3   Suggestions for future study

Future research could examine what progress has been made by employer organisations with regard to the key objectives outlined by the National Skills Authority. The study reveals that the impact of learnership on the organisation is negative, this means that the SETAs are not doing what they are supposed to be doing. The mandate for SETAs includes recruiting learners into learnerships, ensuring learners' placement in the workplace and promotioning SMMEs, the mandate should be narrowed so that they can focus on a limited set of key responsibilities linked to formulating skills strategies and the administration of learnerships.

The study reveals that Manufacacturing is a male dominated sector thus leading to the majority being part of the training programme. This supports the perception that has ruled individuals mind that automotive work is a male dominated career. This will need to be addressed by means of Department of Labour's Employment Equity plan for the future.

The Employment Equity Act of 1998 states that disadvantages in training, education and experience are important in relation to equality in recruitment and promotion and should be seriously looked at within the automotive environment.

6.4   Summary

Literature reveals that Learnerships should begin only once a formal workplace has been secured, this tends to restrict the application of the

learnership model to the employer-employee scenario of the South African labour market. The study indicates that there is no diversity and it does not correspond with the demographics of KwaZulu Natal province as indicated in Table 1.1. If learnerships are to become more widely used models of workplace training in South Africa and elsewhere in the world, alternative and innovative interpretations both of the workplace concept and of how learnerships should be constituted are required. Learnership objectives may not easily be achieved if they are only identified through SETA structures.

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VOLUNTARY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERSHIP TRAINEES AND TRAINERS WITHIN THE ORGANISATION

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LEARNERSHIP PROGRAMES IN PROMOTING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Note to the respondent

Thank you for taking part in this survey and taking time to complete this questionnaire.

1.   We need your opinions to understand how effective learnership programmes in promoting skills development and to elicit learners impressions on the usefulness of the learnership programmes.

2.   Although we would like you to help us, you do not have to take part in this survey.

3.   If you do not want to take part, just hand in the blank questionnaire at the end of the survey session.

4.   What you say in this questionnaire will remain private and confidential. No one will be able to trace your opinions back to you as a person.

5.   Please ensure that you have filled in the whole questionnaire.

PLEASE REMEMBER:

1.   Please answer the questions as truthfully as you can.
2.   Do not put your name on this questionnaire.
3.   Your answers are confidential and will be treated as such.
4.   Please take your time and answer carefully.
5.   You must mark each response by making a tick in the appropriate box.
6.   Your responses will be used for research purposes only and the research objectives will be achieved only with your kind co-operation.

****

SECTION A: GENERAL BIOLOGICAL DETAILS

Please X the applicable box

1.   Your gender group

Male	Female

2.   Your age group.

20 – 25 years	26 – 30 years	31 – 35 years	36 – 40 years	> 45 years

3.   Your ethnic group.

Asian	Black	White	Jewish	Other

4.   Your highest educational qualification.

Matric	Degree	Diploma	Post Graduate	Certificate	Other

SECTION B: SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

5.   Please indicate in your opinion the percentage of skills development in your organisation that is delivered through learnership training.

0 – 25%	25% - 50%	50% - 75%	75% or more	Not sure

6.   Please indicate an estimate of the percentage of the training budget in your organisation that is spent on skills development initiatives.

0 – 25%	25% - 50%	50% - 75%	75% or more	Not sure

7.   What degree of support does learnership training have in your organisation from the executive level?

Key involvement	Moderate involvement	Low involvement	No involvement	Not sure

8.   As a participant in learnership training would you agree the organisation benefits from the skills you have acquired?

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

9.   What obstacles would you say limit learnership programmes?

Lack of supervisors	Lack of funds	Measuring return on investment	Too much administration	Unknown

10.   What role, in your opinion will learnership plays in your organisation within the next five years?

Leading role	Supportive role	Isolated role	None at all

11.   The learnership programme is able to bridge the training and labour market gap?

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

12.   The job performance has improved as a result of learnership as part of skills development.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

13.   Learnership programmes are not accessible to the society.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

14.   The learnership concept has resulted in employment.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

15.   If learnership is to play a role in skills development, what would the reasons be for implementing it in organisation?

Improved job performance	
Increase skills base of the South African Economy	
Have more competent staff	
More motivated and happy workforce	
All of the above	

16.   I had sufficient information to make an informed decision about which learnership to choose.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

17.   Please indicate where you heard about the learnership.

Heard about it at work	Family & friends	Education providers	Media	Other

18.   Why you chose the particular Learnership?

Career path	Work experience	Needed a qualification	Sounded interesting

19.   The relevant SETA -MERSETA is providing necessary support to promote learnership programmes.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

20. The learnership offer a vocational education and training that is appropriate for scarce skills and economy contexts.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

21. Learnership applies to any occupation.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

22. Managing Learnership contractual agreement is an essential component of Quality Assurance.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

23. For learnership monitoring to be possible an effective administration system has to be in place.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

24. The organisation provides enough opportunity for practical work.

Strongly Disagree	Agree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

25. The learnership contract is

1 month or less	Between 1 & 3 months	Between 4 & 6 months	Between 7 to 9 months	Between 10 & 12 months

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

RESEARCH OFFICE (GOVAN MBEKI CENTRE)
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11 MAY 2009

MS. DC MBONAMBI (207520732)
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Dear Ms. Mbonambi

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL NUMBER: HSS/0193/09M

I wish to confirm that ethical clearance has been approved for the following project:

"The effectiveness of learnership in promoting skills development within the organization"

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

Yours faithfully

MS. PHUMELELE XIMBA

cc: Supervisor (Prof. A Akande)
cc: Mrs. C Haddon